

## UKRAINE – A FREEZING OR A FROZEN CONFLICT?

OR: “RUSSIANS ARE ALREADY IN THE CUPBOARD?”\*

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As events in Syria and Europe are painting an increasingly dark future of the region and the multilateral dimensions of the political ties between East and West, the conflict in Ukraine seems to lose its importance. There was a time when more publications appeared on this topic, but now the situation in Ukraine looks like a new frozen conflict– or at least a conflict in a process of freezing. One of the key elements of long term conflict resolution is the better understanding of opposite sides. Most of the articles available in English are focusing on the Ukrainian “network” of dimensions or exclusively western opinions and sources. If we want to find a longer term resolution, we may also need to understand the Russian dimension of the problem. According to the old saying: “if you want to understand a man, walk a mile in his shoes”. The writer of this study invites the reader for a walk in Russian “valenkis”<sup>1</sup> towards a better understanding of the on-going conflict in Eastern Europe.

### Thesis, aims and method

*Thesis:* According to Leopold Pospisil (1971) “law should be studied as an integral part of the cultural whole, not regarded as an autonomous institution.”<sup>2</sup> If we take a closer look at the roots of the Ukrainian crisis we can declare that one of the main problems is the same geo-economic orientation of the European Union and the Russian Federation towards Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> If we analyse the problem a bit deeper, we can also see the shade of the geopolitical interests of the United States of America in the background. Washington cannot show direct impact on Ukraine, but if Kiev forms a more EU-friendly political direction it means that it moves closer to the United States as well (“my friend’s friend is my friend”).

*The Ukrainian crisis has been one of the most dangerous situations in Europe’s history since the end of the 80’s because it could lead to a second cold war.*<sup>4</sup> However, if we consider the fact that since 2008 the economic situation (global economic crisis) has been really

\* „Fragment from the famous Hungarian movie „A tizedes meg a többiek” (“The Corporal and Co.”, 1965) directed by KELETI Márton (MAFILM-3). (*Az oroszok már a spájzban vannak.*)

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional Russian winter footwear.

<sup>2</sup> Leopold POSPISIL: *Anthropology of Law – A Comparative Theory* (Harper & Row 1971) p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Дмитрий ТРЕНИН: *Украина и новый раскол* (Московский Центр Карнеги, июль 2014) p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Dmitri TRENIN: *The Crisis in Crimea Could Lead the World into a Second Cold War* (March 2, 2014, Guardian). See also: FARKAS Ádám: *Észrevételek és javaslatok a fegyveres védelem egyes szabályozási kérdéseihez az ukrán válság és a nemzetközi terrorizmus legújabb kihívásai tükrében* <http://blszk.sze.hu/images/Dokumentumok/diskurzus/2015/farkas.pdf>



familiar to the situation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century just before the First World War, we can make not only a bad, but an even worse case scenario.<sup>5</sup>

*Aims:* The aims of the research were to define the most likely results of the Ukrainian conflict and find an acceptable Hungarian perspective for the *ius post bellum* period.

*Method:* The applied research method was the analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian-EU connections in the mirror of the paradigms of cultural anthropology, anthropology of law and history of law.

### Energy and economy as key factors

The European Union as an economic and political organization of sovereign countries and Hungary as a member state of the European Union and a sovereign country have long term energetic and economic goals with the Russian Federation. Hungary and Ukraine are neighbouring countries, so it is true: Russians are already in the cupboard. The question is the following: is it a problem for us or not? A conflict in a neighbouring country definitely has its negative effects. But we must consider that “these Russians” are not the “same Russians” as they were about 60 years ago. We have to keep distance from the well-known anti-Russian stereotypes based on the communist Soviet Union’s heritage. Russia brings something useful that we are not able to buy on a rentable price from anywhere else. An impressive part of natural gas for Hungary and for the European Union is coming from the Russian Federation. At least 60% (more realistically 70%) of the total amount of Hungarian and 30% of European natural gas are coming from Russia and it seems that we need to cooperate with Russia on a long term.<sup>6</sup> The Russian Federation can sell useful natural gas for us but we have to be careful with the price we pay for this energy source.

