

**Ukraine – “Battlefield” Between EU & Russia**

**in the Context of**

**Association Agreement**





**Author:**Aija Konisevska Azadi

**Supervisor:** Søren Dosenrode, (Dr. phil. – political science)

**2014**

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# Abstract

On November 21st, 2013 Ukraine’s government, just a week before 3rd Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius decided to suspend preparations for signing an Association Agreement (AA) with EU, prioritizing a closer ties with Russia.[[1]](#footnote-1) Decision of Ukraine was an unexpected for everyone, as since independence of Ukraine, it has been repeatedly stating the European Choice as the priority of its’ foreign policy. The ENP framework and Eastern Partnership initiative was the approach of EU, how to make an impact on the domestic policy of Ukraine.[[2]](#footnote-2) However, in the area of EU monopoly – ENP framework countries - appeared a new significant player – Russia’s with Customs Union. Ukraine became a ”battlefield” of shared interests between EU and Russia. More than that, Ukraine’s prefered multilateral approach with many foreign policy vektors at the same time was not acceptable not for EU, neither for Russia.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Why Ukraine decided to suspend preparations for signing AA, is a main problem question of the thesis. 2 most popular explanations in the collected literature are examined through the lens of neorealism: official statement of the government of Ukraine about national security interests of the state and Russia’s pressure on Ukraine.

Keywords: Association Agreement, Ukraine, EU, Russia, ENP, Customs Union, national security, energy, integration

# Introduction

“According to an old folk tradition, if a man knocks on the door of a Ukrainian beauty with a marriage proposal, but does not win her heart, she will reject her suitor by presenting him with a pumpkin.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

The November 21st, 2013 was a historical day for Ukraine, as just a week before the 3rd Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius (28 - 29th November), government decided to “give a pumpkin” to the EU, seeking closer engagement with Russia, and suspending preparations for signing an Associations Agreement (AA) by adopting the resolution "On conclusion of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States on the other hand.”[[5]](#footnote-5) In the night of the same day thousands of protesters expressed demand for a deeper European integration at Kiev’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) starting the protests that lately were called Euromaidan (literally Eurosquare).[[6]](#footnote-6)

Government’s decision was unexpected and unacceptable for the most of the society of Ukraine, as accordingly to the result of the Gfk Ukraine survey in October, 45% of respondents supported the signature of AA and 54% of them wanted that Ukraine will become also a full member of EU in the future. In a contrast – only 14% wanted accession to the Russia’s Customs Union and 15% considered that, Ukraine should not join any of the alliances.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Before the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, government rejected to vote on 6 bills of legislation to meet the EU’s criteria, regarding the release of the former Prime Minister (Yulia Tymoshenko) from prison and to give a permission to receive a medical treatment in Germany. To continue, it was announced renewing of the dialogue with Moscow in the trade and economic area in the framework of Eurasian Customs Union. EU called it as the victory for Putin, and Putin’s spokesman was welcoming Ukraine’s desire towards more close trade and economic ties with Russia.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The showdown attracts attention also due to the fact that beginning of debate on the new agreement between EU and Ukraine was determined already in February 22nd, 2007 with Declaration of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine[[9]](#footnote-9) and on the February 18th, 2008 negotiations on the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA - a part of AA) were launched in the framework of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Bargaining was finished in October 19th, 2011 and already in March 2012 was initialed the final text.[[10]](#footnote-10) Accordingly, it raises attention, that political vector of Ukraine was changed towards East after almost 7 years of negotiations.[[11]](#footnote-11)

EU's Eastern Partnership Agreement is aimed to meliorate mutual political and trade intercourse with 6 former Soviet Republics - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Location in the space between the EU and Russia emphasizes significance of these relations. Ukraine is defined to be a priority partner for the EU due to its’ size and location, however ratification of the agreement was not possible as long as Ukraine will not resolve the concerns over a “stark deterioration of democracy and the rule of law”, including imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko (2011) and former interior minister Yuri Lutsenko (2012).[[12]](#footnote-12) Previously mentioned issues were addressed in the statement of 10th of December 2012 by the [EU Foreign Affairs Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_the_European_Union#Foreign_affairs) recommending necessary reforms in electoral, judiciary and constitution area by the time of the Summit in Vilnius in November 2013 to successfully sign the Agreement.[[13]](#footnote-13) Resolution was approved by 315 of the 349 members of the Ukrainian Parliament and plan on Priority Measures for European Integration of Ukraine for 2013 was adopted, promising implementation of the recommendations of the EU Foreign Affairs Council.[[14]](#footnote-14)

On February 25th of 2013, to accelerate the reforms, EU set a three-month deadline to meet the criteria (Füle’s list of 19 requirements[[15]](#footnote-15)).[[16]](#footnote-16) The same day President of Ukraine promised to do its’ best to meet the EU’s requirements. However, it is important to emphasize, that in the same time president was engaged in negotiations with Russia about the best model (3+1 – Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan + Ukraine) to cooperate in the framework of Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, that would not impede to sign the agreement with EU. The Russia’s position was clear, that they are not supporting Ukraine’s wish to join the Customs Union on special terms. [[17]](#footnote-17) Russian Prime Minister (Dmitry Medvedev) declared: “Our Ukrainian friends like to talk about the issue of joining [the Customs Union] under a ‘three plus one format’ and so on. But it can’t be this way. It's either everything or nothing, but in the latter case this looks like observer status or something else…[[18]](#footnote-18)”

Accordingly, leaders of the EU immediately addressed the issue by emphasizing, that Ukraine must choose between Customs Union with Russia and the AA with EU.[[19]](#footnote-19) President of the European Commission – José Manuel Barroso pointed out, that “One country cannot at the same time be a member of a customs union and be in a deep common free-trade area with the European Union … This is not possible.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

To continue, there have been doubtful moments in the behavior of Ukraine towards EU requirements, as annulment of the Tymoshenko’s lawyer’s ([Serhiy Vlasenko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serhiy_Vlasenko)'s) mandate in the Verhovna Rada in March 2013.[[21]](#footnote-21)

As significant step towards agreement, EU welcomed pardons of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in April for two former government ministers Yuri Lutsenko and Georgy Filipchuk, imprisoned for abuse of office, but insisted for release of all of the president’s political opponents, before the summit in November.[[22]](#footnote-22) The main point is that, there is not mentioned exactly the Tymoshenko release, in the list of Fule or in the EU recommendations of December 10th, 2012. However, EU insisted that expression “selective justice” was oriented towards resolution of the Tymoshenko issue.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Despite the EU announcement to choose between the EU or Customs Union of Russia, already in May Ukrainian government approved memorandum to apply for observer status in the Customs Union, as its’ member [Russia] is Ukraine’s largest trade partner,[[24]](#footnote-24) and in June signed a deal. Russia preferred, that Ukraine would become a full member of Customs Union, but Ukraine politely refused, as it was satisfied with the benefits of observer status (no effect on customs duties or other regulations on trade and opportunity to follow new policies of the bloc), and it was still hoping to sign an AA in November.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Although EU did not considered Ukraine’s observer’s status in the Customs Union as threat to sign the AA, Russia did not give up and the Russian president’s adviser on economic issues (Sergei Glaziev) announced the ultimatum on June 14th in the forum in Kiev. “If Ukraine signs the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union this fall, it will lose not only membership perspective, but also its observer status in the Russia-led Customs Union.[[26]](#footnote-26)”[[27]](#footnote-27)

On 27th of July Putin visited Ukraine for the 1,025th anniversary of a mass baptism and urged Ukraine to rethink the benefits of joining Customs Union, reminding about common history, promising grow in Customs Union’s members trade with Ukraine for 2-3% and mentioning that Kyiv may get a gas supplies from Russia for a 1/3 part lower price than before[[28]](#footnote-28). Despite the “carrots” policy, Russia did not avoid the “sticks”. Putin emphasized that: “Kyiv cannot ignore the risk of retribution from Russia, the main market for Ukrainian exports, in the form of trade restrictions.[[29]](#footnote-29)”[[30]](#footnote-30)

There was not necessary to wait too long for the implementation of the Russia’s threats - on 29 of July (two days after Putin’s visit), Russia banned imports of one of the biggest Ukrainian confectionary company Roshen's products and asked other members of Customs Union, to ban, due to the lack of quality and safety standards. Accordingly to the Federal Consumer Protection Service Roshen's products had "toxic impurities". EU and Ukraine translated the “chocolate war” as Russia’s attempt to punish its pro-European owner and former government minister (Petro Poroshenko) and attempt to push Ukraine to rethink refusal to join Customs Union.[[31]](#footnote-31)

To continue, in August 15th Russia tightened checks on all imports from [Ukraine](http://www.reuters.com/places/ukraine?lc=int_mb_1001), as a result almost 1,000 rail cars were standing at the border between Ukraine and Russia,[[32]](#footnote-32) but already in 20th of August customs checks were eased with the context that it was a demonstration from Russia’s side, how the things will be, if Ukraine will sign an AA.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Russia’s behavior was compared with strategy, published in the weekly newspaper of Ukraine "Dzerkalo tyzhnia" on the 16th of August regarding Russia’s efforts towards incorporation of Ukraine in the process of integration of Eurasia. Although there are doubts about the authenticity of the document and Ukrainian politician (Viktor Medvedchuk), with the support of his Ukraine’s Choice civic movement, called it a “yellow press”, as it was stated in the previously mentioned document, that Medvedchuk (Russia’s favorite in the presidential election of 2015[[34]](#footnote-34)) has a key role in progress of the goals of strategy[[35]](#footnote-35), Putin admitted that it was a recommendations written by outside experts and sent to his administration.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Strategy is aimed at 3 main goals: to prevent Ukraine from signing AA; to create a pro-Russian oriented “network” of influential organizations with capability to change government’s unbeneficial decisions towards Russia and finally, bring Ukraine into Customs Union and Single Economic Space till 2015.[[37]](#footnote-37) As planned actions towards expected targets were mentioned mobilization of Ukrainian oligarchs, that have business in Russia, and have possibility to employ the media towards manipulations with public opinion and pointing out for Yanukovych his shaking popularity and low possibility to continue presidency for a second term due to the Russian-inducted economic problems. As a solution, Russia may offer a range of specific money-making opportunities for Yanukovych, his family and inner circle on the Russian market. [[38]](#footnote-38)

However, despite the slow progress of the reforms, Russia’s ultimatum and economic pressure, on September 18th Ukraine was still keeping the political course towards EU, when unanimously approved the draft AA[[39]](#footnote-39) and in August in the rhetoric of the Head of the Ukrainian Institute of Global Strategies and executive director of the Blazer International Fund in Kiev, probability of Kiev signing an AA was evaluated as increased (about 90% probability that Ukraine will sign) after unsuccessful visit of Putin to Ukraine.[[40]](#footnote-40) In the same time Putin persuaded that Ukraine’s choice will be respected by Russia and will not have any impact on the political relations with Russia. However, he did not hide, that it might create certain difficulties in the trade area. It was not the first Russia’s threats and efforts to put pressure on Ukraine by using trade[[41]](#footnote-41).[[42]](#footnote-42) Adviser to President Vladimir Putin (Sergei Glazyev) was expressing last minute warning to Ukraine, that only by joining Customs Union it can balance the trade, in other case it will face financial catastrophe or even collapse of the state. More than that, in this way Ukraine violates strategic partnership and friendship treaty, that legitimates Russia to intervene if pro-Russian regions appealed.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Cautionary attitude from Russia was not left without attention from the side of Ukraine. Prime Ministers Dmitry Medvedev and Mykola Azarov met on October 15th in Kaluga at the 10th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Committee of the Russian-Ukrainian Inter-Governmental Commission.[[44]](#footnote-44) Yanukovych and Putin held talks on October 25th in the summit of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Minsk; afterwards they met again after 2 days in Sochi[[45]](#footnote-45) and on November 9th in Moscow. By commenting the increased visits during only few weeks, Yanukovych admitted that they were discussing mutual trade and economic relations before the upcoming Eastern Partnership summit.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Acceleration of the relationships can be understood due to the fact, that Yanukovych was keeping open all the possibilities for choice till the last moment, to get the best deal. The parliament was waiting to vote on the bills regarding release from prison and allowance to get treatment in Germany to Yulia Tymoshenko and the possibility to become a full member of Customs Union was still “on the table” together with many other benefits as reduced prices to gas, debt forgiveness (€1.45 billion) and duty-free imports and financial assistance of €15 billion in the form of subsidies. In a contrast, EU offered € 610 million worth loans, that was increased by € 1 billion loan also from International Monetary Fund (IMF), presented on 20th of November under very strict conditions regarding budget cuts and increase of 40% in the bills of natural gas.[[47]](#footnote-47) At this point is important to add, that Ukraine estimated expenses of modernization and standardization accordingly to EU requirements in amount of €150 -160 billion[[48]](#footnote-48) - accordingly EU aid package is not even close to the Ukraine’s expectations.

