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INDEX OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfD – Alternative for Germany

CDU – Christian Democratic Union of Germany

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

CSDP – Common Security and Defence Policy

CSU – Christian Social Union in Bavaria

EEAS – European External Action Service

ENP – European Neighbourhood Policy

EU – European Union

EaP – Eastern Partnership

FDP – Free Democratic Party

HR – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

NSS – National Security Strategy

PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

SPD – Social Democratic Party of Germany

TACIS – Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States

TEU – Treaty on European Union

TFEU – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

VP – Vice-President of the European Commission

WTO – World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

The ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 institutionalized the foreign policy dimension in the normative framework of the European Union. The EU engaged in relations with newly independent Russia, framing the relationship as a strategic partnership and adopting fundamental documents to define terms and objectives of future cooperation. One of the key drivers behind the common policy was reunited Germany, which believed in the change through rapprochement and trade. The consequential Russian-Chechen wars, the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, and the start of Russia's war against Ukraine in 2014 led the EU to rethink its Russia policy. Strategic relations slowly evolved into pragmatic selective cooperation. Germany took the lead after the start of the 2014 Russia-Ukraine war, heading main diplomatic initiatives such as the Minsk negotiations and the Normandy format.

Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 resulted in the EU confrontational stance towards its now former trading partner. German foreign policy took a significant U-turn as well. Chancellor Scholz proclaimed strategic change - the “Zeitenwende”, made a historical decision to send military assistance to Ukraine and used strong rhetoric at the EU level, calling for a more swift response to the Russian aggression. At the same time, Germany undeniably has remained in a weak position and shown the lack of materialization of its foreign policy’ change by refusing to supply Ukraine with long-range missiles.

Thus, how Germany's policy toward Russia impacted changes in the European Union's foreign policy towards Russia will constitute the core of this research. This paper focuses on three main pillars. First, it examines the transformation of EU foreign policy towards Russia since the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Second, it observes to what extent German national interests influenced such transformation. Third, the paper evaluates how the EU and German foreign policy towards Russia has changed since the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Accordingly, the influence of German-Russian close relations on the EU foreign policy towards Russia constitutes the main **problem** of this paper. Many member states

supported consensus regarding dealing with Russian "Gazprom" and other state entities that bear an absolute political character in Russia. As an EU de-facto leader, Germany impacted the common foreign and security policy while pursuing its political and economic interests. This influenced the response of the EU towards Russian aggressive acts towards the Chechen Republic, Georgia, Russia's first attempt to occupy Ukraine in 2014, and finally, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine when member states were faced with the urgent challenge of breaking the dependence on Russian energy imports.

The research question: What were the interests behind the German influence on the EU foreign policy towards Russia, and how did they change during the period of 1993-2024?

The object of the study is the EU foreign policy towards Russia.

The subject of this research is German interests in the evolution of EU foreign policy towards Russia from 1993 to 2024.

Thus, **the goal of this paper** is to determine Germany's interests in the transformation of EU foreign policy towards Russia.

According to the research question and goal, **the following tasks** were set:

- 1) establish the theoretical and methodological framework for the study of the EU foreign policy towards Russia;
- 2) define how the European Union's foreign policy is formed and the member states' role in it;
- 3) determine what role Germany plays in the formation of EU foreign policy;
- 4) define the evolution of the German position towards Russia and its influence on the EU's foreign policy from 1993 to 2022;
- 5) define the content of agreements concluded between the EU and Russia and EU and German strategic documents regarding relations with Moscow;
- 6) determine changes in Germany's position and EU policy towards Russia since the start of the latter's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

A mix of **methods** is used to perform the study. Specifically, the **historical approach** aims to determine the evolution of the EU and German policy towards Russia through analysis of primary and secondary sources. The **content analysis** is

used to analyze media coverage of the EU-Russia and Germany-Russia relations, speeches by countries' officials, and the recently adopted strategic documents on the EU and national level. Finally, **the case study** method will help review specific interactions between the EU and Russia and examples of Germany shaping EU policy towards Russia at times of Russian military aggression against neighboring states.

The contribution of this research to the existing volume of literature on the topic lies in using the "complex interdependence" concept developed by prominent IR scholars Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. This neoliberal theoretical concept will be applied to the two-dimensional relationship between the EU and Russia and Germany and Russia, which will help define how complex interdependence contributed to the construction of EU and German policy towards Russia prior to 2022 and whether it is useful for explaining the current context.

The topic of the complex interdependence in EU-Russia relations was touched upon by Huawei (2021), who observes the dynamics of relations after the Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014 and argues that there is a need to replace the old framework with the concept of fragile interdependence that would better explain the conflicting episodes in interdependent relations. The other authors whose papers will constitute a basis for this research on Germany's and EU's foreign policy on Russia include Timmins (2004, 2006) and Hughes (2007), who offer a valuable historical overview of relations between EU and Russia, conclusions of agreements between the two up to 2008, and also details of German coalitions' policies at that time. The works of Forsberg (2016) and Siddi (2018a, 2018b) will also be used to enrich the paper's historical chapter with facts from the more contemporary period, empathizing with the role of energy matters in EU-Russia relations. Research pieces by Tocci (2023) and Mello (2024) will be a valuable addition to the topic of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its impact on the EU and German foreign policy stances.

The relevance of this thesis can be explained by the fact that Russia continues the military attacks against Ukraine despite the already existing framework of international isolation and the elimination of most economic and political relations with the EU and Germany. At the same time, Germany, as an individual EU member state, is the second

biggest supplier of military aid for Ukraine after the US in absolute terms (Kiel Institute, 2024). As decisions on military aid to Ukraine in the EU and Germany are often calculated against the possible retaliation from Russia, this study is relevant in observing features and motives behind the EU, and specifically German policy towards Moscow, to determine how it drives decisions on whether or not supply certain weaponry to Ukraine.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 to the end of April 2024. The present year of 2024 was included in the paper as it covers important for the study events, such as the criminalization of sanctions circumvention by the European Council, the adoption of the 13th sanctions package by the EU, Germany's emerging leadership in creating the air defense coalition to help Ukraine and reveal of major Russian disinformation network in the EU institutions in April 2024.

As **the sources** for this research, there will be used academic articles and book chapters dedicated to the topic of the EU foreign policy towards Russia, publications on the topic of Germany's role in the EU and its relations with Russia, news articles (Der Spiegel, Politico, Euractiv, etc.), European Council press releases and European Commission publications. Eurostat website will be used for an overview of natural gas imports by the EU from Russia in the period 2019-2022, as well as the Eurostat interactive map for energy trade to observe changes in German imports of Russian natural gas from the 1990s to 2022. Apart from it, the normative documents will be observed, such as treaties concluded between the EU and Russia, including The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1994, the 1999 Common strategy of the European Union on Russia, documents related to foreign and security policy such as Strategic Compass for Security and Defense and German National Security Strategy.

The paper **consists of** an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a bibliography, an abstract, and annexes.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF EU FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA AND GERMAN INTERESTS

1.1. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's concept of “complex interdependence”

Some scholars have connected the concept of interdependence with the assumptions of economic, political, and sociological liberalism, for which interdependence is a prerequisite of a more peaceful international society that excludes incentives for states to engage in conflicts (McMillan, 1997, p. 35). On the contrary, realists believe interdependence is the likely cause of future conflict between the involved actors. The realist school relies on the works of Jean Rosseau, who stated that inequality due to asymmetrical interdependence leads to risks of conflict (Hoffman 1963, p. 329, as cited in McMillan, 1997, pp. 40-41).

For this paper, the concept of complex interdependence will constitute the theoretical framework. This concept was developed in 1977 by prominent scholars and representatives of the neoliberal perspective in international relations, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, in their work titled "Power and Interdependence." The authors emphasize that the world is changing and becoming more interconnected. Although the concept and understanding of power politics are meant to challenge and deny the realist views, Nye and Keohane do not exclude the argument that military power and resources may be played out by some actors, even in the interdependent world (Keohane & Nye, 2011).

Authors define *dependence* as the external forces that can determine or affect interstate relations, while interdependence is "mutual dependence" (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 7). While interdependence brings costly effects to interstate exchanges, their relations are not necessarily of mutual benefit (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 8). The asymmetry in interstate-dependent relations also allows a less dependent state to use resources and power for bargaining with another state or party to get the desired political

or economic concessions (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 9). This bargaining strength is closely related to Albert Hirschman's account of economic interdependence in his famous paper "National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade" (Wagner, 1988, pp. 462-463). As Wagner (1988, p. 477) points out, Hirschman's contribution is beneficial regarding economic sanctions. He argues that for an actor, it may be more costly to concede to the demands of another party than to accept the costs of economic punishment in the form of sanctions.