The question to be asked has three parts:

- ❖ is the relatively cheap gas worth the deeper political interdependence, or
- ❖ should we pay a bit more and follow our own way, or
- ❖ should we diversify our sources as much as we can?

Quoting president Putin’s favourite phrase when he talks about the Russian foreign and security policy: we must be pragmatic. Before the Ukrainian crises, the price of natural gas for Ukrainian “brothers” had been around 283 USD/1000 m<sup>3</sup>, right after the escalation of the crisis “Gazprom” raised prices by more than 30%. In comparison: Lithuania, who first “betrayed” the Soviet Union, payed 370 USD/1000 m<sup>3</sup>. That is why the arrivals of the “Independence” LNG terminal to the port of Klaipeda was an

<sup>5</sup> TÓTH Benedek: *A jog és a gazdaság megváltozó viszonyrendszere* (In: Európai Jog, 2013/5. szám, pp. 1-16.)

<sup>6</sup> More about this topic: *Roadmap – EU-Russia Energy Cooperation until 2050* (March 2013) [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/2013\\_03\\_eu\\_russia\\_roadmap\\_2050\\_sign ed.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/2013_03_eu_russia_roadmap_2050_sign ed.pdf)

important step towards political and energy independence for Lithuania.<sup>7</sup> However, the terminal, which was constructed by a Lithuanian – Norwegian – South-Korean cooperation and can cover the 20% of the Baltic States annual gas needs (more optimistic voices say 90% or more), cannot solve Lithuania's entire energy problem but it can help to take a deep breath. (Lithuania is not able to finance the terminal and other states from the Baltic are not eager to join to the project. Estonia and Finland decided to build an LNG-terminal for themselves. Latvia does not comment the Lithuanian LNG terminal.)

Not only the traditional Russian oil and gas supply places are doing well, new sources are also discovered. However, because of the low oil prices and the strong ties between the Russian GDP and the oil-incomes, the Russian economy is in a slow but unstoppable decline. At the Arctic zone the Russian Rosneft's and the American Exxon Mobil's common project successfully found a new oil and natural gas field under the sea (around 450 billion cubic meters gas and 100 million tons of oil). It makes the Moscow-Washington relations more painful for the Americans. Sanctions were introduced against Russia because of the Kremlin's Ukrainian involvement, the sanctions also targeting Rosneft, so Exxon declared withdrawal from the project, which means that they were sharing the research costs and they were not able to see any incomes because of their own decision.<sup>8</sup>

*Russia seems to be a large marketplace for European states* where one can easily sell its quality products (especially if it is quality food or electronic high tech that Russians cannot produce on a rentable price). So Russia is, or more precisely was an excellent market for EU before the sanctions<sup>9</sup> and the embargo, which have double characteristics. These Janus-faced sanctions (as humanitarian interventions)<sup>10</sup> and embargo have at least as many disadvantages for the EU countries as for Russia.<sup>11</sup> As the Hungarian foreign affairs and trade minister declared in an interview to the

<sup>7</sup> Keith JOHNSON: *Lithuania Cheers 'Independence'* (27th October, 2014)

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/27/lithuania-cheers-independence/> (downloaded: 12th November, 2015) See also: *O63op* (independent Lithuanian weekly journal), (30th October – 5th November 2014) p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> JAKUS Ibolya főszerk.: *Sarkvidéki fűrészesek* (In: HVG, 2014. október 4.) p.71.