Just weeks before summit Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov criticized EU for a lack of flexibility and being too inactive to find solutions for Ukraine, that was experiencing a pressure from Russia and decrease of industrial production and drop in relations with [CIS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States). Although Ukraine explained the economically complex situation, EU did not come up with specific proposals for reorientation and compensation of Ukraine’s market. [[49]](#footnote-49) Accordingly to Azarov:” European Union will be to blame if “because of dubious demands over Tymoshenko” the EU-Ukraine association agreement is not signed during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Nov. 28-29.[[50]](#footnote-50)”

More than that, already in 13th of November during government’s meeting Azarov in the opening statement expressed that no one (EU) was offering any compensation to replace the loss of Russia’s market, accordingly normalization of the trade relations with Russia is a priority issue for Ukraine. It was also admitted that presidents of Ukraine and Russia during the meeting agreed upon a settlement of a number of problems and action towards renewing of the cooperation with Russia[[51]](#footnote-51). This was the moment when EU should understand that the “game is over”. Additionally, at this plenary session members of Ukrainian parliament were supposed to consider EU bills regarding integration of Ukraine. However, it was not done, as committees responsible for the reforms of the parliamentary election system and prosecution system failed to fulfill their obligations. To continue, bill regarding Tymoshenko, was not finalized yet. Accordingly, opposition leaders Vitali Klitschko (UDAR), Arseniy Yatseniuk (Batkivschyna), and Oleh Tiahnybok (Svoboda) asked EU not to decide on the signature of AA on November 18th, before Ukraine have fulfilled all the EU requirements.[[52]](#footnote-52)

On the eve of decision regarding the 6 bills of EU, Ukraine still argued, that it was continuing to work on the documents and procedures for Vilnius summit in accordance with Association Agreement.[[53]](#footnote-53) And the next day Ukraine suspended the preparations for signing AA by adopting the resolution "On conclusion of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States on the other hand[[54]](#footnote-54)”. The main reason for such a decision was the interest of national security. [[55]](#footnote-55)

Although, Ukraine was keeping both options open till the last moment, the decision about suspension was a big disappointment and even shock for both – EU and the Ukrainian society, that was sure about the benefits of the AA. Fact that decision was taken shortly before the Vilnius summit was strategic action, so not EU, neither society will have a time for discussions or negotiations.

Government by adoption claimed that signing of the AA was not beneficial for national security interests of Ukraine, as EU was not offering any compensation or relocation for Ukraine’s market loss due to the economical measures and pressure from Russia. More than that government from the early beginning was against any kind of requirements (especially regarding release of Tymoshenko from prison 1,5 years before Presidential elections in 2015 and allowance to get medical treatment in Germany). The EU biggest mistake was, that it did not evaluate Russia’s interests and abilities properly.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Accordingly, Russia offered € 15 billion in 3 years to Ukraine and forgiveness of foreign debt. To balance the carrot policy it used also sticks - ban on the Ukrainian products not only in Russia, but also other member states of Customs Union, increased price of the gas and Russia’s last “warning shot” – a stronger customs control measures. As a result, Ukraine’s export declined by 10% in 2013, compared to 2012.[[57]](#footnote-57)

## 1.1. Problem formulation

The previously described context is just a short overview on the process of decision towards suspension of preparations to sign an AA with EU. Accordingly, the goal of the research is to indicate and understand different factors in the context that was mutually interacting and influencing an environment in which the decision was made.

Research is devoted to the problem question - Why the Ukraine suspended the preparations for signing an Association Agreement?

Accordingly to the previous background, it is more than clear, that question cannot be answered with a single explanation – national security, accordingly to Ukraine’s official position. In the process of analyze of the collected information 2 most common explanations crystalized. Even in the case of interviews with activists in the policy of Ukraine (Stanislav Kutsenko and Anna Masna[[58]](#footnote-58)) asking to mention the reasons for suspension of preparations to sing an AA, answers was repeting the identified tendency of the sources. That is why research is concentrated in 2 focus areas.

First focus is on the AA by itself – accordingly, weather Ukraine did not sign the agreement because it was not beneficial to the Ukraine’s national security interests. Weather the recommendations and reforms in the Fule’s list were creating the dangers for national security or the agreement by itself. The problem will be observed through the Ukraine’s definition of “national security” and application of it to the EU requirements and influence on Ukraine and areas covered by national security definition.

Second emphasized path is on the Russia’s influence. Weather Ukraine did not sign the agreement due to the Russia’s “carrot and stick” policy against Ukraine and the consequences of realized measures on Ukraine’s economy and development. The problem question will be examined by observing Russia’s treats and “muscles” towards Ukraine and development of the trade tendencies in 2013 in comparement to previous years.

## 1.2. Pre-analysis and delimitation

As previously described, the focus of the research is on the decision of Ukraine towards suspension of the preparations to sign an AA and the factors (reasons) that influenced and leaded towards such a decision. The main actors included in the research are: Ukraine as primary actor and EU and Russia as secondary actors. Accordingly, research paper looks upon the interaction of the previously mentioned actors’ in the multilevel approach – international level in the case of EU and Russia and national level in the case of Ukraine. The EU in the framework of the research is viewed as united body, not a “bouquet of interests”, although author admits that country as Germany[[59]](#footnote-59) (that has a tight economic ties with Russia) would have different attitude than Poland (Ukraine’s neighbor) towards Russia’s efforts.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Although, there are many other parties that play an important role on the decision of Ukraine as CIS, Customs Union members and USA, however, they are analyzed as additional factors, not focus of this research. The problem is viewed as game of power with Ukraine in the center that is balancing between Russia and EU. The author of the research takes into account that there exist other influential actors (International Organizations, NGO’s, opposition, civil society groups), but more detailed effect and action of them is not included in this research, as it is not concentrating on the political crisis in Ukraine after November 21st and reconciliation of the conflict.

The timeline of the project is including pre-history and establishment of the relations between Ukraine-EU and Ukraine-Russia since 1991, covering: main legislative basis, politics and problematic areas and mutual economic interaction. The research will provide a detailed overview on the development of the relationships of Ukraine and EU in the framework of integration programmes (TACIS), frameworks (ENP) and initiatives (Eastern Partnership) and Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)[[61]](#footnote-61). The definitions of national security, national security interests and threats to national security will be provided. The potential development of Ukraine in the framework of AA will be analyzed through the similar examples (based on similar history and GDP) in the past – Poland and Romania, applying some bias, that success of one case is not equally applicable or expected from another.

In the case of Russia, the main documents analyzed, that determines mutual relations are: Belavezha Accords[[62]](#footnote-62), “[Treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_Treaty_on_the_Status_and_Conditions_of_the_Black_Sea_Fleet)[[63]](#footnote-63)” and Kharkiv Pact of 2010[[64]](#footnote-64).

2 significant events, emphasized in the are: the decision of November 21st2013[[65]](#footnote-65), and the action plan between Ukraine and Russia of December 17th, 2013[[66]](#footnote-66), as it was bargained already in October[[67]](#footnote-67), during increased visits between Russia and Ukraine, but officially announced only after the suspension of preparations to sign the AA.

## Methodology and Research Design

Research methodology is qualitative in nature. The main aim of the project is to find out, indicate and understand different causal factors that was mutually interacting and influencing an environment in which the decision for suspension of the preparations to sign the Association Agreement was made. In a purpose to explain a broad range of mutual political, economic and security interactions between countries – Ukraine - Russia and Ukraine - EU and to find possible answers to the decision made by the government of Ukraine – a case study model was employed.

To reach the goal in the framework of chosen methodology, 2 focus areas were defined accordingly to the 2 blocks of potential influential explanations that were identified through the collected information as most popular. First area concentrates on the Agreement by itself and an official announcement of the Ukraine’s government, that decision to sign an agreement would not be beneficial for the national security interests of the country. Second focus is on the influence and economic pressure of Russia regarding the decision of Ukraine. For this purpose – a single case policy analysis study model was employed.

A case study is “a well-defined aspect of a historical happening that the investigator selects for analysis…[[68]](#footnote-68)”. Accordingly to the research, the decision of Ukraine to suspend preparations to sign AA is the historical happening. The focus on the events (EU-Ukraine mutual interaction, Russia’s pressure on Ukraine and Yanukovych’s role) depends on the argumented choice of the author. There exist many types of case studies, and that is even recommended in terms of effectiveness to use a mix of different research methods. In the framework of research, there are 2 case studies types chosen: interpretative (also called disciplined-configurative) and hypothesis generating (heuristic). The first one focuses on historical explanation of the case. Accrodingly, due to the pre-history of relationships and a long-term trade sanctions between Russia and Ukraine - Ukraine’s decision was expected. Second one provides possibility for logic of confirmation as well as generation of new hypothesis. Ukraine’s official statement about national security interests will be tested, but there will be provided possibility to generate new hypothesis about EU- Ukraine relations.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The process tracing of the research will be provided through bilateral treaties, documents, strategies between Ukraine - EU and Ukraine - Russia, statistical data of market patterns of, public statements by officials, involved variables and similar cases in the terms of economic data as GDP (Poland, Romania) that are the members of EU.[[70]](#footnote-70)

The experience with AA in the case of Ukraine cannot be directly applicable to the other countries (Moldova and Georgia) in the framework of EU’s Association Agreement, as countries has different pre-history and relations with Russia, but EU can be more aware and prepared for Russia’s efforts and pressure to keep the countries away from EU’s direction or accept the decision of the countries like Armenia, that already made the choice towards joining Russia’s Customs Union.[[71]](#footnote-71) As it was addressed already in 2007 by Yulia Tymoshenko: “If there is one country, towards which Europeans – and indeed the entire West - should share a common foreign policy, it is Russia.[[72]](#footnote-72)”

To understand the long history of Ukraine towards EU integration and AA is important to describe: EU framework for cooperation – European Neighborhood Policy and [Eastern Partnership](http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm) (EaP), the beginning of relationships in 1991 and Ukraine’s foreign policy priorities. Before the signature of AA, Partnership and Cooperation Agreement determines areas of cooperation between Ukraine and EU. Final text of AA and the requirements of the EU for Ukraine to sign the agreement will be applied accordingly to the Ukraine’s official position – how it is influencing national security interests of Ukraine. The definitions of “national security” and “threats to national security” will be provided from the Law of Ukraine “On National Security[[73]](#footnote-73)”.

To continue, the broad description of complicated relationships between Ukraine and Russia since 1991 is important, to understand the pre-history of both actors before independency of Ukraine and close cultural ties. However, those will not be emphasized areas in the research, neither the role of [Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic) is a significant part of the story that is clearly showed by determined timeline. Suspension to sign an agreement will be analyzed through political, economic and security factors. Comparement of the main tendencies in the market (import, export, FDI) with Ukraine will provide statistical arguments about Russia’s real impact on Ukraine’s economy.