Under "power," which is included in the title of their work, Keohane and Nye (2011, p. 10) mean the ability of a less dependent state to control the resources and potentially impact the outcomes in the relations with its partners by using asymmetries. Depending on the use of power, interdependence is divided into two types: sensitivity and vulnerability. The former defines to what extent changes in one country will bring about costly effects in another and how it will impact the exchanges between the two actors before any alternative framework of policies is developed. For example, the authors mention the oil crises of 1971 and 1973-74, when Western Europe, Japan, and the USA were sensitive to the increasing oil prices due to the absence of new policies (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 10). Vulnerability interdependence can also be observed in times of change, especially external changes that will affect all actors; however, the high or low vulnerability of a country depends on whether it has enough alternative sources to rely on if it has to revert from the exchange of them with another country and what costs those alternatives will incur (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 11).

With the given background, the complex interdependence can be explained in more detail. It is a concept that describes the ideal type of international system, opposite to realist theory. Complex interdependence is built upon three key assumptions. First, it is based on the multiple channels that have become a normality in the globalized world, including informal connections between societies, governments, transnational organizations, and nongovernmental elites (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 28). Such contacts also allow the domestic groups of one country to find partners or create partner coalitions in another, which blurs boundaries between domestic and international politics (Keohane

& Nye, 2011, p. 28). Second, complex interdependence presupposes that there is no hierarchy of issues in interstate relations and that military matters are not always at the top of the agenda. Moreover, domestic policies and foreign ones are closely intertwined, and the policy coordination of both internal and external issues is accompanied by costs (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 27). Finally, when the complex interdependence prevails, the states are reluctant to use military force, however not exclusively: it may be used by governments in relation to other regions or a rival bloc, and at the same time, will be relevant for resolving economic disputes with the partner governments (Keohane & Nye, 2011, pp. 19-21).

There are limitations in relying on Keohane and Nye's work. For instance, the critics of the work sometimes refer to the cases chosen by the authors to demonstrate the complex interdependence conditions, namely in the context of US-Australia and US-Canada relations. As both cases satisfy all the assumptions of the concept, the countries chosen are regarded as liberal democracies. To represent an accurate picture of international politics and to provide solid foundations for theoretical argumentation, authoritarian states had to be included in the examples, too, as argued by Walker (2013, p. 152).

Multiple pieces of research include complex interdependence as the core of their analysis. For example, Hussain et al. (2020) look at Chinese-Pakistani relations through the prism of complex interdependence. They argue that both countries have developed interdependence historically through multiple diplomatic and social channels. The Chinese 2013 initiative to build a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor linking the two major ports of both countries illustrates an attempt to create interdependence. The initiative contributed to the constant flow of Chinese capital into Pakistan's energy sector and interest-free loans to support its economy. Pakistan is a somewhat vulnerable state in these relations due to its lack of domestic resources and capabilities.

Complex interdependence was applied to the case study of China-EU relations, with the former currently becoming the second largest trade partner for the EU (Keyvan, 2020, p. 700). Keyvan (2020, p. 701) reviews the interdependence between the two in economic terms and argues that the trade deficit causes asymmetrical interdependence

between the bloc and China. This asymmetry significantly strengthened amidst the Eurozone crisis, which worsened the economic situation in China and caused some disputes regarding anti-dumping measures imposed by the EU. At that time, the EU encouraged Chinese investments in the region to ensure economic stability in the Union and help increase the euro's value against the dollar. Nevertheless, these interdependent relations differed among EU countries: Germany, France, the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands, as of 2017, imported more goods from China than other member states, with Germany being also the leader in exports to China (Keyvan, 2020, p. 701).

Huawei (2021) argues that other categories of interdependence must be observed while he studies the case of EU-Russia relations. He states that given the deglobalizing tendencies and geopolitical shifts, complex interdependence may not be the proper framework to use as it does not account for the changing nature of international politics. He, therefore, introduces a new *fragile interdependence* that considers reduced interdependence and unstable relations (Huawei, 2021, p. 819). EU-Russia relations thus demonstrate that after the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, there was a reversal in non-energy trade between the two sides. Meanwhile, the gas relations appeared much more resilient and were temporarily suspended due to the conflict. The tendency amid which interdependence on one issue area is being reduced with others being almost unaffected can demonstrate fragility (Huawei, 2021, p. 820).

Despite the limits of complex interdependence, it will be used for present research on the evolution of the EU's Russia policy and the German interests in it for several reasons. Firstly, this theoretical concept has been dominating the field of international relations for decades now and was revisited by its initial creators as well as by other scholars. Secondly, it helps explain the dynamics of relations between Germany and Russia and the EU and Russia, specifically prior to 2022. Finally, the concept developed by Nye and Keohane makes it possible to test it against an actual case of disruption of interdependent relations: the use of military force by one actor (Russia) against another government (Ukraine) and its effect (external costs) on the EU-Russia interdependent relations.

1.2. The EU foreign policy in the context of member states' roles and their national interests

Before moving to the methodological part of the paper, the concept of the EU foreign policy needs to be defined, and in this context, the roles awarded to member states in constructing a Common Foreign and Security Policy should be investigated as well.

Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, European (rather than EU) foreign policy was defined as "the process of foreign policy coordination known as European political cooperation, which began in the 1970s and was upgraded by the Maastricht Treaty into a Common Foreign and Security Policy in 1993 and subsequently amended by the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties" (White, 2004, p. 53). 1997 Amsterdam Treaty introduced a more coherent way of decision-making regarding CFSP by introducing qualified majority voting and "constructive abstention". The Treaty of Nice further continued this job by mandating that the Political and Security Committee be responsible for any crisis management actions (European Parliament, 2023).

2009 Lisbon Treaty gave the EU an impetus to emerge as a new global actor in the international arena. The Treaty created important formal structures to deal with EU external action, such as the double position of High Representative of the Union's Foreign Affairs/Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). It eliminated the rotating national presidency in the Council. Nevertheless, instead of a more concerted and consistent approach to foreign policy and consequent Europeanization, the states could not agree to grant autonomy to the EEAS and aspired explicitly to control the EEAS by pushing through requirements for appointing national diplomats. The European Commission, despite not gaining significant power after Lisbon, still retained its control over the external trade dimension (Aggestam & Bicchi, 2019, p. 517).

Interestingly, the legitimacy and trust of the HR are low among member states' representatives who see the potential threat to their foreign ministers' role in foreign policy-making. HR's functions of agenda-setting and representation previously belonged to the national rotating presidency (Aggestam & Johansson, 2017, p. 1211). However,

member states are still the most critical actors in final decision-making as the process is deemed intergovernmental. They can take over formal High Representative's tasks when he is away or unavailable, along with the tasks they are granted to perform: making proposals and implementing policies agreed upon at the EU level. A vivid example of the legitimacy and leadership of member states is the case of Germany and France being essential representatives of the EU at the Normandy negotiations with Russia and Ukraine (Aggestam & Johansson, 2017, pp. 1214-1215).

The EU foreign policy, in its nature, is quite complex given that since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty, there has been an increase in the cross-loading and informal practices of coalition and group-forming among EU member states. Through the groups of like-minded countries, it has been easier for states to push over their interests at the EU level. In this context, cross-loading means that some member states are mutually influencing each other without the intervention of any mediating subjects at the EU level (Aggestam & Bicchi, 2019, p. 515). Such diversification of policy coordination in the EU could be explained by the significant crises in foreign affairs, particularly Russian aggression against Ukraine and the 2015 migration crisis (Aggestam & Bicchi, 2019, p. 516).

Orenstein and Kelemen (2017) define the major weakness of EU foreign policy as institutional disaggregation. While the EU does have a developed framework of CSDP and CFSP, it still cannot prevent the member states from pursuing their foreign policies that often contradict the common foreign policy of the EU. Notably, it is proven by the so-called EU "Trojan horse" problem. As the Russia-Ukraine war since 2014 showed, the EU managed to develop and agree unanimously on the sanctions regime against Russia. However, it did not prevent the states from acting as "Trojan horses" by building even closer ties with the aggressor state by making Russia the sole supplier of nuclear energy fuel by Hungary or granting access to Russian naval ships by Cyprus to its ports (Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017, pp. 87–88).

As the EU normative framework defines, in issues pertinent to CFSP, member states do act unanimously except in a few cases mentioned in Article 31 of the TEU. Final decisions are made during the meetings at the Foreign Affairs Council (Federal Foreign

Office, n.d.). European Parliament and Commission can also have a say in CFSP through their budgetary powers. Although CFSP exists in line with member states' foreign policies, they must ensure the support of CFSP objectives and cannot act contrary to them according to Article 24 of the TEU (Federal Foreign Office, n.d.). The legal framework of what constitutes the overall EU foreign policy includes multiple acts. For instance, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) has provisions regarding CFSP/CSDP, whereas the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) defines external policies on which the EU Council and Commission share power. However, it is the Lisbon Treaty that brings up the close relationship between the "external dimension," "EU external action," and CFSP together in a more coherent set of positions and institutions to deal with a common foreign policy (Pichon & Dobрева, 2019).