<sup>9</sup> Statement by the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on further EU restrictive measures against Russia

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/144839.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/144839.pdf). See also: Note of 16 December 2014 (C(2014)9950 final) See also: Commission Guidance note on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 (25th of September 2015) [http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu\\_sanctions/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu_sanctions/index_en.htm)

<sup>10</sup> SÜLYÖK Gábor: *A humanitárius intervenció elmélete és gyakorlata* (PhD dissertation, Miskolc, 2003) p. 30. [http://193.6.1.94:9080/JaDoX\\_Portlets/documents/document\\_5742\\_section\\_992.pdf](http://193.6.1.94:9080/JaDoX_Portlets/documents/document_5742_section_992.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Hungary loses 50 million forints (around 170 000 EUR)/day because of the sanctions against Russia. Russia was the third biggest economic partner of Hungary (now it is about on the thirteenth place). Hungary lost 12% of its export to Russia and CIS in 2014. Just a short example: Hungarian farmers who are involved in apple business are knocked out by the sanctions against Russia, while Russia can buy agricultural products from Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan and several other places. 13% of the Lithuanian GDP is coming from logistics – basically export and import from and to Russia. After the Lithuanian president's unfortunate speech about "Russia, the terrorist state", Russians strengthened the custom control on the Russian-Lithuanian border causing 4% GDP fall to the Lithuanians.

Financial Times, the sanctions against Russia have problematic side effects; they did not change Moscow's behaviour, while Central European export is suffering the consequences. The same concerns appeared in the German, Czech, Slovak government, while Poland and Baltic States are supporting the hard line policy.<sup>12</sup> However, it is questionable how hard this hard line policy is. Even the ambassador of the European Union, Vigaudas Ushackas stated that although the sanctions against Russia are not pointless and endless, their role is to help to stabilize the situation in Ukraine and they see some positive effects but the sanctions themselves are not able to solve the conflict.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand: it seems quite unwise to develop economic embargos against Russia, if the main aim of the EU extension towards the Ukraine is gaining a “market place”. EU loses more than it can ever get.

The sanctions and the embargo have their negative effects on the Russian economy: the production of the Russian Federation in the first 9 months of 2015 fell by 5,2%, compared with the same period of the previous year.<sup>14</sup> The import substitution mechanism of the Russian authorities is not effective and it is questionable whether it will ever work and whether Russia can lower its own import-dependence.<sup>15</sup>

Production index (comparison of first 9 months of 2014 and 2015)

Production Index of the Russian Federation (first 9 months of 2015 compared with the same interval of 2014)	
General	-5,2%
Food	+1,9%
Textile	-13,3%
Leather and shoes	-13,7%
Wood and wooden materials	-2,9%
Rubber and plastic	-3,4%
Automobile and mechanical instruments	-13,4%
Transportation instruments	-15,6%
Electric energy, gas and water	-0,6%
Real estate	-7%
Agriculture	+2,4%

It is necessary to ask a couple questions about the Ukraine – Russia – EU triangle, such as:

- ❖ What can the EU offer to Ukraine?
- ❖ What can Russia offer to Ukraine?
- ❖ What can Russia offer to the EU?

In order to answer these questions, first of all, we must consider the cultural, anthropological, legal and historical heritage of this region.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew BYRNE: *Hungary Questions EU Sanctions on Russia* (Financial Times, 16th October, 2014) <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3af681ee-550f-11e4-b616-00144feab7de.html#axzz3GNsvfD43>

<sup>13</sup> Полина ХИМШИАШВИЛИ: *Санкциями конфликтам не решить* (In: Литовский Курьерь, No. 44 (1027) 30 октября – 5 ноября 2014) p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> <http://realnovremya.ru/analytics/16227> (Downloaded: 27th of October, 2015)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.janes.com/article/51989/russian-naval-production-has-idled-admits-rogozin>

## States of the ex-Soviet Union

*It is a generally accepted view that CIS countries have different cultural and social heritage than European countries.* Some parts of Russia geographically belong to Europe, but the culture, society, everyday life, and local habits of the Russian Federation rather form an Asian empire (like India, or China) than a European state. The number of population, the federal structure, the non-nation-state character also endorses this statement. The European cultural border on the East was almost the same as the border of the Roman Empire, the line of the Danube, the *limes*. Huntington (1993) takes this border a little bit eastern; according to him, it was somewhere in the western part of current Ukraine, indicating that the roots of the current conflict are deeper.<sup>16</sup> It is also generally accepted that Europe grew on the base of the Western Roman Empire and the religious inheritance of Rome and the Catholic Christianity, while Russia followed the way of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire and Orthodox Christianity.<sup>17</sup>