Through the research, author is highlighting the warning signals that were not appropriately evaluated by EU regarding “bluffing” of the Ukraine about its’ efforts to sign the agreement and causality mechanisms (mutually interacting factors) of the decision made by Ukraine. The potential mistakes of the EU and advices about what could be done differently are included in the perspectives part. It also answers the “what if” question – it means, what if EU would act differently during negotiations or what if Ukraine would signed the agreement in the November 2013. Author takes into account that the political chapter of the AA was signed on the March 21st, 2014, and remaining section on the 27th of June, however, as mentioned before, timeline of the research is up till the historical decision in 2013.[[74]](#footnote-74)

## Data Reliability and Critics

To provide relevant, adequate and comprehensive information on this case, a broad variety of secondary sources was used such as: academic literature on foreign policy, theories and scientific articles of the professionals in international relations, security and political science, official homepages of EU, European Commission, EEAS, Institute for Security Studies, EurActive and Radio Free Europe homepage. To provide a deep and comprehensive analyse of the problem, the sources as homepage of Ukrainian Parliament Verhovna Rada, web portal of the Ukrainian Government, official homepage of the Mission of Ukraine to the EU, State Statistics Service of Ukraine and “Euromaidan PR” – Site of the Official Public Relations Secretariat for the Headquarters of the National Resistance in Kyiv, Ukraine was used, as well as information published in the pages of newspapers as “Kiev Post”, “Kyiv Weekly”, “Ukrainian Week” “The Moscow times” and “BBC News”, “The Guardian” and “Washington Post”, and other international (UK, Germany’s, U.S. Australian) newspapers, to provide a differentiation of the used information from all the sides involved. It is important to mention that “Euromaidan PR” most clearly reveals the point of view of the Ukrainian people and protesters.

The main problems were with official homepages of the Ukraine, like for example the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Many articles and publications were available only in Ukrainian language, while in the English that kind articles doesn’t existed, or had only the title translated in English. As an example: “MFA History” in English exists only name of the section with empty space under, in Ukrainian: “Iсторiя та традицiї зовнiшньополiтичної служби України” (History and Traditions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine) was fulfilled with a long article under. As even the translation of the title is not precise, author decided to read the official documents, published in official homepages of Ukraine, in the original language (Ukrainian), so to obey the possibility of unfinished and partly translated information. There is necessary to add, the domestic documents of Ukraine are only in Ukrainian. That questions, weather that is due to the lack of English knowledge and specialists, or just an attitude that domestic politics decisions is not the business of international society.

The use of “RIA Novosti” News agency homepage might raise the doubts about reliability, as it is the largest news agency in Russia and under the control of Russian Ministry of Communications and Mass Media[[75]](#footnote-75) – accordingly under the censorship and government interference. But the used information from this source includes only official quotes of the Prime Minister Medvedev, former President of Russia and the position of Russia, not the EU. Accordingly, the information used is not under the doubts of reliability.

To continue, Ukrainian Newspaper “Zerkalo Nedeli” (Mirror Weekly) that, as previously mentioned, was publishing the Russia’s strategy towards incorporation of Ukraine in the Eurasia and was called “yellow press” by Medvedchuk, in the international opinion is called as one of the most influential analytical non-partisan newspaper with high journalistic standards, deep policy analysis, exclusive interviews and critical view on the political elite and electoral campaigns.[[76]](#footnote-76)

There are also primary information sources, used in the research: skype interview with the Chairman of Ukrainian Students’ Association[[77]](#footnote-77) - Stanislav Kutsenko. He is also the founder of Skills Academy (online educational learning project), financed by Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and a member of European Democrat Students (EDS)[[78]](#footnote-78). His educational background is studies of Law in National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA)[[79]](#footnote-79) - one of few pro-Western universities that have internationally recognized diplomas and was supporting Orange revolution activists;[[80]](#footnote-80) and written communication with Anna Masna – Vice Chairman of EDS, executive director at the [Foundation for Democratic Initiatives](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Foundation-for-Democratic-Initiatives/105555689479646) (organization aimed at integration of Ukraine in European and Euro-Atlantic structures and building of Ukrainian state, democracy, and market economy through recommendations for decision makers and civil society[[81]](#footnote-81)), studied in The Institute of Political Sciences in France, Institute of Economics and Entrepreneurship in Ukraine and Economics and Management in Central European University in Hungary.[[82]](#footnote-82) At this point is significant to add, that primary information sources are provided only form the pro-European Ukrainians point of view and lack of pro-Russian side due to the change of regime in Ukraine, but the lack of primary sources from this side is replaced with secondary information sources.

It is important to add that during the research were experienced difficulties to get an access to some documents, that is mentioned in public media, but the full version was not available online. As one of documents is so called “Fule’s list” with 19 requirements that EU was recommending to Ukraine to successfully sign the Agreement. Although, it was possible to find articles that were mentioning some of the EU required reforms from the Fule’s list, the full original document of 19 benchmarks was not published. It was requested an access to the document from EEAS, that is respecting Regulation No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, quoting European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle’s speech on 28th of April 2010, when he was addressing the members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) of the European Parliament:

“I presented to the Ukrainian side a list of key reforms which Ukraine needs urgently to develop together with possible incentives and responses from the EU. This list covers areas like political reforms, macro-financial stability, trade and business environment, mobility and energy. … I passed over copies of the reform list to leaders of the opposition and underlined the need to collaborate closely within the Parliament on the implementation of the reform agenda[[83]](#footnote-83)"

However received answer was stating that “there was never any paper with 19 benchmarks handed in over to the Ukrainian authorities”[[84]](#footnote-84). But it was offered to use the Council conclusions of December 10th, 2012. Recommended paper is mentioning only 10 expected changes from the Ukraine to successfully sign the agreement. However, when author was addressing the request again with evidences, that such a document should exist, finally was received positive answer, that document is identified and in accordance with author’s interest is now also available to public.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Finally, the resolution "On conclusion of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States on the other hand”, mentioned in the official homepage of Verhovna Rada and available only in original (Ukrainian) language. When I addressed issues about the document to EEAS, they commented, that they do not have such a document[[86]](#footnote-86), but Ukraine’s government promised to make it public. That surprised the author, because if the document was signed between 2 parties, both of them should receive the original with translation in both languages.

It is important to add that sources in the list of bibliography are in alphabetical order of Latin alphabet, however due to the fact that used literature were also in Ukrainian and Russian language, that has another alphabet than English sources – this information is ordered based on the system of Cyrillic after the English language sources.

## 1.5. The Choice of Theory

The decision of Ukraine was made in the environment of two “fighting” great powers (EU –Russia) and even regional hegemons about the territory between them. The winner of the “battle” would not only stabilize the status of regional hegemon, but also will weaken other actor’s power, as Ukraine has strategically beneficial location and military significant capacity. The used tools to achieve the expected decision, or approaches to push Ukraine to change the decision was a broad range – from soft power instruments up to military threats and hard power. Despite the contrast of the decision, made by government, to the opinion of the majority of Ukrainians, they were pressed to follow the chosen course of the government. Accordingly, it is more than clear, that realism theory is the most appropriate for the defined case of Ukraine.

The scope on the decision of Ukraine on the Ukraine’s decision about not signing the AA (including DCFTA) in accordance to the interests of national security, can be understood through neorealism and economic dependency, that the “States do not willingly place themselves in situations of increased dependence. In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gain to political interest…[[87]](#footnote-87)”. It includes the instincts of the state to protect national sovereignty, national interests, national security and national independency. More than that states are striving to control the level of dependency and what they depend on as a defense.[[88]](#footnote-88)

Ukraine is the victim of economic dependence from Russia and EU. Due to the rising gas prices for the import from Russia (3x higher in 2013 than in 2007), result is current external debt of $136790 million.[[89]](#footnote-89) Russia with CIS countries and EU is the largest markets for Ukraine (closer ties with EU will boost foreign investment and trade, but also includes a lot of regulatory mechanisms, standards regarding convergence and transparency). Ukraine’s import from Russia in 2013 was $15,8 billion from the side of Russia import from Ukraine is only 5% of Russia’s total amount, but still the largest between CIS countries and 4th biggest in the world comparement. The export from Ukraine to Russia is 24% of total amount, identifying strong dependence of Ukraine on Russia’s market.[[90]](#footnote-90) And signing the AA with EU would increase economic dependence also with EU.

Accordingly, through diversification of trade and trade partners (in the framework of AA), Ukraine can achieve less dependency on Russia’s market and gain a greater self-sufficiency, but at the same time it will increase dependence from EU’s standards, values and rules. The “fear” of Ukraine is that it is not able to evaluate properly the effect of the cooperation on relative capabilities of Ukraine in the future in the framework of AA of EU or CU of Russia. Accordingly, the information and international pressure (“carrot” and “stick”) policy plays a significant role in decision. More than that, weak states tend to take a direction towards international institutions, to balance the will of larger states, by transforming the power from powerful to them. Although the co-operation gives promise about “absolute gains” of all involved, the “self-help system ”, when you can not be sure about the intentions of cooperation partners, arises problem of “relative gains”. Accordingly, “ … state will decline to join, will leave or will sharply limit its commitment to a co-operative arrangement if it believes that partners are achieving or are likely to achieve relatively greater gains.[[91]](#footnote-91)” The strong states can chose the mostly relative advantage option, while the weaker ones has to accept economic engagement and increased dependency.[[92]](#footnote-92)

At the same time, there is necessity to employ the offensive realism to explain behavior and mutual interaction between EU and Russia in the international system, fears and ambitions. EU’s foreign efforts are devoted to the enlargement of the peaceful zone and democratic values also outside the boarders of EU, but it also created crossroads in the relationships with Russia, especially in 2004, after official launch of ENP. As it is said, that a coin has two sides, accordingly, every action might be seen from two (minimum) points of view. EU’s external influence was orientated in the shared neighbourhood of post-Soviet space, that Russia considered as threats to its’ regional status and traditional zone of influence. Moscow translated EU’s behavior as ambitions towards status of global power. Accordingly, the territory became “an economic and diplomatic battlefield” and agenda of competition, reaching a new post-Cold War low point. The focus of the research is on the Ukraine, who understands its’ “golden carrot’s” role and meets dilemma to choose the future foreign policy vector. In accordance with previously mentioned, Ukraine’s decision defines the winner of “zero-sum game”. The winner can be only one, as Russia and EU insisted to choose the sides, “breaking the dreams” of Ukraine about observer status in Customs Union and successful participant of AA in the same time. [[93]](#footnote-93)

EU’s ENP framework by itself is oriented on the countries in the space between EU and Russia as common foreign policy approach and EU had never hide its’ hegemonic ambitions to become a global player.

Accordingly to the Security Strategy – “…union of 25 states (in 2003) with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world’s Gross National Product (GNP), and a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union is inevitably a global player. In the last decade European forces have been deployed abroad to places as distant as Afghanistan, East Timor and the DRC. The increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU makes us a more credible and effective actor. Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world. ”[[94]](#footnote-94)

Accordingly, that is not a surprise that Russia considers EU as regional hegemon who with economic and normative tools involves Ukraine in a range of assymetrical bilateral relationship with an aim, to promote EU’s norms and values. The ENP can be defined as “soft imperialism” that is applied in a hard way through these relationships, dictating the rules, norms and values to follow, without discussion on the understanding and meaning of the used terms. The expectations of EU are close to the Mearsheimer’s description of hegemon and the ambitions of such – the possibility to control another region close to its’ boarders and accessible over land. Regional hegemons tries to prevent other great powers to reach the same status, even in another regions, as the peer competitor weakens its’ “status quo power”.[[95]](#footnote-95)Accordingly, the EU’s membership promise, replaced with ENP framework, empowers its’ regional hegemony aspirations in the East. And of course Russia is not accepting it, when it comes to the traditional territories with Russian speaking minorities. As a result of such a “better world” Russia can loose its’ great powers and regional hegemon’s status.

Accordingly, further subchapter will introduce to the neorealism theory, offensive, defensive realism, soft and hard power and balance of power.