The specific interest of this research lies in Germany's priorities in its European policy (policy aimed at the EU). After the reunification of Germany during the 1990s, the German approach was all about adaptation and support of a more integrated Union, widening and expanding EU structures to the CEE countries, and further enhancement of the CFSP. This list of interests remained constant even when Germany saw internal changes, such as new political parties in power (Zawadzka, 2021, p. 114). Therefore, the fundamental ideas during the period, which have been preserved till now, included the reconciliation with Poland through even more integration in Europe, close economic cooperation with CEE states, and adaptation of Germany's civilian power model to its European policy (Böttger and Jopp 2017, p. 5, as cited in Zawadzka, 2021, p. 115). The ideas of multilateralism and the federalist approach are most evident in German support first of the European Constitutional Treaty and later the Lisbon Treaty, which meant giving more supranational power to the new institutions and Commissions (Zawadzka, 2021, p.116). Aggestam and Hyde-Price (2020, pp. 10-12) argue that the role of Germany in CFSP can be characterized by the situational leadership that Germany now and then takes on itself amid the changing nature of the geopolitical situation in the region and expectations from other actors. Leadership in this context has to be understood as a social role or a process through which the actor influences or tries to influence others in a group to achieve collective goals (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2020).

There is also a need to define the concept of “national interests” that drive German impact on the EU Russia policy. From the liberal perspective, national interests are the compilation of the ideas, values, and preferences of various stakeholders, which the state defends and supports in the international and regional arena (Giusti, 2022, p.41). Liberalism thus shifts focus in the national interest to the domestic groups and individuals and allocates significance to public opinion in formulating national interests (Giusti, 2022, p. 48). Realists, on the contrary, define national interests as the response to external threats and fears (Giusti, 2022, pp. 41-66).

Keohane and Nye (1987, p. 749) argue that the national interests of the state can undergo changes with the regime or leadership change or through the process of learning. They cite Ernst B. Haas, who perceived learning as the ability of states to understand the reasons for the negative effects of interdependence and, as a result, develop more effective policies to achieve the state’s goals (Keohane & Nye, 1987, p. 750). Such learning can be either incremental or the result of a crisis, such as the 1938 Munich Agreement or the invasion of Afghanistan (Keohane & Nye, 1987, p. 751).

The present study of German interests in the evolution of EU foreign policy toward Russia will rely on the liberal definition of “national interests” and on the basic distinction of state interests presented by Donald Nuechterlein (1976). Nuechterlein (1976) distinguishes between defense, economic, world order, and ideological interests. Moreover, he argues that they may have different intensities and thus may be survival, vital, major, or peripheral. The intensity concept means that there are issues in other countries with which a certain state leader may be more or less concerned, depending on their consistency with the state’s values, interests, as well as other factors (Nuechterlein, 1976, p. 248). Accordingly, there may be some trade-offs between the above-mentioned interests. For instance, the country may sacrifice ideological and world order interests to maintain essential economic cooperation with the country that underwent the coup (Nuechterlein, 1976, p. 249). This classification, with further detail, is summarized in Table 1.1. (Annexes, p. 67).

1.3. Methodology for the study of the German and EU foreign policy towards Russia

Content analysis will be used to analyze the media articles, as well as primary sources. It was chosen as the widespread method meant for the analysis of communication, whether verbal or visual (Pashakhanlou, 2017, p. 449), and a helpful tool to define how the state's interests are framed (Giusti, 2022, p. 41). To be more specific, the types of content analysis include qualitative and quantitative analysis that utilizes computer technology and instruments that can define the frequencies of words used or the language used. In this study, qualitative manual content analysis will be used as it can be applied to "how" research questions and, therefore, aligns with the thesis research question (Pashakhanlou, 2017, p. 449). Specifically, the content of German and European media articles and primary sources will be observed to define how the EU and German perceptions of Russia changed since the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and how those changes were communicated through the news articles and EU and German strategic documents. D'Amato and Terlizzi (2022) use qualitative content analysis as the main method in their research on the EU strategic counterterrorism debate revoked by the 2015-2017 terrorist attacks in the EU countries. The analysis of the text data using content analysis helped the authors to confirm that whereas the EU has clear objectives on counterterrorism in its strategic documents, it still lacks clarity on the threats that are to be countered and the precise layout of policy measures.

Another method used will be a case study. A *case* is a class of events that bring up the author's interest (George, 1979, as cited in Bennett, 2004, p. 21). A case study involves analyzing a particular facet of a historical event rather than just observing the whole event (Bennett, 2004). This method allows for observing the causal links between specific events and features the researcher seeks, dictated by the research question and goal. Thus, the case study method has room for flexibility (Gerring, 2007, p. 33). Case studies also can have explanatory power. When the theory is used in the case analysis, the researcher can conclude that the historical event was predicted according to the theory or vice versa (Bennett, 2004, p. 22). Therefore, case studies are particularly useful for testing whether

the theory can explain the outcome or the process being studied. It is worth noting that using case studies also results in selection bias (Bennett, 2004). It adds up to the limits of this research as the list of events chosen for defining the EU policy towards Russia with a specific analysis of German interests behind it does not constitute the whole range of contacts that have taken place between the EU and Russia or Germany, and Russia since 1993. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, the number of cases has to be shortened. The events chosen for the research include the Russia-Chechen wars of 1992-1994 and of 1996-2001, the 2008 Russo-Georgia war, the Nord Stream gas pipeline projects, and the Russia-Ukraine war (2014-2024). Referring to the case study approaches of organizing and reporting qualitative data defined by Patton (2002, p. 439), these cases constitute critical incidents or major events that have tested the complex interdependent relations between the EU countries and Russia and have defined the consequent foreign policy decisions. There are two types of cases used in this study: peripheral and intensive (Gerring, 2007, p. 22). The peripheral cases are used in the historical Chapter II, in which limited details of EU and German policies towards Russia were observed to construct a general picture of relations prior to 2022. An intensive case study of the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine is conducted in the empirical part of the paper, where the measures of the EU and Germany and shifts in policy towards Russia are observed in greater detail.

The set of methodological tools for the present study also includes historical analysis. Specifically, this method is used in qualitative research using secondary and primary historical sources (Thies, 2002, p. 352). In our case, the objects of historical analysis will be EU Commission statements, agreements between the EU and Russia, the European Parliament's resolutions, Germany's National Security Strategy, and the EU Strategic Compass. These documents are available in online archives of the EU Commission, European Council, and German Federal Foreign Office. Secondary sources will include the interpretations of those documents and events that bring significant value to research on EU policy towards Russia by political scientists, international relations scholars, and historians. Statistics can also be used in the historical approach for

evidentiary and illustrative reasons, but the causal explanation is the focus of such research (Thies, 2002, p. 353). As such, the Eurostat data will be an additional source for defining the energy interdependence between the EU and Russia. Again, as with the case of any other method, historical analysis leaves room for the researcher's bias during the selection of primary and secondary sources. The general bias derives from the fact that the research is not credible if much material on the topic is omitted due to the selection process. The second significant bias is caused by the possible favoritism of the researcher toward a single explanation of the event that better fits into the theory the researcher uses (Thies, 2002, p. 355).

CHAPTER II. EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS: FROM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO PRAGMATISM (1993-2022)

2.1. Political and economic scope of EU-Russia relations (1993-2013)

To analyze the scale of complex interdependence between the EU and Russia, the levels of political engagement and non-energy trade between the two sides need to be observed primarily. The historical trace of the EU involvement with Russia shows several important tendencies from 1993 to 2022. This period can be divided into stages, referring partially to the study done by Hughes (2007).

The first stage in the post-Cold War relations between the EU and Russia covers the early 1990s - 1994, characterized by the declarative emphasis on strategic partnership with Russia in the European rhetoric. During the 1993 European Council Copenhagen summit, the EU officially called on CEE states to apply for EU membership while Russia was still processing the loss of its "empire" (Timmins, 2004, p. 359). Russia did not play a major role in the Balkan crisis and was isolated from major international events. Therefore, neither for Moscow nor the EU was cooperation a priority as both had different agendas (Timmins, 2004, p. 359).

Before the Maastricht Treaty came into force, the EU launched aid programs for newly independent states. Contrary to the CEE countries, for countries like Ukraine and Russia, a separate aid program was developed, namely Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), that focused exclusively on economic modernization (Hughes, 2007, pp. 78-79). By the end of the 1990s, when faced with indifference from the Russian leadership, EU policy was focused less on the export of stability and more on avoiding the import of instability (Timmins, 2004, p. 359).

In the second stage (1994-2000), increasing EU dependency on Russian oil and gas called for the institutionalization of the relations. Therefore, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and EU Common Strategy were concluded (Hughes, 2007, p. 78). The 1994 PCA with Russia was adopted during the Cologne Summit under the German Presidency in the European Council (Hughes, 2007, p. 81). Although the

agreement was rather symbolic, it established an important mechanism of biannual high-level summits and regular meetings at different levels between the EU and Russia (Articles 7-8), granted the most-favoured-nation treatment (Article 10), and generally constituted a comprehensive framework for future cooperation in all policy areas (EUR-Lex, 1997). The strategic goal of the agreement was the rapprochement with Russia by economic convergence (Article 6) (EUR-Lex, 1997). From the Russian point of view, though, the PCA offered the tools to gain access to the EU market (Timmins, 2004, p. 360).