*Generally, the Soviet leadership was conscious about separatist ideas.* As was the case with the British Empire and its treatment of colonial countries – one can plea that the Soviet Union formed the borderlines of its republics randomly, without any real ethnic, religious, cultural or geographical conception, just using a map, a liner, an eager administrator and the work was done, but when we conduct a research on the post-Soviet states we can see that most member states of the Soviet Union were designed for a federalist state organization. They have to make concerted efforts to be self-sufficient: they have to build their own infrastructure and deal with issues like the lack of different natural resources which were common in the Soviet Union.

*The structure of some subjects of the Soviet Union did not support the independence.* This state of affairs does not take the oil-rich Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan or the agricultural stronghold Georgia with its sea and hills into consideration. This situation rather refers to the fact that Armenia has its weaknesses – lack of carbo-hydrates, problematic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, etc. – which can be neutralized by Russian help. In Central Asia Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have water but they do not have natural gas. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have gas but they do not have water. Kazakhstan has a special character from this point of view because it was the first Central Asian country under Russian protectorate and it happened quite early, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at least 80 years earlier than anywhere else in the region. It is probably one of the factors why there were not any anti-Russian campaigns even in the '90-s, when the whole Soviet Union was loud of independence movements.<sup>18</sup> The situation is familiar with the always loyal Belarus. Moldova is gradually splitting into two parts: Tiraspol follows the Russian way, while Chisinau – with the help of the Romanian EU passports – lives from its worker migrants. Ukraine has its special character also, not because of its direct economic possibilities but because of its geopolitical dislocation: it is between the EU and Russia, and some of the most important gas supply routes go through its territory.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel P. HUNTINGTON: *The Clash of Civilizations?* Foreign Affairs Summer 1993 pp. 22-46., p.30.  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>  
 (downloaded: 16th November, 2015)

<sup>17</sup> More about this topic: GECSE Géza: *Bizánctól Bizáncig – Az orosz birodalmi gondolat* (Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 2007 ISBN: 9789631959062)

<sup>18</sup> Bradley MAYHEW (et al.): *Central Asia* (Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd., 2010) pp. 34-45.

*After the collapse of the Soviet Union an onslaught of regional problems occurred around Russia: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, South-Ossetian and Abkhaz conflict in Georgia, Transnistrian conflict in Moldova, water, gas, border, ethic and HPP problems all around in Central Asia and the Colour Revolutions. It can be the topic of another study investigating which of these conflicts were internal armed conflicts and which were international armed conflicts.<sup>19</sup> The roots of these conflicts have cultural, religious, ethnic, legal and historical background but the Soviet Union as a centralized state was able if not to solve but at least to handle these problems before its collapse. It seemed that Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine are the most stable allies of Russia.*

### **Russia, Ukraine And The Crimean-Peninsula And Why Is It So Important? Or: “Brothers In Arms”**

*The Crimean-peninsula has strategic importance for the Russian Federation. The current Russian leadership vocalized its opinion several times regarding that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> (Note: they vocalize it several times but it is not sure whether they really mean it. It is not sure whether Russia lost or gained more with the loss of almost failed-states like Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan, the always problematic Fergana-valley and other “dead weights”.) At the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict, Russia had quite a minor chance to reoccupy the Crimean-peninsula so it seemed that it had only one possibility to stop the Eastern expansion of NATO and EU: it must have helped to cut Ukraine into two parts, like it happened with Moldova. The Crimean-peninsula gained its “individual” state status, or at least real territorial autonomy, and then on its own decision, it became a subject of the Russian Federation as the Republic of Crimea, together with the federal city of Sevastopol.<sup>21</sup> Russia would not be afraid any more of the future of its naval base.<sup>22</sup> We can agree with Isaszegi: the main question has been the naval base and the free access of the Russian Navy to the Black-Sea and the Mediterranean.<sup>23</sup>*

<sup>19</sup> SÚLYOK Gábor: *A humanitárius intervenció elmélete és gyakorlata* (PhD dissertation, Miskolc, 2003) p. 47.