### **1.5.1. Neorealism, Offensive and Defensive Realism - General Assumptions.**

“Realism, the oldest and most prominent theoretical paradigm in international relations…[[96]](#footnote-96)”

The classical realism tradition as a formal approach in the international relations was defined in the interwar period in twentieth-century (generally might be dated from 1939 [[97]](#footnote-97)), to provide more scientific lens for studying international relations. Neorealism (also called structural realism) subfield came into debate in 1979 with Kenneth Waltz’s “Theory of International Politics”. Theory seeks to explain behavior and mutual interaction of states through the international structure. In relevance to the classical realism, also neorealism main assumption is that principle, ordering international system is anarchy – accordingly, no world government or higher authority over the actors. Autonomous states interact in the “self-help” system, being prepared to defend own survival interests. The focus is on the power capabilities and distribution of it in the international system. There are differences in between states, based on the posed power capabilities – accordingly the strongest ones dominates the “game” and determines, how the weaker states should behave.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Neorealism agree about possibility of international cooperation, but it is hard to achieve, difficult to maintain dependently on power of the state. The mutual cooperation is based on insecurity about relative gains – who is getting more from the cooperation, and how the increased capabilities will be used against others. Accordingly, when it comes to cooperation, fear about security is more significant, than material and economic gains. As the fundamental goal is – to prevent possibility for others to improve their power or relative capabilities. Economic welfare and national security are important, but the more likeliness for cooperation is on economic areas, than on military. Anarchy condition requires state emphasize relative power, security and survival instinct. The motives of the decisions and actions are based not only on the interests, but mostly on the capabilities of the state, that have an impact on the intentions and preferences of the states. [[99]](#footnote-99)

Neorealism is divided into defensive and offensive realism. Joseph Grieco represents defensive realism. He emphasizes phenomena of economic interdependence in relations between states. Economic interdependence creates vulnerability and fear from the influence of the successor states. The states in their behavior are driven by “imperial thrusts[[100]](#footnote-100)” or “autarchic strivings towards greater self-sufficiency[[101]](#footnote-101)”. The first drive is for successor states, that due to the power capabilities can chose and control, what they depend on. Another one is for weaker states that can strive to reduce amount of dependency. The engagement in the cooperation depends on the intentions of the cooperation partners. If there is any doubts about fairness of the deal or possibility that relative gains of the partner are bigger state will not join the agreement, or will limit the previous cooperation. In accordance with will to maintain security in the anarchic system, states prefer more reserved approaches and policies.[[102]](#footnote-102)

In contrast, offensive realism explains the aggressive behavior of the states through the anarchic system. Accordingly to Mearsheimer, States seeks to maximize their relative powers and achieve hegemony, to provide own security.[[103]](#footnote-103) In this way, the possible challenging by any other great power will be excluded. Is necessary to add that there is a low possibility of global hegemons, due to difficulties to project power over oceans. The most possible option is region hegemons in the own geographical area.[[104]](#footnote-104)

The two concepts “hard and soft power” have origins in the neo-realist theory, characterizing 2 different foreign policy approaches. As a hard power usually is understood: economic sanctions, coercive diplomacy and military intervention. It is used to enforce national interests against neighbouring countries. In a contrast, soft power approach focuses on: economic co-operation, common political values, peaceful means in conflict management and resolution.[[105]](#footnote-105)

The described theory framework will be applied to the analysis of the research regarding 2 focus points Suspension of preparations to sign Association Agreement with EU to ensure national security interests of country and/ or due to the pressure from Russia.

# 2. Ukraine - EU

The chapter will explain the significance of Ukraine for the EU in the strategic, geopolitical and security meaning towards regional hegemon status and in reverse - EU’s importance for Ukraine in the geopolitical, economic, security and energy resources context. In the framework of realism theory Ukraine in its’ cooperation (further membership) aspirations is seen as looking for a commitments to redistribute power from powerful states of the EU to itself and provide a market diversification, so to reduce the dependency from Russia. The establishment and development of the relationships between Ukraine and EU from the point of view of the both parties since recognition of independence in 1991 will be revealed.[[106]](#footnote-106) Pre-history of the cooperation framework and documents will provide the basis for further analysis of the Association Agreement. The attention will be paid on the previous and existent framework of the EU to cooperate with Ukraine, programmes (TACIS) and instruments towards Ukraine and Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Success stories, importance and benefits of the collaboration of mentioned parties will be described. In a contrast, challenges, difficulties, misunderstanding and opposit views towards deeper cooperation will provide a necessary knowledge towards explanation of the behaviour of Ukraine by chosing and defining foreign policy path.

## 2.1. Why Ukraine?

Since independence, Ukraine received € 3.3 billion in grants and €10bn in loans under beneficial conditions from the EU. In recent years, in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy[[107]](#footnote-107), the annual average grant amount to Ukraine was € 150 million. It places EU in the top, as the biggest international donor of Ukraine.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Ukraine has been in the scope of interest for the EU up till nowadays due to its size (with a population over 45 million in 2013[[109]](#footnote-109) and total land area of 579,330 sq km[[110]](#footnote-110)) – third biggest in the Europe after Russia and France.[[111]](#footnote-111) Geographical location is not less significant, especially regarding its longest boarder with Russia 1576 km and relative proximity to Western Europe and boarders with 4 EU countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia).[[112]](#footnote-112)

To continue, geographical location of Ukraine provided opportunity to became a key transit country in the energy resources area from Russia to the EU. In 2013, [16 percent of Europe’s natural gas consumption](http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=15411) was flowed through the Ukraine.[[113]](#footnote-113)

And even that is not all, Ukraine have been and is an actor with military-strategic importance due to large - scale military infrastructure and elements as Sevastopol (the military naval base of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet), that was protecting Russia’s military-strategic interests in Southwestern and Western Europe. More than that, independent Ukraine limited Russia’s access to vital sub-regions of Europe as Baltic and Black Seas. As a result, it increases Europe’s ability to balance and reduce Russia’s efforts towards superpower image.[[114]](#footnote-114) It was admitted by U.S. secretary of defence in 1996 that: “I cannot overestimate the importance of Ukraine as independent country to the security and stability of all of Europe.”[[115]](#footnote-115) Even more – already in 1997 Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book “The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives” emphasized the importance of Ukraine in the global area. He highlighted Ukraine as one of the critically important geopolitical pivots – state that is significant due to its sensitive location, access to important areas and resources and consequences of potentially vulnerable condition in the case of the particular behavior of geostrategic players. Ukraine fulfills all of these criteria and is seen as a tool to transform Russia. Even without Ukraine Russia is able to strive for its imperial status, but not anymore in the framework of Eurasian empire. Accordingly, Russia would become more “Asianized” and remote from Europe.[[116]](#footnote-116) The attractiveness of Europe and increased ties with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia was seen as a strategy to disseminate and proselytize common democratic values and principles creating Eurasian framework of cooperation and security.[[117]](#footnote-117) As a significant step and measures towards positive changes of the country’s situation in human rights, the rule of law and democracy, was admition of Ukraine to the Council of Europe (CE) in November 1995.[[118]](#footnote-118) Ukraine was the second (after Moldova and before the Russia) between ex-Soviet countries in CE. Even despite the fact, that in July 1999 - on the Eve of the given deadline (2000), only thirty-two out of forty-two commitments was fulfilled and Monitoring Committee proposed to suspend Ukraine's membership in the CE, it was stopped by Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). It was done so due to the worries that, accordingly to the prominent independent deputy of Ukraine and democrat Anatoly Matvienko, - suspension, punishment or any other measures would slow down the country's democratic progress, empower antidemocratic forces and push Ukraine closer to "the East" and a "Slavic Union" not Europe.[[119]](#footnote-119) And that would be a big step back from the progress previously achieved.

To continue on the security area, the nuclear issue, after the world’s worst nuclear accident in Chernobyl in 1986, required G7[[120]](#footnote-120) and European’s Commission’s assistance to mitigate the consequences, improve nuclear safety and make sure that Chernobyl’s Nuclear Power Plant is not creating danger in the future. Up till now there was invested approx. €500 millions by European Commission in social projects: in healthcare, education and horticulture, to reduce the effects of the disaster and rebuild the lives. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 1995 between G7, the Commission and Ukraine on closure of Chernobyl expressed the common commitment on the issue.[[121]](#footnote-121)

But what about Ukraine? Was the commitment towards deeper EU integration and tightened cooperation ties mutually beneficial and attractive?

## 2.2. Ukraine’s ”Declarative Europeanization”

The official foreign policy position of Ukraine towards European integration was formulated already in the late 1990s. Accordingly to the official homepage of Mission of Ukraine to the EU, we can talk about the establishment of the relationships between Ukraine and EU, when Minister of Foreign Affairs of the country holding presidency of the EU in 1991 - Netherlands, on behalf of the whole EU, officially expressed recognition of Ukrainian independence.[[122]](#footnote-122) However, at the legislative level Ukraine’s desire in relation to the EU was announced later - on July 2nd, 1993 in “On the Main[[123]](#footnote-123) Directions of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine”, approved by Verhovna Rada. It is important to pay attention on Ukraine’s foreign policy goals and directions after recognition of independence. Due to the historical changes in the international relations, the emergence of new regional centers of power and fundamental political and economic changes in Ukrainian society, country was searching for its’ place on the global scene and foreign policy direction. At this point is also significant to emphasize Ukraine’s expectations from the international cooperation and openness. That is very clear from the document that Ukraine’s government is well informed about its’ significance in geopolitical and security area for Europe, that is emphasized in the beginning of document. Accordingly, country is not hiding the ambitions to become an influential world power in the future with political and economic capabilities to perform stability in Europe due to the geopolitical position, historical experience, rich natural resources, cultural traditions, economic, scientific, technical and intellectual potential. However, the political preferences and decisions regarding the engagement are directed by national interest. The Ukraine’s membership in the European Communities was defined as the priority of its’ foreign policy on the condition that it will not create danger to the country’s national interests. However, the main targets of Ukraine, in the framework of national interest, match the 3 key EU intentions: geopolitics, security and economics. Ukraine prioritizes strategic and geopolitical interests in the context of national security and political independence of the country. The territorial integrity and inviolability of the country’s boarders is emphasized as well as development of democracy. The European values as human rights are applied to the situation of Ukraine oriented on the protection of the interests and rights of citizens and legal persons abroad. If the EU’s interests in economic area are oriented on energy resources, then Ukraine’s desire is - integration of the national economy into global market. The biggest challenge - to increase the foreign investment into Ukraine, depends on change of the country’s image to reliable and prospective partner. To conclude, Ukraine agreed on the fact that in order to maintain cooperation and stable relations with EU, it has to conclude an PCA by seeing it as “baby steps” towards association and future membership in organization. [[124]](#footnote-124) Together with a plenty of other guidelines and programmes (TACIS) were declared the integration measures in areas to achieve the fulfillment of the preconditions until period of 2007 for a full membership of Ukraine in EU in the framework of PCA.[[125]](#footnote-125)

### 2.2.1. TACIS and PCA – a Success Story or ”Lost in Translation”?

Looking into the pre-history of cooperation framework between EU – Ukraine, during the period of 1991 – 2006, is necessary to start with the Cooperation Programme TACIS (Technical Assistance to CIS[[126]](#footnote-126) countries) supporting the transition process in political, economic and social vacuum of independent states. EU’s input is significant, as it is the biggest donor for Ukraine. To be more specific, in the framework of TACIS EU’s macro-financial assistance and humanitarian aid overall amount exceeded € 1 billion.[[127]](#footnote-127) It is significant to emphasize, that PCA does not include the issue of membership (despite Ukraine’s expectations) – excluding Ukraine from the “accession circle”.[[128]](#footnote-128)

The origins of PCA were based on a proposal of Commission in January 9, 1992, to replace the previous Trade and Co-operation Agreement, due to the change of identity and transition to the market economy of the new independent states (NIS[[129]](#footnote-129)) of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The negotiations on PCA between European Commission and Ukraine were officially opened in 1993.[[130]](#footnote-130) The same year Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine was established.[[131]](#footnote-131) After 3 rounds of negotiations with Ukraine, agreement was signed on June 14, 1994. Accordingly, Ukraine was the first between CIS countries that signed the agreement. It took so long as already that time, Ukraine’s request was to include the discussion on prospects of future free trade agreement between Ukraine and EU.[[132]](#footnote-132) The trade and trade-related provisions entered into force already in 1996 via an *Interim Agreement[[133]](#footnote-133)*, but the agreement - with four years delay (1998), due to the necessity of ratification of the Parliaments of 15 member states.[[134]](#footnote-134)