EU could influence the democratization processes of CEE countries that clearly aspired to become EU members and saw reforms as a precondition for this primary goal. However, Russia never set such an objective, so it was harder to influence Moscow with the carrot-and-stick mechanism (Timmins, 2004, p. 360). When Putin first came to power as prime minister in 1999, he presented the Russian strategy towards the EU at the Helsinki EU-Russia summit, which clearly indicated Russian unwillingness to become ever part of the EU (Timmins, 2004, p. 365). The PCA limitations were more vivid during the Russian war against the Chechen Republic in 1994 (Timmins, 2004, p. 361). The agreement demonstrated the EU's desire to put economic matters over human rights concerns and continue to conduct pragmatic business as usual with Russia (Hughes, 2007, p. 80). Nevertheless, the EU could not completely ignore the war and thus put off the ratification of PCA until 1997.

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 gave life to the mechanism of common strategies that was eventually abandoned due to its ineffectiveness (Bindi & Angelescu, 2012, p. 35). In particular, it was the Social-Democratic & Green coalition government in Germany that was behind the first EU foreign policy common strategy. The common strategy on Russia was therefore agreed during the Council Vienna summit in 1998, and Germany further led it to the final conclusion at the European Council Cologne summit in 1999. The spirit of the document demonstrated that Germany and EU countries agreed that greater cooperation would lead to a more democratic and economically stable Russia (Timmins, 2004, p. 363).

The euphoria of common strategy was again interrupted by the escalation in the second Russia-Chechen war in August 1999, during which EU countries first expressed sympathy with Russia and later opposed the bombardment of Grozny, still calling Russia the "major partner for the European Union" in its Declaration on Chechnya (Timmins, 2004, p. 364). Due to human rights violations during the Russia-Chechen war of 1999-2000, the TACIS funding was put on hold, and a strategic partnership was frozen at the EU Helsinki summit. EU applied limited trade sanctions by cutting the steel import quotas for Russia by 12% in 2000 (Hughes, 2007, p. 88). Eventually, Russian troops captured Grozny in February 2000 (Timmins, 2004, pp. 364 - 365).

Prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US, the EU leaders were reluctant to comment directly on the Russia-Chechen war and did not develop a clear position. After the start of the War on Terror, member states such as Germany, Italy, the UK, and France openly accepted Putin's rhetoric on so-called "Chechen terrorists". It should be mentioned that prior to that, Moscow actively spread this narrative to convince the EU leaders of the so-called "Chechen terrorism question" (Hughes, 2007, p. 88).

According to the objectives set up in the PCA, the EU-Russia 11th summit in 2003 saw the agreement to create the four Common Spaces in 1) external security; 2) freedom, security, and justice; 3) economy; 4) research, education, and culture (Hughes, 2007, p. 86). The road map for the implementation of these objectives was created in 2005 at the 15th EU-Russia summit (Hughes, 2007, p. 87). At this point in time, the EU was an active proponent of Russian membership in the WTO but required Moscow to ratify the EU Energy Charter (Nițoiu, 2014, p. 236). In terms of economic cooperation, EU recognized Russia as a "market economy" in November 2002 (Canay, 2008, p. 25). As of 2005, the FDI inflow to Russia from EU25 reached €9 billion (Canay, 2008, p. 24). In 2006, Russia was the EU's third largest trading partner, accounting for 6.2% of EU exports and 10% of EU imports of goods (Canay, 2008, p. 24). In 2012, Russia remained the Union's third biggest trade partner after the US and China, with 45% of Russian exports going into the EU, leveling up to 9.7% of EU total external trade (Popescu, 2014, p. 1). However, after Moscow acceded to the WTO in 2012, the year later, the EU filed a complaint to the organization against Russian protectionist measures for recycling imported cars (Nițoiu,

2014, p. 238). The case indicated that EU hopes for market liberalization of Russia did not materialize.

Another point of tensions in this stage, apart from the Russia-Chechen wars, was caused by the Russian preoccupation with the EU enlargement and possible economic consequences for itself. Thus, Moscow even called for economic reparations (Timmins, 2004, p. 361). The tensions became higher, with Russia threatening not to extend the action of the PCA to the new EU member states. The PCA was eventually extended, but the EU-Russia partnership remained pragmatic, with the EU even calling on the UN to condemn human rights abuses in Chechnya (Timmins, 2004).

To coordinate relations with the new neighboring states, the EU developed a new policy instrument, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in 2002, in which Russia refused to participate (Timmins, 2004, p. 368). At the same time, the 2004 enlargement even more contributed to the interdependence between the EU and Russia (Nițoiu, 2014, p. 236). Later, the special dimension of ENP - Eastern Partnership (EaP) was developed to include Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus, as well as three countries of the shared neighborhood in the Southern Caucasus (Averre, 2009, p. 1689). Mainly initiated by Poland and Sweden, the EaP was signed in 2009, but it still did not contain a clear membership perspective for the targeted states (Nițoiu, 2014, pp. 244-245).

In the second half of the 2000s to 2013, or the third stage of relations observed in this subchapter, dissonance grew between the views on how to deal with Russia, which was explicitly evident in the EU response to the Russia-Georgia war in August 2008 (Fix, 2021, p. 45). The lead was taken by Germany and France, which held the presidency in the European Council (Fix, 2021, p. 38). The French shuttle diplomacy was advocated by Germany in opposition to the Poland and Baltic states that viewed the war as a clear indication of Russian aggressive politics (Fix, 2021, p. 39). French President Sarkozy came up with the Six-Point Peace Plan, which the EU immediately adopted on August 13, a day after the end of hostilities (Fix, 2021, p. 40). Although only one condition of proper withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgian territory was completed, Germany advocated for the renewal of political cooperation, and France again called the partnership with Russia “strategic” (Fix, 2021, p. 51). The debate on sanctions, including at the EU

level, took place, but it was linked to the requirement for Russian troops to withdraw. Eventually, no tough restrictive measures were implemented, exempt from the delay of negotiations on new PCA (Fix, 2021, pp. 55 – 56). German diplomats were convinced the just mediation process had to include more and not less cooperation with Russia, and that directly contributed to the return of business as usual with Moscow (Fix, 2021, p. 61). As a result, the Partnership for Modernization was launched on the EU level during the EU-Russia summit in June 2010 (European Commission, 2010).

Since the collapse of the USSR, Germany was the one to trade machinery and engineering commodities to help Russian industry modernize, believing that some day it would become a promising business partner and Germany would be the first to benefit (Karnitschnig & Nöstlinger, 2022). German government started to take leadership in matters dealing with Russia in 1994 when it drafted the foreign policy discussion paper that called for the EU to recognize Russia as a separate political center in Europe (Timmins, 2004, p. 362).

The reasons for Germany's warm relations with Russia inside the EU can be traced back to the 1960s. In 1969, Willy Brandt, Chancellor of West Germany, proclaimed the *Ostpolitik* - reconciliation policy aimed at the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in general (Forsberg, 2016, p. 21). In this policy, Brandt managed to combine both the historical aspect of rethinking Nazi war crimes, the feeling of responsibility, and wider economic and strategic goals of cooperation with the Soviet bloc (Garton Ash, 1993, pp. 298–300, as cited in Siddi, 2018a, p. 41). The advisor to Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr, called the strategy "change through rapprochement" (Kundnani, 2015, p. 112), which later under Chancellor Schröder evolved into "change through trade" (Kundnani, 2015, p. 112).

After the dissolution of the USSR, Chancellor Kohl got along well with Borys Yeltsin but lost elections in 1998 and was replaced by the Red-Green coalition under Schröder (Timmins, 2006, pp. 301-302). The ties with Russia deepened in the 2000s with the development of close personal relations between then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and new Russian president Putin (Siddi, 2018a, p. 41). At this point, the Schröder administration faced the issue of unemployment in reunified Germany, and Russia promised the benefits of new investment, as well as the energy trade that Berlin was

interested in (Timmins, 2006, p. 309). The uncompromised policy line taken by Schröder and SPD was criticized by CDU, FDP, and Greens as ignoring the need for democratic reforms and respect for human rights by Russia (Timmins, 2006, p. 311). It was expected that the new 2005 Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) would be more critical towards the Russian establishment, as she participated in East Germany's dissident movement. However, she continued following the main principles of Ostpolitik (Forsberg, 2016, p. 22). This could also be explained by the fact that the foreign ministry in Germany was taken by the protege of Schröder, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD), who was a known promoter of Ostpolitik (Siddi, 2018a, p. 42). Thus, in the Grand coalition (CDU/CSU and SPD) of 2005-2009, divides were built between German political partisan spectrums, as well as over what was a priority in its foreign policy: interests or values, or dichotomy of both (Yoder, 2015, p. 52). Merkel was more focused on the values agenda, arguing that Russia should respect human rights, as they go hand in hand with economic cooperation. Foreign Minister Steinmeier, at the same time, stated that it was the EU that needed to offer closer integration with Russia to help it become a more democratic state (Yoder, 2015, p. 52).