[http://193.6.1.94:9080/JaDoX\\_Portlets/documents/document\\_5742\\_section\\_992.pdf](http://193.6.1.94:9080/JaDoX_Portlets/documents/document_5742_section_992.pdf)  
(downloaded: 27th of October, 2015)

<sup>20</sup> Ирина ВОЙЦЕВ: *Зачем Путину Крым?* <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2014/03/03/1179445.shtml>  
(3. марта 2014.)

<sup>21</sup> 18th of March, 2014.

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20604>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> ISASZEGI János (ret.gen.): *Ukrajna és a régió válsága, érdekek csatája* (In.: Honvédségi Szemle 142. évfolyam 2014/4. szám) p. 55.

### Turkish Game<sup>24</sup> – The History of the Crimea

The Crimean-peninsula with its rich cultural foment and semitropical climate has been fought over by the Greeks, Khazars, Tatars, Mongols, Huns, Genoese, Ottomans, Russians, French and British over centuries. In the ancient times the peninsula was inhabited by Greeks and Scythians but the main political problems occurred when Turkic and Slavic people fought for its control. In 1240, Mongols arrived as they shattered the Kyivian Rus and their descendants, the Crimean Tatars formed a khanate there. Later the khanate became a fairly autonomous vassal state of the Ottoman Empire. In 1783, Russians arrived and began a campaign of revenge for the Tatars' slave-trading raids into Russia. Because of this, four to five million Crimean Tatars fled to Turkey, while Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians and Germans were invited to resettle Crimea, however, as we mentioned, Catherina the Great annexed the Crimean-peninsula to the Russian Empire at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Since 1783, the Russian Black Sea Fleet has been dislocating in the Crimea.*<sup>25</sup> Russia wanted to take over the faltering Ottoman Empire, so Tsar Nicholas I sent troops to the Ottoman province of Moldavia in 1854. The British and the French assembled in Varna to protect Istanbul's interests. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ukraine was the most developed part of Russia and the independent Ukrainian Republic was established in 1917, but five years later it became the part of the Soviet Union. In 1928-1933, millions of locals starved to death in the territory of the same Ukraine, where a couple decades ago the most grain had grown in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The Crimean area became a part of Ukraine as a “special gift” from Nikita Hrustsov in 1954 and after the collapse of the Soviet Union it remained as a part of Ukraine, but the Russian Black Sea Fleet – according to a contract between Russia and Ukraine – remained in Sevastopol. Here, we have to declare that the “gifted procedure” was not adequate with Soviet legal standards. The author of this study have not found any legally binding document declaring that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic had the right to solve territorial disputes among member states inside the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup> I found a “secondary source” which even declared that from 27 members of the whole Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic only 13 attended and voted “by common consent” about taking the Crimea from Russia and giving it to Ukraine.<sup>28</sup> But nevertheless, on 19 February 1954, the Presidium made its decision: the Crimean-region

<sup>24</sup> The title is taken from the famous novel of Boris AKUNYIN: *The Turkish Game* ( First Published: Zaharov,1998, ISBN 5-8159-0045-1)

<sup>25</sup>Хронология трех веков Российского Флота  
<http://flot.com/history/kron.htm> (12nd November, 2015)

<sup>26</sup> ISASZEGI, op.cit. p.50.

<sup>27</sup> [http://flot.com/news/dayinhistory/index.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=5275](http://flot.com/news/dayinhistory/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=5275)

„В апреле 1783 года по указу Екатерины II полуостров Крым был взят под юрисдикцию Российской империи... В феврале 1954 года Крымская область передана из состава РСФСР в состав УССР, что было произведено с нарушением действующих конституций РСФСР и СССР.”