PCA opened the platform for regular political dialogue – annual Ukraine-EU Summits. The main principles of the PCA were: cooperation between NIS, opening of the markets among Community and partner countries, cooperation in civil scientific research and technological areas to provide the framework for technical assistance, emphasizing the necessity for institution building, strengthening, empowering the civil society and promotion of political dialogue with member states of Community.[[135]](#footnote-135) Besides significance of political dialogue, PCA provided a platform for the development of economic relations, energy issues, border cooperation, transport, environment protection, promotion of trade and investment and supported the efforts of Ukraine towards adaptation of legislation, democracy consolidation and transition to market economy. Emphasize on the economy related issues in mutual cooperation was obvious, as 3 titles out of 11 in the agreement are dedicated to it.[[136]](#footnote-136)

Regarding PCA is necessary to add that it was complemented by sectoral agreements. Among them were mutual agreements on textile products (1993) , steel (1997), thermonuclear synthesis (1999), provisions regarding energy carriers to the countries of Western Europe (1999) and nuclear security (1999). However, is imortant to emphasize that regulations of trade in textile products and steel resulted in establishment of limiting quotas on Ukrainian export to the EU. This is a typical strategy of Community to look for the market of its’ textile products export to third countries, at the same time granting improved access of EU market to the partner countries through the quota system.[[137]](#footnote-137)

As a result, were identified negative trade tendencies for Ukraine. While EU became the main trading partner for Ukraine (except the CIS), with 22,5 percents[[138]](#footnote-138) of share in Ukraine’s total trade, Ukraine’s situation was negligible: from 0,4 percents of EU exports and 0,3 percents of EU imports in 1995, to the decline by 0,1 percent of export and remaining amount of import in 1999. And it seems to look like the initial enthusiasm regarding EU integration disappeared.[[139]](#footnote-139)

Despite the lack of benefit from the trade, at the end of 1999 Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk claimed that country’s chosen foreign policy course towards European integration is supported by 70% of Ukrainians. At the same time, his excuse regarding lack of progress was explained through the need of “political sign” (words confirming Ukraine’s right for the future EU membership included in the EU’s Common Strategy on Ukraine, that was approved in December 1999, in Helsinki) from the EU to accelerate the process of integration. The diplomatic answer, stated that any European state has such a right that makes it unnecessary to include it in the official document. But Ukraine should more concentrate to complete the transition process towards democracy and free market, as so far only 400 out of 10 000 of pieces of country’s legislation met the standards. Accordingly, in the end of 1999, 22 provisions of the PCA were still not met. The main problem with Ukraine was that it was not enough successful in transforming of institutions, economy and society and despite a number of decrees, resolutions, strategies, programmes and reports – significant progress was not achieved.[[140]](#footnote-140)

#### 2.2.1.1. “Two to Tango”

Despite the long list of cooperation principles, objectives and areas, and continuing with a broad range of documents and instruments of the implementation as exchange of the information of the scientific and technical character, mobility programmes for specialists engaged in Research and Technological Development (RTD) and other joint activities, there was a moments of misunderstanding in the initial phase of TACIS as well as in PCA.[[141]](#footnote-141) EU officials had no idea, that such a clear and recognizable terms might be understood differently in other countries. In the Post Soviet space term as “technical assistance” was quite often understood as equipment (not exchange of best practices or information) and in the case of budget – it should be available for implementation (in cash) - not providing of salaries, offices for the EU officials.[[142]](#footnote-142) So the first problems arise in the lack of mutual understanding of the terms, definitions of the programmes and agreements.

There is necessary to emphasize a significant feature of Ukraine when it comes to the engagement or signing agreements. Policy of bilateralism was a country’s sovereignty protective behavior from Ukraine, by limiting the cooperation to strictly economic issues.[[143]](#footnote-143) However, despite the bilateral cooperation, Ukraine as well as other CIS countries expected contractors from different EU countries to speak in “one voice” during implementation of TACIS projects. In the reality it happened in more “nationality directed way”, than locally adapted – accordingly, the nationality of contractors very often determined the promoted administrative or institutional system. So event bigger lack of mutual understanding was due to the different way of “doing the things” by different contractors.[[144]](#footnote-144)

Finally, the programme included re-intallation of democracy in the region, where people had no previous experience or understanding about democracy.[[145]](#footnote-145) Policy of European integration as the main objective in foreign policy was promoted and supported mostly by part of political elite. Accordingly, population were not enough informed (no any public debate), that resulted in lack of understanding and approvement by general population. More than that, many from the business and administrative-political elite in Ukraine had a key business partners and interests not in the territory of EU. Moreover, EU requirements and competition policy would have a significant influence on it. Due to the private interests in the cost/benefits “game” in the case of implementation of EU requirements, representatives of business elite were not big supporters of the reforms.[[146]](#footnote-146) Accordingly, Ukraine’s dependency on Russia’s energy resources and CIS membership had also negative impact on EU integration processes in Ukraine, as CIS and Russia are the targets of business-political elite’s interests. Analysts agree that declarative character of Ukraine’s politics dominates over practical implementation and the things are going slow due to the weak, uncoordinated and incoherent administrative support and state institutions.[[147]](#footnote-147)

Since early 2001 EU agreed that Ukraine started to show significant progress in integration processes, and emphasized it as a priority for the development and stability in the whole Europe. But it was still considered, that there is no need for further promises about Ukraine’s status changes, as the potential of opportunities of the PCA and Strategy of Ukrainian Integration to the EU is still not fully explored. Furthermore, Gothenburg summit in 2001 are considered to present new level of relationships between EU and Ukraine, as for the first time Ukraine was mentioned under the chapter “ The Future of Europe” (previously was in “External Affairs”), underlining future visit of the President of the European Council as sign of support and award regarding Ukraine’s achievements.[[148]](#footnote-148) More than that, in the autumn of the same year, Ukraine got invitation and took a part in European Conference on the issues of international terrorism, drugs trafficking, illegal immigration and border controls. Ukraine translated the signal as country’s major role in the issues discussed.[[149]](#footnote-149) To continue, in the end of 2001 was approved the text of EU Action plan on justice and home affairs in Ukraine.[[150]](#footnote-150) Even more, to respond to the PCA implementation challenges, a new strategy paper was adopted regarding sustainable economic growth and stimulated economic activity for a period of 2002-2004.[[151]](#footnote-151)

### 2.2.2. The Real EU’s Aspirations in the Framework of ENP

The idea about ENP as a policy partly designed short term solution came into public debate in early 2002 to deal with “problem child” – Ukraine that had an intention to become member of EU since its’ independency. Although the accession is the most powerful tool of EU to stimulate country towards reforms, and less ambitious goal – prospects of developed cooperation was not enough for Ukraine anymore, EU was not ready to offer a membership to Ukraine, even if it was the only way to influence the country. The EU preferred orientation towards finding the new ways, how to export security, prosperity and stability in the neighboring countries without membership promise.[[152]](#footnote-152)

The ENP as bilateral policy between EU and 16 closest neighbours[[153]](#footnote-153) was developed on May 2004. Furthermore it was complemented with multilateral and regional partnership incentives: Eastern Partnership (EaP - since May 2009), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED – relaunched in July 2008) and the Black Sea Synergy (BSS - February 2008).[[154]](#footnote-154)

The main objectives were oriented towards deeper political cooperation, common interests and values (democracy, human rights, the rule of law, sustainable development and social cohesion) and integration on economic area.[[155]](#footnote-155) The main principles of ENP include stability, prosperity and good governance perspectives for the “special” closest neighbours of the EU. The expectations of the successful policy implementation and priorities for political and economic reforms in the short to medium term (3-5 years), stated in the Action Plans (or Association Agendas for EaP countries) with every ENP partner country, are the way towards better security situation in the regions of EU neighbourhood.

In the review of 2010 – 2011 of ENP presented “more – for -more” concept. Accordingly, the countries with best achievements regarding democratic reforms will receive greater offers and more ambitious and developed partnership.[[156]](#footnote-156)

However, EU’s aspiration with ENP were much more significant and strategic than just a creation of the territory of peace and prosperity, if look at it in the ”light” of European Security Strategy (ESS, adopted in the December 2003 by the European Council[[157]](#footnote-157)).

ENP definition included the EU’s regional ambitions, emphasized in the ESS - building a security in the EU’s neighborhood (East of the EU and Mediterranean) and maintaining international order through effective multilateralism. It places issue in the highest importance level with a duty to promote the ring of well-governed countries (friends), especially after the “big bang[[158]](#footnote-158)” enlargement in 2004. Accession of the 10 new members represented EU successful efforts to adapt to the rising challenges of the end of Cold War and integrate the East Central Europe (ECE) into political and economic structures.[[159]](#footnote-159) More than that, the newly created framework had something to do with membership aspirations in the partner countries. The clear sign to that is the fact, that although participation in the ENP was offered also to Russia, EU had a possibility to exclude it from potential membership. However, Russia declined participation, responding with more “equal” cooperation idea in 4 areas (economic, security and justice, external security, freedom, research and education). As a result, EU gained a geopolitical competitor with sensitive relation to the countries of ENP in the role of Russia that could create difficulties to address cross-border issues in the future and complicate the mutual relationships.[[160]](#footnote-160)

The above-mentioned issue and territory of EU and Russia’s shared neighbourhood (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) is named as “an economic and diplomatic battlefield”. EU’s efforts to extend the area of peace and stability in the east direction resulted in creation of agenda of competitiveness between EU and Russia, as Russia self-excluded its’ participation in ENP. The following period was characterized with a debate on the European security future, military domain[[161]](#footnote-161) and a new post-Cold War low point (fall) in the relations between EU-Russia. The official launch of ENP in 2004 had a coincidence to experience re-election of President of Russia Vladimir Putin. As a result, Russia’s further foreign policy aspiration was characterized as more assertive and the Moscow’s view on ENP was translated as EU ambitions towards global power status – accordingly, threat in the Russia’s traditional zone of influence. [[162]](#footnote-162)

EU had to meet also challenges and difficulties dealing with partner countries regarding ENP framework and idea by itself. The ENP expressed vision of 2 opposite claims, that from one side it created framework for united and peaceful continent without dividing lines, but from the other side, there were the limits for further enlargement. More than that, the expression of “insiders” and “outsiders” came to the public space. That is not making sense, how many “partnership and cooperation” documents EU offers to non-members, that is not enough big “compensation prize” in the case of countries that are admitted to full membership. And that is not a surprise that the “outsiders” object to stay outside.[[163]](#footnote-163)

Ukraine was not the exception. Despite the fact, that EU clearly admitted the importance of Ukraine as geopolitical neighbor, in the ENP the membership possibility was not included. Accordingly it did create the misunderstanding issues, as “integration” by Ukrainian officials was understood as reforms towards membership in the EU. In contrast, EU defined it as enlargement policy based on following concepts - “all but institutions” or a “wider Europe”.[[164]](#footnote-164) Regarding the lack of future membership perspective in the scope of ENP, Ukraine expressed its’ disappointment and unwillingness to admit such a policy, as it did not present the foreign policy priorities of Ukraine. Despite the fact, Ukraine continued repeatedly ask for document on its’ prospects of membership, Brussel answered with diplomatic silence. So far there was no possibility to talk about membership, but only deep political and economical integration (free trade area, improved partnership on energy issues, visa facilitation etc.) as EU had a doubts that Ukraine is enough motivated to get rid of declarative democratization and prove its’ European Choice with real action. More than that, it should understand that reforms should be made even without a “carrot” of EU membership, as it will have a positive impact and economic and social benefits.[[165]](#footnote-165)

In February 2005 was signed EU-Ukraine Action Plan – bilateral political document oriented on the extension of cooperation between both actors in Justice and Home Affairs.[[166]](#footnote-166) Also in accordance with anti-dumping legislation of EU, Ukraine was announced a market economy in the December 2005. The ninth summit that was held in Kyiv in the end of the year was called as most successful in accordance with EU-Ukraine’s growing mutual interaction and “likelihood” of Ukraine to meet Copehagen economic criteria[[167]](#footnote-167). Promise about membership was again up “in the air” and EU confirmed readiness to start consultations on new agreement with Ukraine, as PCA will expire already in March 2008.[[168]](#footnote-168)