The relations between Germany and Russia started to deteriorate even before the 2014 Russian aggression against Ukraine. Under the Christian Democratic-Liberal Coalition during 2009-2013, Chancellor Merkel had only a few meetings with then prime minister Putin and was reluctant to use the term "strategic partnership" (Meister, 2014, p. 3). In 2012 the partnership was shadowed by the autocratic oppression of public demonstrations in Russia, the detention of Pussy Riot activists, and the general move of Russia towards an even more authoritarian form of governance (Forsberg, 2016, p. 23). This position materialized in the criticism of the Putin administration by the Bundestag resolution in November 2012 (Forsberg, 2016, pp. 26-27). At the same time, Germany's trade with Russia in 2012 reached a record €80 billion (Siegert, 2013, as cited in Nițoiu, 2014, p. 241). Then, in March 2013, Russia adopted the law on so-called foreign agents that also included German NGOs such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which caused greater protest on the German side (Forsberg, 2016, p. 27). Nevertheless, in the 2013 federal elections in Germany, a new Grand coalition between CDU and SPD parties was

set up in the Bundestag, which continued the bid for Ostpolitik under new Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle (FDP) (Krause, 2023, p. 134).

In this period, Russia, the EU, and Germany were becoming more interdependent not only in economic terms but also in other policy areas. For instance, the people contacts were streamlined by the EU visa liberalization policy. With that being said, between 2009 and 2012, from 3.2 to 6 million visas to enter the EU were issued to Russians annually (Popescu, 2014, p. 3). Apart from that, Germany built strong civil contacts with the Russians. According to Wood (2017, p. 342), almost 12,000 Russian students pursued higher education in Germany in 2015. Annual trade in this period reached €70 billion, and the number of cooperation agreements between universities constituted almost 800 (Wood, 2017, p. 342). However, the numbers were much lower for Germany (only 175 students studying in Russia by 2012), and a significant share of the trade structure was mostly in energy products, with Germany importing €38 billion worth of energy commodities from Russia. German exports to Russia accounted for only €29 billion in 2014, compared to much higher numbers of exports to and imports from the USA, France, and China (Wood, 2017, p. 342).

Overall, the comprehensive historical overview of the period 1993-2022 demonstrates that the economic interests and long-term business plans in cooperation with Russia were of major interest to Germany, overriding the ideological, let alone world-order interests that were not altered by the Russian military aggression in Chechnya or Georgia. Such an approach was extrapolated onto the EU level, which, although it had a more pragmatic and critical stance towards Russian human abuses, failed to use conditionality in its policy towards Moscow and chose to focus on economic cooperation instead.

2.2. Energy cooperation: German lobby (1993-2013)

Energy trade constituted the most significant share of trade volume between EU countries and Russia, simultaneously being the biggest point of confrontation. Moscow was the leading provider of gas, oil, and coal to Europe, along with uranium (Siddi,

2018b, p. 1554). At the same time, gas was the most politicized topic despite not constituting the biggest part of the energy trade structure between the EU and Russia (Siddi, 2018b, p. 1555).

The 1999 common strategy on Russia started the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue, which was launched in 2000. At the same time, the EU adopted the first Green Paper that mentioned the significance of a strategic partnership with Russia and support for big contractual projects such as gas pipelines that were to transit through Hungary and Poland (Hughes, 2007, p. 85). The Russian gas industry remained in need of liberalization and elimination of protectionist policies, with the EU encouraging Russia to sign the Kyoto Protocol on climate change (Timmins, 2004, p. 367).

In the first half of the 2000s, the EU was disproportionately dependent on Russian gas (42% of EU gas imported from Russia) and oil (18%) (Timmins, 2004, p. 358), immersing in the asymmetric interdependence with Russia. As of 2008, Russia accounted for 30% of oil imports and consumption in the EU and 44% of gas imports (Canay, 2008, p. 25), making it the biggest consumer of Russian energy. At the same time, Russia exported more than half of its oil and gas to the EU, which made the sides equally dependent on each other in terms of energy trade (Canay, 2008, p. 25).

In 2005 and beyond, the EU paid even more attention to the energy dialogue with Russia, fearing instability due to the gas wars between Russia and Ukraine in 2005-06 (Hughes, 2007, p. 87). At the time, German gas enterprises BASF and Ruhrgas concluded an agreement with Gazprom on building a 1,200 km North European gas pipeline (or Nord Stream 1) aimed at connecting Vyborg with Greifswald through the Baltic Sea (Hughes, 2007, p. 87). The project was possible due to pro-Russian lobbyists such as Klaus Mangold, chairman of the influential German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (Wintour, 2022). The agreement on the pipeline was signed on September 8, 2005, after Angela Merkel came to power (Wintour, 2022). Moreover, former Chancellor Schröder was appointed as chairman of the board of the Nord Stream pipeline company (Forsberg, 2016, p. 24).

Speaking of influential pro-Russian German lobby in the energy sector, the CORRECTIV and Policy Network Analytics (PNA) prepared the regularly updated

investigative database of German lawyers, politicians, and executives who acted as Russian Gazprom energy lobby (Falcón et al., 2022). The investigation demonstrated the scale of the lobby network reached in a country. Interestingly, most lobbyists, such as Social Democrats, have been acting in the states of former East Germany, such as Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (MV) and one in the eastern state of Saxony, serving as essential entry points for Russia in terms of building gas pipelines. The politicians from these states (mostly affiliated with SPD or CDU) engaged in music festivals, discussions, and cultural events where they could unsuspectingly coordinate. Although such lobbying is not illegal in Germany, it proved the state politicians who got to control more than 50% of Germany's gas supply were out of sight of German authorities (Falcón et al., 2022).

Among those mentioned in the investigation is the VNG Group - the biggest gas importer in Germany. This importer has been concluding long-term contracts with Gazprom since the 1970s, assembling together with Gazprom ownership over German gas storage facilities and organizing conferences with Russian participation, such as the Annual German-Russian Raw Materials Conference held until Covid 19 pandemic (Falcón et al., 2022). Among its regular participants were former federal minister of economy Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) and Saxony's minister-president Michael Kretschmer (CDU). The former, while on the post, actively spoke of lifting sanctions on Russia imposed after the occupation of Crimea (Falcón et al., 2022). The German lobby network included non-profit organizations as well. For instance, a roundtable of German-Russian future forums conducted from 2008 up to 2021 was organized by CDU-affiliated Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and sponsored by the gas supplier VNG, serving as the venue for pro-Russian lobby meetings (Falcón et al., 2022).

Similarly, Wintershall company, the biggest importer of Russian energy supplies, along with Gazprom, held the Petersburg Dialogue, founded in 2001, allegedly to improve civil society contacts and conduct conferences for policy-makers (Meister, 2014, p. 3). The platform served as a venue for German businesses to talk to German politicians about common projects as part of the Partnership for Modernization with Russia. The rules and lists of guests for seminars and other events were controlled by Russian representatives (Meister, 2014, pp. 3-4).

What is also traditional for the pro-Russia business lobby in Germany is the revolving door mechanism, with German businessmen entering politics to promote their interests among politicians or vice versa. For example, Moscow-based lawyer Falk Tischendorf, known as a prominent lobbyist of Russia, was appointed as Russian representative for the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in the VNG network by the Russian embassy (Falcón et al., 2022). Another yet influential foreign trade association worth mentioning is the Ost-Ausschuss or “East Committee,” which has been active since the 1950s and has been a major German lobby in trade with Eastern Europe (Karnitschnig & Nöstlinger, 2022).

During the late 2000s, gas tensions were mostly caused by different uses of power in energy relations. While Russia used geopolitical power, the EU exercised liberal regulatory power (Siddi, 2018b, p.1556). The Russian strategy, specifically that of Gazprom, was built around long-term contracts that ensured its dominance in the EU energy sector. To resolve the issue of long-term delivery contracts, the EU adopted Energy Packages in 2003 and 2009 that were aimed at natural monopolies and making the internal market more diversified and regulated (Bros et al., 2017, p. 23). Particularly, the Third Energy Package in 2009 significantly affected the energy cooperation between Germany and Russia, as it set the rules of the internal energy market. At the same time, the EU gained more voice in energy matters since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, when energy policy became a shared competence as written down in Article 194 of the TFEU (Bros et al., 2017, p. 23). The so-called “Gazprom clause” was added to the Third Energy Package that forbade non-EU states from owning energy distribution assets in the EU (Siddi, 2018b, p.1558). It put pressure on the Gazprom monopoly as well, limiting the scope of use of pipelines, gas transmission, and the building of new pipelines (Bros et al., 2017, p. 24). In 2009, Russia finally declared that it would not join the EU Energy Charter Treaty that allowed third-party access to Russian gas pipelines (Siddi, 2018b, p. 1557).

Eventually, the EU Commission in 2012 opened an antitrust investigation against Gazprom, blaming it for linking its gas prices to oil prices, preventing diversification of EU supplies, and dividing the gas market (Łoskot-Strachota & Zachmann, 2014, p.7).