<sup>28</sup> Николай СТАРИКОВ–ДМИТРИЙ БЕЛЯЕВ: *Россия Крым История* (Питер, Санкт-Петербург, 2015) сс. 78-91.

went out of bounds of the Russian Soviet Federative Social Republic and became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>29</sup>

The contract between Russia and Ukraine about the dislocation of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea was renewed in 2010 and it made an opportunity for Moscow to rent the naval base until 2042.<sup>30</sup> The Black Sea Fleet was involved in several special operations like the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008, international anti-pirate patrols at Somalia, etc.

The Russian population of the Crimean-peninsula is significantly bigger than the number of population of any other nations in the region. According to the census of 2001, the number of ethnic Russians in Crimea was 1 450 400, while Ukrainians counted 576 600 people. The number of Crimean Tatars was 245 200, in addition, some Belorussians (35 000) and Armenians (10 000) lived on the peninsula. It means that the 58,5% of the population were Russians, 24,4% Ukrainians, 12,1% Crimean Tatars, 1,5% Belorussians, 0,4% Armenians.<sup>31</sup> Russians were in majority, Ukrainians in minority and even some of the Ukrainians prefer to join Russia because of pragmatic economic thinking. Between 26 -7 March 2014, all 193 barracks located in the Crimean became under Russian control. More than 15 000 soldiers of the Ukrainian Army declared that they want to serve in the Russian Army instead of the Ukrainian.<sup>32</sup>

### “Терем –Теремок”<sup>33</sup> or, the tale about the Huge Bear who wanted to live in the cosy but tiny cottage

According to the Russian point of view, the European Union is in a deadlock: Bruxelles cannot cooperate with Moscow as it happened earlier but it does not have the tools to change its policies. The sanctions aim to influence the Russian economy but inside Russia they seem as a clear reason “to wage a battle against foreign influences”.<sup>34</sup> The Ukrainian crisis has changed the political relations between the European Union and Russia. The *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* signed in June 1994 was a promising start, even the *Agreement on a Common Strategy Towards Russia in 1999* was desirable with its general terms like “stable, democratic and prosperous Russia (...) is essential to lasting peace on the continent.” As Utkin (2014) says: “however banal, the strategy’s goal still seems valid and appropriate for both the EU and Russia.”<sup>35</sup> In 2003, the EU-Russia Summit in St Petersburg

<sup>29</sup> Указ Президиума Верховного Совета СССР «О передаче Крымской области из состава РСФСР в состав УССР» Москва, Кремль, 19 февраля 1954 г. In: Николай СТАРИКОВ–ДМИТРИЙ БЕЛЯЕВ: *Россия Крым История* (Питер, Санкт-Петербург, 2015) с. 235.

<sup>30</sup> Соглашение между Украиной и Российской Федерацией по вопросам пребывания Черноморского флота Российской Федерации на территории Украины <http://likbez.org.ua/yanukovych-and-medvedev-agreement-on-black-sea-fleet-of-the-russian-federation-until-2042.html>. See also: Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 29 апреля 2010 г. N 67-ФЗ

<http://www.rg.ru/2010/05/04/flot-dok.html> See also: ISASZEGI, op. cit., p.56.

<sup>31</sup> <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Crimea/>

<sup>32</sup> ISASZEGI, op.cit., p.55.

<sup>33</sup> The first words of a famous Russian tale.