## 2.3. Association Agreement, Pre-conditions and Implementation

AA was officially launched on the 5th of March 2007, but up till that PCA was prolonged, based on mutual agreement. The entry of Ukraine in the WTO in 2008 stimulated negotiations with EU on free trade area (liberalization of movement of services, goods and capital) and economic regulatory policy. Accordingly, on September the form of the new agreement was defined – association type, combining principles of political association and economic integration. The negotiations were completed in the beginning of 2012 with text translations in languages of the EU.[[169]](#footnote-169) The updated EU-Ukraine Association Agenda was endorsed in the middle of 2013.[[170]](#footnote-170)

AA key elements can be grouped in 5 sections: values and principles (democracy, EU values, rule of law, human rights, good governance, freedom, sustainable development and market economy); foreign and security policy (regional issues, WMD, conflict prevention and management, disarmament and nonproliferation); DCFTA (intellectual property rights, EU trade norms and standards, sanitary rules, competition, energy aspects, foreign investment, transit and transport); justice, freedom and security (visa liberalization, rule of law, data protection, money laundering, migration, terrorism, drugs and organized crime) and energy (nuclear issues, security of supply, energy market integration, efficiency and renewable energy sources).[[171]](#footnote-171)

There have been significant setbacks for EU-Ukraine relationships since election of 2010 and the victory of pro-russian Yanukovych. However, the new leader tried to show its’ commitment to the foreign policy priorities regarding deeper engagement and integration with EU and on 22 April (2011) Yanukovych approved National Plan regarding visa liberalization. In the 15th EU-Ukraine summit (2011) was underlined the fact that mutual understanding of AA is reached after 4 Joint Progress Reports. The agreement was initialized in March 2012, welcoming Ukraine’s European Choice. At the same time it was stated, that the performance of Ukraine would determine the engagement between EU and Ukraine. Accordingly, 3 areas were underlined: issues of selective justice, international standards in parliamentary elections of 2012 and reforms of Association Agenda.[[172]](#footnote-172)

Regarding selective justice and especially the request regarding release of Tymoshenko and Yuriy Lutsenko, it was a verbal statement by EU, as it was not included in the text of AA Agenda. There is a range of reforms to ensure independence and effectiveness of judiciary and courts, but nothing about selective justice. More than that, for Yanukovych is would mean, to release a political opponent before the elections of second term presidency, when his own raitings were very low.

The elections of 2012 was “..gerrymandered, not legitimate and full of fraud.[[173]](#footnote-173)” But still EU was not closing the doors in the front of Ukraine’s association, by giving a chance to implement EU reccommendations.[[174]](#footnote-174)The reform matrix, presented by Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle consist of 19 key reforms in 6 areas: political, macro-financial stability, trade and business environment, mobility, energy sector and civil aviation.[[175]](#footnote-175) From one side in Ukraine was welcoming and in consensus with matrix reforms, from other – it created worries about the decline of power of policy makers.

However, there was a decision, made by Cabinet of Ministers on 21st of November 2013, to suspend the preparations to sign AA in a purpose to ensure national security of Ukraine, more detailed analysis of the actions, necessary to implement to recover the loss of the amount of production and direction of trade and economic relations with Russia and other members of CIS, taking into account that the formation of the fair internal market relations between Ukraine and EU are still the main principle of international rights and main economic security of the government. As an alternative for further relations with EU, was a proposal about creation of tripartite commission between EU and Russia to deal with the issues regarding production, directions of trade and economic relations, expansion and promotion of international trade, further market liberalization, harmonization of the regulatory framework to improve conditions for business activities.[[176]](#footnote-176)

To understand and analyze the connection between AA and national security threats is necessary to define national security. Accordingly to the concept of “national security” – it is the protection of vital interests of civil society and state in a purpose to provide sustainable development, identification, prevention and neutralization of actual and potential threats to the national interests. The “threats to national security” are defined as the potential and present events and factors that create danger to the vital national interests. Finally, the national interests are vital natural resources, intellectual and cultural values ​​of the Ukrainian nation, sovereignty, needs of society and state towards progressive development of Ukraine.[[177]](#footnote-177)

The most visible way to examine benefits of the countries that developed closer ties with EU is to look after the similar example from the historical background with Ukraine. There are visible evidences in the cases of Poland and Romania that benefited from cooperation with EU even before membership on the similar rules. There are 3 main benefits from the engagement with EU: higher GDP, higher exports and higher investments. In 1990 Poland’s GDP per capita was only 8% higher in compare to Ukraine, but in 5 years Polish results was 4 times higher. The same happened to the export, in 5 years Poland, from the same starting point with Ukraine, achieved the amount of 2 times higher than Ukraine’s export per capita in 1995. Ukraine had for a half higher exports per capita than Romania in 1990, but after 5 years Romania’s numbers were identical with Ukraine. During 5 years total investments in Ukraine fell by almost a half (42%), but in Poland it rose by 64%. More than that, the statistics of real GDP growth between Ukraine and 10 EU members of 2004 shows, that only Ukraine is experiencing a negative tendencies in this aspect during last two decades (1990 – 2012), 10 EU countries proves average growth from 1,6% - 4,9%. At the same period, Russia’s average growth rate was 1,2.[[178]](#footnote-178) But more on Ukraine – Russia ineraction will be described in the next section.

Accordingly to the national security concept and EU reforms matrix, is hard to find evidencies threatening to the national security of Ukraine. Totally opposit, there are reccomendations to deal with the potential and existent threats of the country. It was a mistake of Ukraine to consider, that only as a full member of EU it will be able to benefit from closer engagement with EU, as previous similar examples shows that significant progress can be identified even before membership. More than that, Ukraine makes it difficult to work with and trust, as it is prefering a ”declarative Europenization” not the real actions. If EU interference in the domestic affairs of Ukraine is seen as a source of national security threats, then it is done only on the Ukraine’s accepted basis of the bilateral agreements and treaties, ENP framework and Eastern Partnership initiative.

Applying to realism lens, it is clear that EU and Russia share responsibility to ensure peace and security in the Europe and has an ambitions towards regional hegemon status. Ukraine’s unwillingness to fullfill the requirements of EU can be explained through the realism, as scepticism towards increased dependence, and in a ”self-help” system security considerations can win over economic benefits. Accordingly, the theory supports the decision of the Ukraine to suspend negotiations to sign AA, as it would mean an increased economic interdependence situation and significant changes in the domestic structures of the country.

# 3. Ukraine – Russia

The chapter will briefly introduce with a common background and cultural ties of Ukraine and Russia, that have a significant impact on the relationships between both countries and the opposit tendencies between East and West of Ukraine towards EU and Russia. Afterwards will be described the ”Russian Factor” in the foreign policy of Ukraine. Ukaine’s growing potential/or effortsto become more assertive, strong and independent international player in the relationships with Russia will be examined, not only through the statements, but also through the real actions in the frameworks as CIS and Customs Union (CU) of Russia. Then will be described dependency pattern regarding economy (mostly energy) between Ukraine and Russia. And finnally, the Russia’s Action Plan for Ukraine of 17th December 2013 will provide the recent Russia’s expectations from Ukraine in foreign policy area, as well as strategy for incorporation of Ukraine in CU.

## 3.1. Pre-history and Development of Relationships between Ukraine and Russia.

Ukraine and Russia have a lot of common history already from the mid-ninth century, when the first organized state – Kievan Rus, on the terrritory of nowadays Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, can be identified. Accrodingly, Kiev, in the uderstanding of Russia is not only a ”mother of Russian cities”, but also a source of Russian and Ukrainian nations.[[179]](#footnote-179) To continue, in 1654 the Treaty of Pereyaslav, signed by Ukrainian leader Khmelnytsky, allowed incorporate Kievan Rus into the Russian Empire for the next 270 years, continuing with 70 years under Soviet Union. The efforts of alliance with Sweden in 1709, resulted in defeat for Swedes, keeping ”Little Russia” (Ukraine) within the Russian Empire. Even more, to deal with the growing nationalism and efforts towards independency, in 1840s there was a ban in the schools regarding use of the Ukrainian language.[[180]](#footnote-180) In 1918, Ukrainian People’s Republic’s try to create an independent state, experienced defeat, when 4 years later pro-Bolshevik marionet government signed the Treaty on the Creation of the Soviet Union on the principle of ”voluntary” joining as Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The main ideas as trust, solidarity and peace resulted in forced collectivization program for farmers (1928) and death (“holodomor[[181]](#footnote-181)”, from 1932 - 1933) of over 10 millions Ukrainians that were “replaced” by large number of imported Russians and other people, without any Ukrainian language knowledges. And event after that, from 1934 – 1939, continued the period of political oppression[[182]](#footnote-182). And despite the fact that in 1991 Ukraine finally became an independent, that was officially recognized by international society, in 2008 in NATO summit Putin represented his colonial attitude towards Ukraine by stating, that Ukraine is not a state. He have been demonstrating his attitude very obviously just recently to the President of Ukraine - Viktor Yanukovych in July 2012, when let him wait for 4 hours without apologies, while Putin spontaneously decided to visit Night Wolves bikers club.[[183]](#footnote-183) It shows that in his own imaginable world map, Ukraine still is a province or suburbs[[184]](#footnote-184) of Russia.[[185]](#footnote-185)

The further subchapter will provide overview on the influence of the Russia in foreign policy of Ukraine after independency.

## 3.2. Russia without Ukraine or The “Russian Factor” in the Foreign Policy of Ukraine

“Millions of Russians are convinced, that without Ukraine not only can there be no great Russia, but that there can not be any kind of Russia at all.”

(Len Karpinskii, *Moskovskie Novosti*, 22 December 1991)[[186]](#footnote-186)

The Treaty of 19 November 1990 was a first step towards good neighbourly relationship between two sovereign states that leaded to the positive Ukrainians vote (90%) in the referendum on independence of Ukraine in 1 December 1991.[[187]](#footnote-187)

The relationships between Ukraine and Russia since the independence of Ukraine have been characterized with many words as: awkward, unstable, conflictual and abnormal. Ukraine’s importance in the eyes of international society was increased, as the boarders of Russia’s moved more than 800 km to the East and created limits to the Russia’s access to the Black Sea. Accordingly, the world’s geopolitics reality was changed. In accordance with previously mentioned, the discussions between Kiev and Moscow were concentrating on many sensitive issues. Between the most significant: Black Sea Fleet and its military base Sevastopol, Crimea territory, Ukraine’s NATO aspirations and the main objective and functions of CIS. Besides that questions as: dispose of the assets and debts of the former Union, the energy debt of Ukraine, NATO enlargement to the East, delimiting of the boarders and the status of the Russian speakers and Russian minorities in the ex-Soviet Republic - Ukraine.[[188]](#footnote-188) It was also a time of uncovering for Ukraine by itself, as in the long history, Russia was dictating and determining Ukraine’s attitude towards itself and world. Accordingly, first 3 years (1991 – 1994) of Ukraine’s independence was characterized by visible Russia’s influence in the foreign policy area.[[189]](#footnote-189) It was identified a clear military threats oriented on absorbtion of Ukraine back to its place as part of Russia in late 1992. During visits of Ukraine’s ambassador to Moscow, Ukraine received direct statement that it should reunite “voluntary” with Russia if wants to obey the war.[[190]](#footnote-190)

The same opinion, but in a more diplomatic way was represented by the first President of Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin (1991 – 1999). He saw a legitimate right for Russia to review the new boarders with new independent neighbours. Even more, his political adviser in the early 1993 told to the diplomats from Western countries do not rush with opening of embassies in Ukraine, as soon there will be necessity to downgrade them to the consulate level and there can not be any kind of talk about political-military relationship.[[191]](#footnote-191)

However, the hegemonic attitude of Russia towards independed Ukraine raised not only the Ukraine’s intentions towards increased security guaranties from the international society (NATO), but also more assertive policy and stronger position against Russia. It might be said that the issue on the Black Sea Fleet and military challenges were partly resolved by signing The Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the Status and Conditions of Presence of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the Territory of Ukraine (May 28, 1997), Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (May 31, 1997) and The Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Use of Airspace of Ukraine and of Airspace Over the Black Sea (July 16, 1999). However, the conflict returned with increating power to the statement of Ukraine in 2008 about not renewing of the lease and necessary for Russian Fleet to leave territory of Sevastopol until May 29, 2017. Status of Fleet is related to the discussions over boarders, sovereignty of Crimea, EU enlargement (also ENP and Eastern Partnership) and aspirations of NATO accession of Ukraine.[[192]](#footnote-192)