The EU found the violations and threatened a large fine on Gazprom. Fearing that, Gazprom gave up regulatory power and sought negotiations, in the outcome of which it pledged to reverse unfair practices, and the Commission then officially closed the case in 2018 without imposing any fines (Siddi, 2018b, pp. 1565-1566).

With the 2009 financial crisis, Germany started to buy gas from Qatar and Norway, which cost less than Russian gas. By the end of 2010, supplies from Norway and Russia to Germany almost equaled (Meister, 2014, p. 6). In 2011, Germany introduced the concept of *Energiewende*, meaning the shift to renewables, less nuclear energy, and a more efficient energy market (Bros et al., 2017, p. 24-25). German policy was dual here, too. For instance, it asked for the OPAL pipeline, which connects Nord Stream 1 with the Central European gas pipeline in the Czech Republic, to be excluded from the Third Energy Package, contributing to Gazprom's dominance in the market. On the other hand, Angela Merkel supported the Commission antitrust case against the Russian gas transit monopoly (Meister, 2014, p. 7).

All in all, this subchapter shows that German economic interests in uninterrupted trade with Russia were not only established on the state level but were, more importantly, pushed by the domestic agenda influenced by the widespread network of pro-Russian business lobby inside the country. This proves the significance of domestic interest groups as theorized by liberalism and also makes a point about the role of multiple channels and informal contacts in complex interdependent relations.

2.3. Russia-Ukraine war: EU in-between cooperation and confrontation (2014-2022)

The start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2014, the consequential occupation of Crimea, and the start of the war in the eastern regions of Ukraine came as an external shock to the EU. The Union and Germany followed inconsistent and often double-standard policies in response to the Russian aggression.

Russian aggression put an end to the EU-Russia energy strategic partnership established in 2011 and suspended the EU-Russia energy dialogue (Bros et al., 2017, p.

33). It also put the negotiations regarding the new PCA with the EU on hold. The sanctions imposed by the EU in the initial phase of the war included the individual sanctions on assets and visas for targeted Russian officials and were later followed by broader economic and political measures such as a ban on trade with Crimea, exclusion of Russia from G8 and sectoral decrease in trade in arms, energy and financial sector. Despite this, Russia remained the fifth largest trade partner for the EU until 2021 (European Parliament, 2023), accounting for 5.8% of the EU international trade volume in goods. This included the EU imports from Russia, mostly in fuel and mining commodities, worth €158.5 billion (European Commission, 2023). The EU was also the largest investor in Russia in 2019, with FDI outward stock reaching €311.4 billion. Until 2022, the EU maintained dialogue with the Eurasian Economic Commission - the executive branch of the Russian Customs Union (European Commission, 2023).

In the EU 2016 Global Strategy, the relationship with Russia was framed as a strategic challenge (European External Action Service, 2016). At the same time, the Council developed principles on how to deal with Russia further, and they included selective cooperation in areas of interest for the EU and dialogue with civil society (European Parliament, 2023). EU Commission 2019 resolution concluded that Russia should not be considered a strategic partner for the EU (European Parliament, 2023).

Although the EU had the potential to produce its own oil and gas, its consumption outweighed the levels of production, which made it rely on external suppliers. As of 2015, the EU produced 3.2% of world gas but consumed 11.4%; similarly, the EU produced 1.4% of the world's oil but consumed 13.5% (Dobbs & Kearns, 2016, p. 26). Thus, the Russian gas sector was not a target of EU sanctions and was only indirectly affected by individual and financial sanctions (Bros et al., 2017, p. 35). Contrary to the whole EU, Germany had quite a diversified energy market, and therefore, Russian energy supplies did not account for a large percentage of German imports. For Russia, Germany was the main destination for energy imports (DaDalt & Park, 2020, p. 103). However, with the decline of gas markets in other suppliers, such as the UK and Netherlands, in 2017, 60% of Germany's natural gas was imported from Russia (DaDalt & Park, 2020, p. 116).

According to a study by Forsberg (2016, p. 23), the shift from 2012 to 2015 in Germany's Russia policy signaled significant change, but it was not as dramatic as some journalists framed it. The German policy at the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2014 included three strands: mediating the conflict, supporting sanctions against Russia, and supporting Ukraine but without military assistance (Forsberg, 2016, pp. 28-29). Chancellor Merkel kept supporting Ostpolitik and, in the summer of 2014, she even tried to resolve the conflict by proposing that Russia keep its gas transit through Ukraine in exchange for Ukraine's integration with the EU but promised that the West would not offer accession of Ukraine into NATO (Forsberg, 2016, p. 29). The solution to the conflict was also followed by two Minsk agreements (2014-2015), the talks about the Association Agreement with Ukraine, and even the proposition voiced by Merkel in January 2015 in Davos on concluding the free trade agreement with Moscow (Marie, 2015, pp. 3-4). Later, its Normandy Format initiative, along with France and Minsk agreements, disregarded the reality of the war because Russia, in those negotiations, was representing itself as a mediator and third party (Krause, 2023, p. 140). The downing of the Malaysia Airlines aircraft MH17 on July 17, 2014, by the Russian separatists with the use of the Russian anti-aircraft missile system Buk became a convincing factor for Germany to finally agree on the need to impose stricter sanctions (Krause, 2023, p. 141).

Although Merkel supported sanctions, along with Christian Democrats such as Wolfgang Schäuble, the Social Democrats, traditionally critical of the government, took another side. For instance, a former adviser to Kohl, Horst Teltschik, was among the people who initiated the open letter "Another war in Europe - not in our name", published in *Die Zeit* in 2014 that called for the return of conciliatory policy with Russia and warned against demonizing Russians (Forsberg, 2016, pp. 30-31). The response letter was written by over 100 researchers in Eastern Europe, including a German scholar in Kyiv - Andreas Umland, who called to stop rewarding the aggression (Forsberg, 2016, p. 35).

At the same time, at the Vladivostok Economic Forum on September 4, 2015, the agreement on Nord Stream 2 was signed, and Gazprom would receive in its hands the gas storage facilities in Germany, making it even more dependent on Russia (Wintour, 2022). Collaboration in the project also involved French, Austrian, and Dutch companies

(DaDalt & Park, 2020, p. 117). East Committee chairmen were among those to support Nord Stream 2 and complain about moving away from the Russian market and putting Moscow under sanctions after its occupation of Crimea, as well as in early 2016 when Russia actively bombed Syrian civilians (Karnitschnig & Nöstlinger, 2022).

Böttger and Butylin (2022, p. 44) cite the 2014 Allensbach poll that indicated that 55% of Germans believed Russia to be the aggressor in its war against Ukraine, with 34% blaming so-called separatists. At the same time, East Germans tended to view Russia in a positive light, but more due to economic dependency than historical links, as usually argued. The cyberattack on the Bundestag in the 2021 parliamentary elections contributed to the negative perception of Russia among the German population (Böttger & Butylin, 2022, p. 44). Importantly, after the sanctions were implemented, the German public generally supported the government's foreign policy line (Forsberg, 2016, p. 37).

The Russian war against Ukraine also divided the German lobby. While one business leader, such as Joe Kaeser, chief executive of Siemens, claimed that his company would continue to invest in Russia, others, such as the Federation of German Industries, BASF, and Opel, withheld their business supporting the government policy, with stating that the economic consequences would be harsh (Forsberg, 2016, p. 34).

Whereas Germany has usually been seen as sympathetic to Russia, there are divisions among the political and civil circles on how to deal with Russia, and they became even more evident after the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014. Siddi (2018a, p. 41) mentions two opposing groups. The first is the so-called *Russland-Kritiker*, who take a more harsh stance against Russia and consist of CDU and Green Party representatives. The second group is *Russland-Versteher* (those who “understand Russia”), consisting of Social Democrats, who largely also include business groups and lobbyists. Among the latter are politicians who criticize the Western approach towards Russia and those who openly support the Russian government, such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the CSU. However, the most influential in German foreign policy has been political parties whose representatives take the foreign policy office or the chancellory post (Siddi, 2018a, p. 42). At the outbreak of the Russian occupation of Crimea, Social Democrats took a critical stance, with Steinmeier and Merkel coordinating

sanctions at the EU level and calling Russia a violator of international law. When military de-escalation took place, Social Democrats again shifted to the traditional Ostpolitik in their discourse (Siddi, 2018a, p. 45).

Thus, the German response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 showed the two competing tendencies. While the economic interests remained of major importance, the ideological interests and world order ones could not be left by Germany on the periphery anymore. Such constellation of interests' intensity was also justified by the public opinion in Germany (citizens in the majority supported sanctions and viewed Russia as an aggressor) and business groups (who were reluctant to lose revenues and wanted to return as close to business as usual as possible). Additionally, the common EU response to the initial stage of the Russia-Ukraine war indicated that the member states experienced high vulnerability to the Russian energy supplies in terms of complex interdependent relations, being unable to find alternative sources in a short time period, which thus constrained their overall response to the Russian aggression.