<sup>34</sup> Sergey UTKIN: *A Partnership Gone Wild* (In.: New Eastern Europe, No 4 (XIII)/2014, The Jan Nowak-Jezioranski College of Eastern Europe in Wroclaw), p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> op.cit., p.16.

brought the idea of “*common spaces*”: a space of economy, security, research and education, etc. Unfortunately, the lack of practical steps slowed down the movement. The Kremlin wanted more than just meetings under the umbrella of “*strategic partnership*”. Moscow wanted a common space which would unite Russia and the EU, where decisions had taken by consensus, and rules planned and adapted together as equal partners instead of the mere adaptation of EU law and regulations. This is story is quite the same as the famous Russian folk tale, when the Tiny-tiny Mouse finds a small cottage (EU) and he moves in. After a while comes the Jumping Frog who also wants to live there, so they share the cottage. Then comes the Runner Rabbit who also wants to live there and because there is enough place, they all share the house. Then comes the Cat, the Fox and the Wolf and they live happily but once the Bear arrives also wanting to live together with the other animals, so he presses its huge body into the cottage which collapses. Here, I would like to cite Utkin (2014) again, who sees this problem very well: “*The mainstream analysis suggested that a country of 140 million people could hardly fit in the EU institutions in any foreseeable future. Thus, Russia could either submissively accommodate itself to norms it would probably never have right to set, or find ways to make its voice heard or listened to, even from outside the EU.*”<sup>36</sup>

*The project of Eurasian integration was chosen by Russia as an instrument to vocalize its interests. If the EU has a “take it or leave it” approach towards Russia and tries to “occupy” the post-Soviet step by step, the CIS states could build an advantage from “coming together and building a competitive block which could then negotiate with the EU much more successfully.”*<sup>37</sup> The idea is not new: from one point of view, Russia followed the same method when it constructed Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and tried to make it acceptable as an equal-right counterpart of NATO. From another point of view, the idea is also a “second hand one”, since it is bounded to the Eurasianism, Aleksander Dugin’s International Eurasian Movement and Neo-Eurasianism, too.<sup>38</sup> The problem is that according to Dugin, there is an irresolvable confrontation between the Atlanticist world and Eurasia,<sup>39</sup> this kind of being a paraphrase of Samuel Huntington and his theory about the clash of civilizations. For DUGIN, the Berlin-Moscow axis is crucial in creating a Euroasian Empire, where the two capitals are the symbols of two geopolitical centres of power.<sup>40</sup> “Moscow is the centre of the Russia-dominated space that would include Russia, countries of Northern Balkan Peninsula, Moldova, Ukraine (excluding Western Ukraine), Eastern Belarus, Central Asia and Mongolia. Berlin is the centre of a Germany-dominated space called “Mitteleuropa” that would include Germany, Italy and most of the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Anton SHEKHOVTSON: *Putin’s Brain?* (In.: New Eastern Europe, No. 4 (XIII)/2014) p. 72. See also: <http://www.evrazia.info/article/1915> and: <http://eurasia.com.ru/english.html>

<sup>39</sup> op.cit., 73.o.

<sup>40</sup> More about this topic: Alexander DUGIN: *The Fourth Political Theory* (2012, Arktos) ISBN 978-1-907166-65-5

<sup>41</sup> Shekhovtson, *ibid*

## The realistic future of Ukraine or, the Moldovan and Georgian example

The realistic future of Ukraine is similar to Moldova and Georgia: the territory we previously knew as Ukraine would exist in two or three different parts. There will be a Western-oriented Western-Ukraine, from where people will immigrate to different EU countries, or they just became worker-migrants. The Crimean-peninsula will stay as it is: a Russian stronghold and a place for the Black Sea Fleet. And probably there will be an Eastern-Ukraine with a strong Russian influence and secondary importance (a negotiable part in the Russian-Western dialogue).<sup>42</sup> Three countries of the common neighbourhood of Russia (Georgia, Moldova and recently Ukraine) have already declared their willingness to integrate the EU and it can easily happen that Russia ends up alone, facing the realm where the EU determines the rules,<sup>43</sup> however, the results today are the followings: Moldova split into two: the pro-Western part with the capital of Chisinau and the pro-Russian Transnistria with Tiraspol as a central town. People from the pro-Western part are using their Romanian (EU) passports (a result of Romanian-Moldovan double citizenship) to challenge their luck in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, etc. People from the Transnistrian part are counting on the Russian business. Georgia fell apart: although Abkhazia and South-Ossetia are recognized only by a couple pro-Russian countries (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, etc.), they are *de facto* out of the control of Tbilisi. Ukraine fell apart and the Crimean-peninsula is part of the Russian Federation.