In accordance with Crimea, Russia has a “power of possession” (Sevastopol and Crimea under the majority control of Russian officials, Black Sea Fleet personnel) and “power of legitimacy” (in accordance with the inhabitants of the territory – majority ethnic Russians, the strong support of the Russia’s presence is expressed against Ukrainian nationalism). At the same time, Ukraine has only “power of legitimacy” outside the territory of Crimea. The rule of law and TFCP is not enough to won the “love” of Crimea ethnically Russian inhabitants.[[193]](#footnote-193)

The Agreement of May 28th, 1997 permitted to lease the territory to Russia for 20 years – accordingly, till 2017 and keep the main naval base in the Sevastopol, sharing the facilities with Navy of Ukraine. The lease of 18,500 ha of land in Crimea with all the infrastructure and facilities is also a part of the deal. In the result of mutual negotiations, Ukraine agreed to sell its part – providing Russia a gain of 82% of the Fleet. The one-time fee for warships and vessels is approx. $526 million and additional $100 million per year for the rent of facilities.[[194]](#footnote-194)

The Agreement was criticized by nationalists of Russia (Crimea is rightfully owned by Russia as well as Sevastopol is Russian city and there can not be any rent) and Ukraine (Allowance to foreign troops to remain in the territory of Ukraine is forbidden in Constitution of Ukraine). Due to the expirity of the Agreement in 2017, intensified relations between both countries. There have been reported actions about the fact that Russian consulate in Simferopol distributed Russian passports to Ukrainians in September 2008 and $ 34 millions from the Moscow City Hall for the support of “compatriots” abroad in May 2009 for the next 3 years, gas disputes in 2005 and 2009, and a question about Russian language in Ukrainian schools in Crimea territory, that would be encouraging action for Russian nationalist towards referendum in Russian-speaking Crimea to join Russia.[[195]](#footnote-195)

In 2010 with newly elected president Yanukovych, was signed Khrkiv Pact, extending the lease of the Sevastopol to Russia up till 2042. As a reward from Russia was received 30 % reduction in the gas prices (from 2010 – 2019).[[196]](#footnote-196) However, the volume of the constantly existing disputs, despite the signed agreements on territory, boarders and Ukraine’s independence in foreign policy course, and Russia’s heavy-handed strategy (as distribution of passports) gave Kiev a reasonable argument to look for a stronger links with West.

## 3.3. Ukraine – Russia and CIS

The relations between Russia and Ukraine were established immediately after independency of Ukraine in 1991. However, it is obvious, that Russia was still not ready to give a slip on its’ traditional territory in Soviet time or its’ regionally hegemonic, decisive and influential role.

As a prove for that was a signing of “Belavezha Accords” in 8th of December 1991 between Heads of States and Governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, stating demise of the USSR and establishing new Russia lead regional organization for cooperation in trade, finance, lawmaking, security and political, economic, humanitarian and cultural issues between former Soviet Republics – CIS (not surprisingly named also as “Russian Commonwealth”). Besides that, accordingly to the Accords, involved parties should guarantee equality in the rights and freedoms of the citizens, irrespectively of the nationality, also the territorial integrity should be respected and existing boarders – inviolable. Document also included openness of the boarders within CIS and free movement of information, products and citizens.[[197]](#footnote-197)

After almost 2 weeks – on 21st of December 11 countries[[198]](#footnote-198) (excluding Baltic States and Georgia[[199]](#footnote-199)) signed protocol regarding Alma-Ata Declaration, between the common rules and responsibilities were mentioned also rights on self-determination and principles of not involvement into domestic policy, no use of power, military threats, hard or soft power instruments between the participants. Of course, the minority rights were not forgotten. In the military area, the united military-strategic forces and control over nuclear weapons. The participants desire to become nuclear free or neutral state will be respected.[[200]](#footnote-200)

In 1993 was signed the Agreement on the formation of Economic Union, responsible for common rules in the economic space as coordinated economic policy, taxes, customs, prices and regarding free movement of people, labour, products, services and capital. In October 2000 was signed an Agreement on launch of Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). In 2003 4 participant-countries[[201]](#footnote-201) - signed an Agreement on creation of Common Economic Space (CES).[[202]](#footnote-202)

From the first look, it might seem as “from declarative point of view” – CIS was developing, but the reality and unsatisfaction of the participants showed opposite tendency. In the period of 2003 – 2005 3 participants of CIS experienced “colour revolutions”: Georgia – Rose Revolution (2003); Ukraine - Orange Revolution (2004) and Kyrgyzstan - Tulip Revolution (2005). The new governments of Ukraine and 2 other countries defined very clear pro-Western direction and anti-Kremlin stance. And Moldova was seemed to follow the lead.

In 2004, Georgia expressed its’ stand, that CIS is a history and Georgia’s future potential is together with NATO, that leads to incompatibility with participation in The Council of Defense Ministers[[203]](#footnote-203). In 2005, Ukraine reminded about its’ participant’s status, not a member’s[[204]](#footnote-204) and that accordingly, it is considering about halting the financial contributions to the association. More than that, it is not unite about “superstates” potential of CIS country and rights to influence decisions of national government, or delegate the status of international law and neither to represent the country in the international bodies. Ukraine is against any constructions of federative or confederative character in the territory of post-Soviet Union. Ukraine will not take part in the politically – military structures of CIS and is against creation of such. It believes in the rights of every participant of the CIS to determine the foreign policy and the activities within association independently. Accordingly, the future potential of the Ukraine is related with integration into European and Euroatlantic structures. As a result, in 2005 also Turkmenistan downgraded status to associate member.[[205]](#footnote-205)

CIS was experiencing crisis and in 2007 it was said by the secretary of Russian Security Council, that at this moment EurAsEC is more competent to unite and handle an issues of the biggest CIS countries.[[206]](#footnote-206)

## 3.4. Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) – as a Solution for the Failure of CIS, an Alternative for the EU’s Eastern Partnership or a Strategic Trap?

The foundation of is dated since January 1995, when the treaty on the creation of a Customs Union between Russia Kazahstan and Belarus was signed. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined later (1996 and 1997 accordingy). With Putin in the President’s position, project of Customs Union gained more rapid and ambitious development and in October 2000 EurAsEC reached the form of fully-fledged organization with a gravity center by Russia. [[207]](#footnote-207)

In 2006, Uzbekistan joined to the 5 other participants[[208]](#footnote-208), but already in 2008, suspended country’s participation. Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia were satisfied with promised observer status (in 2002 and 2003 accordingly). UN General Assembly (GA) recognized EurAsEC as legal international body and in 2003 granted observer status. In 2007, the resolution “Cooperation between the UN and EurAsEC” was adopted.[[209]](#footnote-209)

However, here the efforts did no stop. In 2006, during the Interstate Council meeting was made a decision about creation of customs union through the framework of EurAsEC: Belarus, Kazahstan and Russia would become a founding members. The membership possibilities for other countries would be offered in accordance with readiness of economies. The agreements on legal basis were signed after a year with a perspective to create a strong organization for regional integration.[[210]](#footnote-210)

As the main task of the ECU project will be advanced economic integration. It will be a single economic space with common regulation in macroeconomic, financial operations and competition, including harmonization measures of the energy and transport policies. Of course, the idea from the CIS about common market of labour, capital and goods was not forgotten. It is expected that the ECU will become fully-fledged in 2015. More than that, the system of rules was introduced in harmony with WTO regime and international requirements.[[211]](#footnote-211)

However, as it happens not for the first time, Putin in his rhetoric about the ECU are not in the consensus with reality. Although ECU received interest from the partners from Vietnam to Syria, that will not be enough to rejoin the post-Soviet territory in economic agglomeration. To gain the geopolitically important position in the region would require Ukraine’s participation in the Union as full member (due to the size of population, territory, economy and location). An observer status would create the same threats as in CIS Ukraine’s associate member’s status – that ECU will not be able to offer more than “pictures and handshakes”. Accordingly, Ukraine became “battleground” between EU and Russia in the crossroads between Association Agreement (including DCFTA) and membership in ECU. It urged also EU to revisit its’ framework for “external governance” towards shared eastern neighbourhood, looking for the recent challenges and future scenarios in the ECU context.[[212]](#footnote-212)

Even before Russia’s attempts to engage Ukraine in the ECU, there were many doubts about the real benefits. Kazahstan’s involvement in the CU was the reason of delay in the accession to the WTO. Despite the laud promises about harmonization of the norms with WTO, the membership was the reason of “discrepancies” in the external tariffs. At the same time, Russia joined WTO by itself in contrast to the “bloc’s” original propose. More than that, World Bank’s study in 2012 found evidences that Kazahstan’s membership is the reason to the loss of productivity. The problem is identified in the forced action to increase trade with members and decrease with nonmembers.[[213]](#footnote-213) The Union actual aim is to become a dominant regional organization in the post-Soviet territory with Moscow’s controlled architecture. As an evidence for that is Russia’s strategic considerations, how to keep its’ superior bargaining power. Although there might be decisions, requiring qualified majority, the weight of the votes are 57%, 21,5% and 21,5% (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan accordingly). Russia will need a support of one member to achieve the agreement, but two other members voting jointly cannot achieve majority.[[214]](#footnote-214)

The action in the territory of EU monopoly requested also Russia, to look more specific, what ECU has to offer to Ukraine in comparement with EU. Putin presented arguments of gains and looses analysis emphasizing negative costs of DCFTA and benefits of ECU membership. Russia promised increased GDP in the period of 2011 – 2030 to the amount of $ 219 billion (In 2010 it was $ 165 billion) as a result of ECU membership. In contrast, Ukraine in the DCFTA, Russia estimates Ukraine’s lose of 1,5% of GDP base volume. Of course, the reduced gas prices were a part of the story, promising benefit of $ 8 billion per annum. The maintaince of the access to Russian market was promised as well. However, in the case of DCFTA, there might be products, subjected to quotas. The biggest threats prognosis is regarding uncompetitiveness of Ukrainian goods in the market of EU. Accordingly, aviation, ship - building industries and agriculture will experience the hardest hit And the membership by itself is more than EU offers. More than that, in the framework of ECU, full unconditional membership rights will provide possibility to vote on the decisions, but DCFTA do not include any Ukraine’s influence on the EU rules, but just compliance and implementation. Finally, Russia expressed the claim that it will not take so long, when EU will have a wish to join in the dialogue with ECU. Accordingly, countries of ECU will integrate and join EU on the better conditions and more faster. [[215]](#footnote-215)

Such a “wolfs promises to the sheep before dinner” can not be taken seriously. Russia’s ECU was created for purpose to stop the post-Soviet countries in their efforts towards EU membership. More than that, membership in ECU would be in the contrast to the membership in EU, as they both are economically oriented unions and the same country can not be member of both. That is sure, that in the case of membership, Russia would strategically create the punishment measures for countries, that wanted to withdraw from ECU and join EU.