CHAPTER III: RUSSIAN FULL-SCALE INVASION OF UKRAINE AND TURMOIL IN EU AND GERMAN RUSSIA POLICY (2022-2024)

3.1. 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine: EU reaction

Despite the temptations of EU countries to react to Russian amassing of troops near the Ukrainian borders and the existence of vulnerabilities with regard to their dependence on Russian energy sources, the EU response to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was steadfast and more coordinated than expected. It is worth first briefly looking at the restrictive measures taken against Russia and later determining the shifts in EU strategic culture.

Right after the Russian attack, the EU member states accepted millions of Ukrainians fleeing the war by activating for the first time the Temporary Protection Mechanism and providing humanitarian support and assistance at the Ukrainian borders with EU countries. The assistance to Ukraine also included financial and military help, the former being allocated to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility. The EU has also been coordinating efforts with NATO and G7, among others (Consilium, n.d.).

With regard to Russia, at the time of this study, the EU adopted thirteen sanctions packages in total. The first package was adopted right before the Russian invasion, on February 23, against individuals from the Russian Duma who recognized the independence of the occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The second package came out on February 25 and included measures against high-level officials, including Putin and Lavrov (Consilium, n.d.). The latter packages were more comprehensive and included the SWIFT ban on ten Russian and four Belarusian banks, broadcast ban on Russia Today, Sputnik, and Russia 24. The EU also closed the sky to Russian aircraft use and approved sanctions against Belarusians involved in the Russian war against Ukraine (Consilium, n.d.).

Of special importance are the sanctions imposed on the Russian energy and industrial sectors. Particularly, those included the ban on new investments in the Russian energy and mining sector and the cutting of steel and iron imports from Russia, as well

as coal and solid fossil fuels (Consilium, n.d.). In June 2022, the EU agreed on a ban on imports of crude oil (with a transitional period of 6 months) and refined petroleum products (with a transition period of 8 months). However, this package included temporary exceptions for Bulgaria and Croatia, dependent on the Russian pipeline oil supply (Council of the EU, 2022a). With the “maintenance and alignment” package of July 21, 2022, the Council banned Russian gold imports. At that time, concerns arose over bypassing sanctions, and the control was tightened over exports of dual-use products and oil through third countries (Consilium, n.d.).

Another important eighth package included the cap on oil prices for the third countries buying Russian oil transported through maritime routes. In short, this meant that third countries would be restricted from providing logistics for imports of Russian crude oil and petroleum products, and with a price cap, Russian export revenue was about to decrease significantly (Council of the EU, 2022b). In the 10th package, the EU prohibited Russians from gaining access to gas storage facilities in the EU member states. With the number of sanctions violation cases reported, the EU also reiterated the need for states to report on what happens to the Russian frozen assets in the EU. This time, Iranian entities helping Russia with arms components were included in the sanctions list (Consilium, n.d.). The 12th sanctions package introduced the so-called “no russia clause”, prescribing that EU exporters cannot re-export goods, especially of dual-use category, to Russia and put a ban on imports of liquefied propane (Consilium, n.d.).

The last package of sanctions, as of April 2024, was adopted by the EU on February 23, 2024, and targeted North Korean individuals involved in aiding Russia militarily, entities from third countries, such as China, Thailand, and India, that engage in trade with Russian industrial and military sectors and finally individuals involved in the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. Overall, EU sanctions already apply to more than 2000 individuals and entities (Consilium, 2024).

Although the sanctions were indeed comprehensive, the EU faced the problem of preventing their circumvention (Tocci, 2023, p. 2). In this context, the Council decided to add the violation of sanctions to the list of EU crimes in the TFEU in November 2022 (Consilium, n.d.). Progress in this realm was achieved on April 12, 2024, when the

Council eventually adopted the law on common rules that EU members have to follow to prosecute individuals or companies that have violated the sanctions imposed by the EU. The list of criminal offenses includes trade in sanctioned goods, performing sanctioned financial operations, helping with the circumvention of travel bans, and inciting or aiding such criminal offenses (Council of the EU, 2024).

Although the initial EU response to the Russian invasion saw divisions among member states, with France and Germany calling on trying to negotiate with Russia, now the response has grown into a more united one, making closer not only intra-EU relations but also the relations between EU and UK that have been harsh after Brexit (Tocci, 2023, p. 3). The Russian invasion of Ukraine gave new impetus to the EU enlargement process (Casier, 2023). Accordingly, in June 2022, the European Council decided to grant candidate status to Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia, and Herzegovina and renew the cooperation with Western Balkan countries (Casier, 2023, p. 37).

European Parliament has played a distinguished role in the EU policy towards Russia. Parliament's resolution of November 23, 2023, recognized Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism and a country using terrorist means. On an economic scale, among others, the WTO and EU denied Russia the status of most favored nation treatment that allowed its commodities and services to easily enter European markets. Furthermore, the 2007 EU-Russia visa facilitation agreement was suspended (European Parliament, 2023).

The most fearful economic development for most energy-dependent member states has not been realized, meaning that the EU managed the energy crisis well enough by diversifying gas supplies and creating the European Energy Platform to ensure the gas storage facilities would be refilled. The overall EU shift from gas to coal and oil helped to reduce emissions levels in 2022 by 2.5% (Tocci, 2023, p. 4). Challenges, however, persist. China's dominant position in the industry of renewables, batteries, and critical minerals is the trap the EU may want to avoid to not be immersed again into vulnerability interdependence, as was the case with Russia (Tocci, 2023, p. 4). To avoid possible dependence on China, the EU already declared a de-risking strategy (Tocci, 2023, p. 5).

Two years into the Russian full-scale war, EU countries at the Union's and national levels concluded more than 180 agreements with alternative energy suppliers (Kardás,

2024). However, there is still no consistency in common energy policy, with only 14 agreements concluded at the EU level. Moreover, 45 percent of those agreements explicitly focus on the short-term goals of securing a stable supply of gas to become independent of Russia, and they have not yielded fruitful results in achieving European Green Deal goals (Kardaś, 2024). Accordingly, the EU even developed the special instrument *AggregateEU platform* to make joint gas deals with Eastern European countries, including Ukraine and Moldova (Kardaś, 2024). Moreover, the EU adopted the REPowerEU Plan aimed at quickly reducing dependence on Russian energy imports by 2027 and moving forward in a clean energy transition to build a sustainable Energy Union. The main objectives laid down in the plan include diversification, energy saving, substitution of fossil fuels, and a smart combination of reforms and investments (European Commission, 2022).

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, EU-Russia relations had been deteriorating even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The full-scale war, however, brought about a culture shock for the EU foreign and security policy, as Helwig (2023) points out. Not long after the Russian attack on Ukraine, French President Macron organized an informal summit, during which the member states concluded the Versailles declaration, which stated that “Russia brought war back to Europe” (Helwig, 2023, p. 491). The declaration also mentioned the need to enhance the bloc’s defense capabilities and develop European strategic autonomy and resilience (Casier, 2023, p. 37).

In March 2022, the EU adopted the Strategic Compass for Security and Defense, which called Russia “a long-term and direct threat to European security” (European Parliament, 2023). The document serves as the plan to enhance EU security and defense by 2030. In particular, it puts emphasis on acting robustly, securing the citizens from all kinds of threats, investing in critical technologies, and building partnerships (EEAS, 2022, p. 6). Among the innovative measures laid down in the document is the call for creating an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5,000 troops modular force that could be deployed in the crisis zones (EEAS, 2022, p. 11). Significantly, for this study, the document mentions that “interdependence remains important, but it is increasingly conflictual and soft power weaponized,” with technologies and vaccines becoming tools

of political influence (EEAS, 2022, p.14). Overall, the Strategic Compass focuses on the EU's "quantum leap forward" to be able to become a strong security provider and build strategic autonomy (EEAS, 2022, pp.10-23).

Strategic Compass can be perceived as the Union's first-ever defense strategy (Biscop, 2023, p. 2). Among other important objectives in the Strategy are the launch of investment in the defense industry under the European Defense Fund and deterrence against hybrid threats (Biscop, 2023, p. 2). With regard to its implementation, though, the member states are more concerned about developing capabilities at the national level than at the EU level (Biscop, 2023, p. 2). The exemption may be the 2022 European Sky Shield initiative led by Germany, which was joined, apart from EU member states, by Switzerland (Reuters, 2024).

3.2. Germany's new foreign and security policy

The start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 allowed Germany to stay on the fence and maintain the old *Ostpolitik* while actively pursuing conflict resolution through the Minsk negotiations and Normandy format. Therefore, it could be said that Germany followed path dependency in that case. However, the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine forced Germany to choose a completely different path. Before observing the National Security Strategy of Germany, there is a need for an overview of a few different policy changes that took place in Germany after the start of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Whether or not to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine became a question of reputational cost. Thus, even staunch promoters of *Ostpolitik* policy towards Russia, such as the East Committee, changed their rhetoric, declaring support for Western sanctions and Ukraine (Karnitschnig & Nöstlinger, 2022). Another lobby organization that had to stop its activities and distance itself from Russia was the German-Russian Partnership Association, which, up to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, had received €250,000 in total funding from the federal government (*The Lobbying Atlas*, n.d.).