## Questions as conclusions

*Is Ukraine an almost frozen conflict?* It will be frozen because of the lack of understanding. It will be frozen because Russia will never give up its naval base in the Crimean-peninsula and Ukraine will always fight for its so called territorial integrity.<sup>44</sup> And it will be frozen because of the lack of Russian gas. And I hope that only the conflict will be frozen and not people in Ukraine, or Hungary or even Europe because of the lack of Russian gas. Although European countries try to diversify their resource supply routes, these efforts are hardly cost-effective and only can produce results years from now. The quickest (and least cost effective) possible solution would be building LNG terminals, like the 58 already existing ones in Europe. But the decrease in interdependency

<sup>42</sup> TÁLAS Péter: *Az ukrán válság értelmezési kereteiről és az ukrán választásokról* (In: Nemzet és Biztonság, 2014/5. szám) pp. 111-123.

„Egy ilyen helyzetben ugyanis Moszkvának a kelet-ukrán területek – az úgynevezett Dnyeszter-menti Köztársasághoz hasonlatos – befagyasztott konfliktussá alakítása lehet a leghatékonyabb kártyája. Kérdés ugyanakkor, hogy mi lesz a Donyeck-medence újjáépítésével, aligha valószínű ugyanis, hogy Kijev hajlandó lesz egy olyan területet konszolidálni, amelyet továbbra is az oroszok által támogatott szeparatisták birtokolnak, miként kérdéses az is, hogy Moszkva – a fegyveres és politikai támogatáson túl – hajlandó lesz-e forrásokat áldozni a terület újjáépítésére.”

<sup>43</sup> UTKIN, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Anton BEBLER: *Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict* (In: Romanian Journal of European Affairs, Vol. 15. No. 1. March 2015) pp. 35-54.

„The political and legal stand-off between Ukraine and the Russian Federation will undoubtedly continue creating an additional “frozen” conflict in Europe.” p. 53.

between the EU and Russia strengthens the Russian Eurosceptic hardliners. We can agree with Utkin (2014): “The only realistic goals in the view for the coming years are limiting the damage and getting ready for the next political era in the long term. Exchanging punches, on the contrary, makes the damage grow. European institutions have to listen to the companies and business associations that work with Russia. They create and multiply the basic ties between the EU and Russia.”<sup>45</sup> My opinion does not represent any official point of view, it is based on my knowledge of the events; my judgement can also be mistaken but I have the right of free speech and this right is also an obligation: I take my side.

- ❖ First of all, the most important factor is that we have to *keep on the dialogue*. A frozen conflict in our neighbourhood can lead to a new cold war.
- ❖ Russia is not our direct neighbour. But Russia was or neighbour, Russia is our neighbour, Russia will be our neighbour. And a country is not the same as an apartment: we cannot grab all of our stuffs and just move to another place. *We have to live together in peace.*
- ❖ *Political connections are on low point.* As an effect, economic relations are also falling down. So we must strengthen other ties on other spheres: we must build a strong cultural bridge. Russian ballet, theatre, literature...these are valuable thing in any circumstances. Just because of the political divergence, we do not have to divest ourselves of these. Sports and scientific relations are also important, like tourism: Russians love our spas and who once saw the miracle of the white nights in Saint Petersburg, or the collection of Hermitage, Tsarskoye Selo will never forget it.

When I think about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict I have to admit: I prefer the song “Follow the Moscow, down to Gorky Park, listen to the wind of changes”<sup>46</sup> than the other one, about “brothers in arms”<sup>47</sup>. But anyway, being pragmatic: I do not want more war. Hot or cold, it doesn’t matter.

<sup>45</sup> UTKIN,op.cit., p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> Scorpions: Wind of Change (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4RjJKxsamQ>)

<sup>47</sup> Dire Straits: Brothers in Arms (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhdFe3evXpk>)