Of course, Russia after the presenting of “carrots”, was threatening with “sticks” against Ukraine, as close of customs boarders or trade sanctions or loss of observers status in Customs Union in the case of “unfriendly” policy. The visible example was already in 2011, blocking some cheese products due to food safety standards. The same repeated also as a ban on Ukrainian chocolate and other sweet products from one of the biggest pro-European owner factories “Roshen”[[216]](#footnote-216) and extra customs inspections on the import from Ukraine, to push Kiev to drop the “suicide” agreement with EU.[[217]](#footnote-217) In 2012 Ukraine addressed the issue about politically motivated trade sanctions, but as it was visible afterwards, it did not stop Russia to repeat its’ behavior in the future. [[218]](#footnote-218)

The EU’s mistake was, that it did not respond to the Russia’s costs and benefits claims in Ukraine, as it was sure about its’ “power of attractiveness” and Ukraine’s vector in foreign policy, proved over the years. It also did not estimated the significance of Ukraine for Russia adequately on the basis of history, its’ regional status, ambitions and economic instrument.[[219]](#footnote-219) In a result the increase of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2013 (January – September) was almost 2 times lower, accordingly $ 1270,2 mln. versus 2599,6 mln. in 2012. Between the main investors, Russia is 4th ($ 3842,1 mln.) after Cyprus ($18712,0 mln.), Germany ($6194,8 mln.) and the Netherlands ($5504,0 mln.). More crucial changes can be identified in the import and export amounts. If in 2011 the amounts were $88,8 bln. and $82,2 bln., and in 2012 - already 91,4 and 82,3 accordingly, in 2013 – only 61,5 and $ 55,7 bln. That shows negative growth rate of trade as -8,6% in import and -8,8% in export. The breakdown can be seen in the comparement between 2012 and 2013 in the export (decline of 1,2%) and import (decline of 2,7%) with Russia. The industries, experiencing the negative impact are vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment (-1,5%) and mineral products (-4,1%) in import and products of chemical and allied industries (-0,1%) and vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment (-3,3%). It is visible that Russia engaged the other CIS members in its trade war against Ukraine, as also Belarussia’s import with Ukraine shows decrease of -1,5%. The changes in market with all other main partner countries has a more or less significant grow.[[220]](#footnote-220) Regarding gas market, since 2012 can be identified decree in the imported amount of gas from Naftogaz Ukrainy (Russian gas) from 44.8 bcm[[221]](#footnote-221) in 2011 to 32,94 bcm in 2012 and 27.9 bcm in 2013. The price that was only 130 $/mcm in 2007 increased to 414 $/mcm in 2013. [[222]](#footnote-222)

As a result on 17 December 2013, President of Ukraine – Yanukovych, and President of Russia – Putin, signed an Action Plan for bilateral trade (2013 – 2014) to deal with restrictions. Government of Russia also decided to make an investment in the National Welfare fund, to the sum of $15 billion. Russia also rewarded Ukraine’s decision on prioritizing of trade relationships with Russia by signing amendment regarding lower price for the gas - to $268.50 for 1,000 cubic metres, but only temporarly. Although, EU accused Russia about pressing Ukraine to join the Customs Union instead of the AA with EU, Putin emphasized that there was no talk about joining Customs Union.[[223]](#footnote-223)

So what would be the potential scenarious for Ukraine as a part of Eurasian Customs Union?

Population of Russia is 142 470 000 (2014), the total amount of Ukraine (44 291 000), Belarus (9 608 000), Kazahstan (17 949 000), Kyrgyzstan (5604 000) and Armenia (3061 000) is only 80 513 000. Accordingly, 62,89% of the total population of Customs Union are located in Russia. GDP of Russia in terms of purchasing power parity (2013) is $ 2.553 trillion, but sum of 5 countries: Ukraine - $ 337 billion, Belarus - $ 150 billion, Kazahstan - $ 243 billion, Kyrgystan - $14 billion, Armenia - $ 20 billion would create only 23% in compare of Russia’s 77%. The same dominance of Russia is also in GDP, accordingly to official currency exchange rates, with 81,3% (Russia) and 18,7% (5 other countries together). Without any public statements, it is clear, that CU is a Russia’s leaded project (also called “Russia and the satellites”) to provide the framework for realization of its’ interests and excluding the possibility of “unfriendly” decisions.[[224]](#footnote-224)

In August 2013 so “called” leaked official information was published in the one of the “gossip” newspapers, as it was named by Russian officials. The question about, weather it was a strategic propagandist purpose, that such a strategy on incorporation of Ukraine in the Customs Union of Russia is published, or it really was a leaked information, is not answered, but accordingly to official statement by Russia, they requested an opinion of the experts on the situation with Ukraine ant it was unofficial recommended plan for the action without any legal basis. Ukraine had no doubts about documents source, as it has expressions, typical to “Russia’s” hegemonic ambitions as “coercion” and “forcing”. The 3 main objectives: prevent Ukraine’s efforts to sign AA, create the network of influential pro-Russian organizations and incorporation of Ukraine into Customs Union of Russia and Single Economic Space till beginning of 2015 should be achieved through the strategic action of Ukrainian politician Viktor Medvedchuk and his party - Ukraine's Choice civic movement. However, the Ukraine raised hopes that maybe this document would finally get EU’s attention, to look more seriously on Russia’s economic, political, ideological, attempts towards Ukraine.[[225]](#footnote-225)

There are no doubts about Russia’s role in the decision of suspension the preparations to sign AA. It has historical, cultural, strategic, security and economic reasons for that. More than that, it “hits” Ukraine with economic sanctions in the period, when Ukraine still did not manage to recover from the consequences of financial crisis in 2008, as makes it more “painful”. More than that, mass media propaganda works as fears increasing factor for Ukraine about potential consequences, refusing Russia. While in the phase before the decision towards East or West, Russia was full of promises, after the official statement of suspension, membership in Customs Union is not even the first topic to discuss.

# Conclusions

The dissolution of Soviet Union uncovered a new geopolitical reality for Ukraine, Russia and EU. The longtime stereotypes about location and place of international actors have changed. Ukraine’s will to increase distance with Russia and engage in the cooperation with EU was an “alarm” for Russia and the goal to achieve for EU. Accordingly to the goal of the research towards indication and understanding of different factors in the context that was mutually interacting and influencing an environment in which the decision was made, changed geopolitical reality would be as one of the first and most significant factors. It stimulated EU to strive for power maximization possibilities, to maintain peace in the continent and Russia to look for possibilities to keep the former zone of influence under Moscow’s control. Everything was new with EU – the terminology, language, accountability mechanisms and “soft” nature of requirements. But it was still hard to get rid of the Soviet heritage – widespread government corruption, mass media control, abuse of power and violations of justice and human rights. Ukraine was a country “in between”: not anymore part of Soviet Union and not yet the part of EU. Accordingly, a broad range of programmes, documents, strategies, action plans was signed to “made” Ukraine more “Europenized”.

Research was devoted to the problem question - Why the Ukraine suspended the preparations for signing an Association Agreement? And the answer was examined through 2 most common views – official statement of government regarding threats to national security and pressure form Russia.

The analysis, through the historical description of development of relations, provide the opportunity to see the main intentions of Ukraine. It never wanted EU values and norms, and the officials in the government institutions and business elite were satisfied with existent system. Ukraine wanted only free trade area and EU membership. However, EU, every time kept the promise “in the air” without any documented formulation. Also Association Agreement, had no any membership perspective, but to get an access to free trade area, Ukraine had to fulfill 19 requirements, that actually would influence mostly the ones who agreed on it (political elite). Of course, there were no any threats to national security in accordance with a text of Association Agenda or EU recommendations. The problem here actually arises due to the fact, that mass media addressed the issues, by mentioning only a part of the government’s statement. The sentences as the decision had been taken to protect Ukraine's national security or in the interests of national security does not really explains the full idea of suspension. As it is explained in the original document. Suspension is in a purpose to ensure national security of Ukraine, provide more detailed analysis, to recover the loss of Russia’s and CIS market, recommending EU to start negotiations with Russia on creation of tripartite commission. This is seen as the best form for resolution and discussions on the economic related issues. The full text actually is a confirming argument for second focus, regarding Russia’s pressure on Ukraine. It is said “between the lines”, that by signing AA, Ukraine is loosing the access to Russia’s and CIS market (Russia’s economic sanctions), and Ukraine is expecting from the EU solutions for this loss, or in the other case it might create significant economic difficulties, lead to market instability, that is a threat to national interests, accordingly to the strategy on national security and definition of the concept. So, although, there were not arguments confirming the statement about national security threats in accordance with AA by itself and EU requirements, argument provided strong basis for confirmation of the second examined focus.

Regarding second focus, about Russia’s influence, is necessary to start with Russia’s “blackmail”, regarding distribution of arguments about disadvantages of signing AA and benefits from joining Customs Union. Actually, from that point of view, as the Russia presented, it really sounded that Customs Union is a better option: Russia promised increased GDP in the period of 2011 – 2030 to the amount of $ 219 billion (In 2010 it was $ 165 billion) as a result of ECU membership. In contrast, Russia estimates Ukraine’s lose of 1,5% of GDP base volume in the DCFTA framework. Of course, the reduced gas prices were a part of the story, promising benefit of $ 8 billion per annum and the maintaince of the access to Russian and CIS market The biggest threats prognosis was regarding uncompetitiveness of Ukrainian goods in the EU market. And finally, the “sensitive” EU membership dream of Ukraine, that still was not included in the Association Agreement. However, in the framework of ECU, full unconditional membership rights will provide possibility to vote on the decisions, despite DCFTA’s stated compliance with EU rules and implementation. Finally, Russia expressed the claim that it will not take so long, when EU will have a wish to join in the dialogue with ECU. Accordingly, countries of ECU then could join EU on the better conditions and more faster. The argument is so unbelievable, as all this “battle” for Ukraine is only in a purpose to keep it and all the other members of CU away from EU.

Worst than that, there were no any reactions from the EU on this type of information. And the fact, that for sure not many of the Ukrainians would spend a time to read 50 pages long agreement, to check if the information is correct. At this point is significant to add, that during authors interview with Stanisalv Kutsenko, that is activist in Ukraine’s politic, on the question to compare the recently signed AA with the AA, that were drafted before suspension – he admitted, that he haven’t read the full text of the new agreement. Accordingly, EU should understand that it is significant to provide a information in the cases, when competitor country is distributing false arguments.

However, the “blackmail” was not enough, so Russia started to use economic sanctions against Ukraine’s products as cheese, chocolate and longer custom checks. 3 years in the row economic indicators as import, export and foreign direct investment presented declined tendencies with Russia and CIS countries that is one of the Ukraine’s largest market.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2013 (January – September) increase was almost 2 times lower, accordingly $ 1270,2 mln. versus 2599,6 mln. in 2012. Between the main investors, Russia is in the 4th ($ 3842,1 mln.) place in the world. In the import of 2012 the amount were 91,4 and export 82,3, already in 2013 – only 61,5 and $ 55,7 bln. Accordingly. That shows negative growth rate of trade as -8,6% in import and -8,8% in export. The breakdown can be seen in the comparement between 2012 and 2013 in the export (decline of 1,2%) and import (decline of 2,7%) with Russia. It was observed that Russia engaged the other CIS members in its trade war against Ukraine, as also Belarussia’s import with Ukraine experienced decrease of -1,5%. Regarding gas market, the price from 130 $/mcm in 2007 increased more than 3 times to 414 $/mcm in 2013. With a negative past, regarding “minus” tendencies in the balance between import and export from EU and even quotas on its’ textile products, Ukraine had no chance to deal with economic situation without borrowing money, even by signing Association Agreement. Accordingly, a borrowed money from IMF follows with strict regulation in the economy of the state that creates loss of sovereignty in this aspect.

As a result Action Plan between Ukraine and Russia, agreed before the significant decision on suspension, but signed on 17 December 2013 provided Russia’s offered solutions for all the Russia’s created economic problems, as investment in the National Welfare fund, to the sum of $15 billion, 30% lower price for the gas - to $268.50 for 1,000 cubic metres (but only temporarly – till the next dispute?).

Due to the past with Soviet Union, Ukraine prioritizes national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty over everything – even economic gains. Accordingly, only increase of requirements and no potential of EU membership and voting rights in the Union to represent its’ interest was not that, what Ukraine was striving for. More than that, technocratic attitude towards Ukraine’s efforts to get some attention on Russia’s hard power actions was only increasing Ukraine’s doubts about signing agreement.

To the question, if Ukraine would sign the Agreement if there wouldn’t be pressure from Russia, most probably yes, but it is also sure, that it would be also continuing to strive for development of relationships with Russia and observers status in Customs Union at the same time.

Regarding chosen theoretical framework, the economic independence concept of defensive neorealism provides a significant input to understand Ukraine’s fears and preferences, accordingly – less dependence and national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity over relative economic gains. More than that, it also shows Ukraine’s place between two great powers. It has to accept the rules that the stronger states create. Ukraine tries to reduce dependency and choose from whom it will depend, but as a result of decision, things are as it was before.

In the case of different perspective on the issue, as for example “the failure of EU to sign agreement with Ukraine”, there could be another theoretical framework applied as neoliberalism and game theory approach to find out the reasons of not cooperation.

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