Concerning German politicians, there was mostly regret and feeling of responsibility for not being able to prevent a Russian military attack on its neighbor and for leading a so-called appeasement policy towards Moscow. The realization struck many officials from the previous government. The former defense minister in the Merkel government, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, recognized on the first day of the Russian invasion that the previous policies failed (Knight, 2022). The former Chancellor Schröder also had to admit to the mistakes but still claimed that beyond sanctions, EU countries needed to keep some economic, political, and societal contacts with Russia (Knight, 2022).

One of the prominent examples of admitting to Ostpolitik's failure is the SPD chair Lars Klingbeil, who is among a few SPD politicians who publicly admitted that the policy towards Russia was wrong. In particular, he stated that contrary to the long-standing belief in Germany that European security could only be achieved with Russia, the current situation shows it can only be achieved against Russia (Boyse, 2023). At the same time, the rhetoric of German President Steinmeier, who was a staunch supporter of *change through trade*, has been cautious. He tried to use soft terms such as “failure”, making it sound like German policy towards Russia was a noble desire to achieve peace (Boyse, 2023).

Representatives of the Greens, along with Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, actively called for German self-reflection (Boyse, 2023). In her article for the *Guardian*, Annalena Baerbock wrote that Germany failed to listen to its Eastern European partners' warnings about Russia. Moreover, she stated that: “For decades, German governments pursued what came to be known as “chequebook diplomacy” – the belief that our cash rather than our soldiers should help resolve conflicts.” (Baerbock, 2023). However, former Chancellor Angela Merkel was reluctant to make similar statements but rather defended her policy towards Russia, including energy cooperation, claiming that they were attempts to secure peace and stability (Boyse, 2023).

Just three days before the Russian invasion, due to Moscow's recognition of breakaway regions in Donetsk and Luhansk, Germany finally stepped up to freeze the Nord Stream 2 project. Although the pipeline was ready to function in September 2021,

it was still awaiting certification from the EU and Germany due to the critique of the project (Marsh & Chambers, 2022). Undoubtedly, the stopping of the Nord Stream 2 project identified a major development in Germany's energy policy (Mello, 2024, p.11), as the project had been consistently called a purely economic enterprise by Scholz (Mello, 2024, p.11). Contrary to German beliefs, Nord Stream 2 happened to be a geopolitical project that reduced the interdependence between Russia and Ukraine, allowing Moscow to increase interdependence with Germany while making the invasion of Ukraine less risky in terms of stability of gas supply and revenue (Umland, 2022, p. 93).

The German strategy towards the emerging energy crisis consists of three strands. Those include an increased focus on building infrastructure for liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals that could be used at full capacity in the future and cover half of previous Russian gas (Dennison et al., 2024). Germany updated the Renewable Energy Law, which declares the construction of renewable energy facilities a priority (Dennison et al., 2024). Also, Germany has been a leading country in seeking alternative gas suppliers around the world. Thus, Norway in 2022 already became Germany's biggest gas supplier (Dennison et al., 2024).

In his now famous Sunday speech in Bundestag on February 27, 2022, Olaf Scholz declared that the Russian war against Ukraine is *Zeitenwende*, a so-called “watershed” that brings momentum for change of the long-term perception of Russia in German foreign and security policy (Scholz, 2022). Apart from that, Chancellor Scholz stated that Germany would make a one-time contribution of €100 billion to increase military expenditures and quicker achieve the 2% of GDP defense spending as a NATO member. Moreover, the Chancellor announced that Germany would buy American F-35A fighter jets and unmanned aerial vehicles and would participate in the joint European purchases of tanks and fighter jets (Mello, 2024, p. 2). The one-time surplus budget of €100 billion was followed by the amendment to Article 87a of the German Constitution, “Basic Law,” and stated the following: “(1a) For the purpose of strengthening its ability to honour its alliance obligations and its defence capability, the Federation may establish a special trust with its own credit authorisation for a single amount of up to 100 billion euros” (“Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany,” 2022). Nevertheless, the decision to allocate

€100 billion to the defense budget is criticized because it does not contain a long-term perspective but rather is based on off-the-shelf purchases (Raik & Quencez, 2023, p. 8).

“Zeitenwende” speech was a remarkable step for Olaf Scholz, who was not previously known as a staunch supporter of European integration, came from SPD conservative circles, and served as Hamburg’s mayor and later finance minister in 2017-2021 (Mushaben, 2022, p. 42). The historical speech came even as a surprise to coalition party leaders as the Chancellor prepared it in consultation with only a few advisers (Gathmann et al., 2022). Although Scholz later tried to clarify that declaring *Zeitenwende* was meant to give significance to the consequences of the Russian war against Ukraine and was not about to set the agenda, the changes followed in German foreign policy (Mello, 2024, p. 2). As such, Germany took a historical decision to send 500 Stinger anti-craft systems and 1000 anti-tank weapons to Ukraine, which was before a taboo (Herszenhorn et al., 2022).

The German historical National Security Strategy (NSS) was published in May 2023 (Kamp, 2023). The idea of developing the first NSS traces back to the coalition agreement of the new “traffic-light” government (SPD, Greens, and FDP) in November 2021 (Kamp, 2023, p. 73). However, the Russian invasion streamlined its adoption and ignited larger debates among coalition partners on its wording and content. The project itself was launched by the head of the Foreign Office, Annalena Baerbock, in March 2022 (Kamp, 2023, p. 75).

The NSS is built on three pillars: *robust security* related to the defense capabilities and cooperation with partners; *resilience*, meaning protection from vulnerabilities and evident in the reduction of dependency on Russian energy; *sustainability*, meaning more sustainable development in the face of climate change (The Federal Government, 2023, pp. 6-7). All of these pillars shall together create integrated security (The Federal Government, 2023).

The Strategy contains the notion of German special responsibility for maintaining peace and security in Europe, derived from its historical awareness (The Federal Government, 2023, p. 11). The NSS recognizes that “international economic and financial relations also have a security dimension” and contains a plan to spend 2% of GDP on a

multi-year basis as average according to NATO member goals (The Federal Government, 2023, p. 13). The Strategy states that Russia is “the most significant threat to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area” (The Federal Government, 2023, p. 22). This is a sign that no “Russia first” policy is possible anymore, at least in the foreseeable future, as Kate Hunsen Bundt, Secretary General of the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, mentions (Dempsey, 2023). Another significant development mentioned in the NSS is the German permanent deployment of 4,000 military personnel in Lithuania as part of NATO Eastern flank commitment (Mello, 2024, p. 7).

3.3. EU and Germany's Russia policy: changes and deadlocks

Although the EU sanctions did not target gas imports from Russia, the latter suspended its deliveries by pipelines after it started the invasion of Ukraine, which led to an increase in gas prices (Simeonova, 2023). Explosions on Nord Stream 1&2 pipelines that followed in September 2022 made both of them dysfunctional (Simeonova, 2023). Overall, the imports of Russian natural gas by the EU declined after the invasion. Figure 3.1. (Annexes, p. 68), presenting EU imports of natural gas in the period from 2019-2023, illustrates these tendencies. However, the exceptional increase in the monthly average value of imported Russian gas in 2022 was caused by the hike in prices. Due to EU sanctions, the average value of €5.5 billion worth of imports in the first year of full-scale invasion changed in 2023 to monthly €1.8 billion of Russian natural gas imports in the EU, further continuing to decline (Eurostat, 2024a). At the end of 2023, Russia accounted for a 13% share in EU imports of natural gas compared to 33% at the end of 2021 (Eurostat, 2024b).

However, the imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the EU, on the contrary, increased to 22 bcm (billion cubic meters) in 2022 compared to 16 bcm in 2021. Although the imports of LNG rose, the EU managed to decrease its demand (Darvas et al., 2023, p. 6). The Russian nuclear energy sector has not suffered either due to the opposition from Hungary and Bulgaria. Thus, in 2022, the EU imported Russian nuclear industry products

worth €750 million (Baczynska, 2023). The imports of fertilizers, exempt potash (that is banned), by the EU from Russia in 2022 totaled €2.6 billion (Baczynska, 2023).

The EU also has distinguished 34 minerals as so-called critical raw materials and thus continued to buy them from Russia, funding its mining sector. For instance, European Airbus kept buying titanium and nickel, among others, from Kremlin-affiliated firms (Hansens et al., 2023). The mining sector was not targeted by the EU, much exempt for separate stakeholders, while the US and UK sanctioned Russian individual mining companies (Hansens et al., 2023).

This again raises the question of the double standards used by the EU and the desire to completely halt the trade that brings Moscow billions of euros into its war economy. For instance, between February 2022 and July 2023, due to the existence of subsidiary branches in Germany and the UK, titanium producer Vspo-Avisma (partially owned by Rostec) sold the EU titanium worth \$308 million, according to *Investigate Europe* (Hansens et al., 2023). The Vspo-Avispa is not sanctioned by the EU. The EU, however, has started working on the Critical Raw Materials Act to reduce this dependence (Hansens et al., 2023).

Indeed, there is the problem of circumvention of sanctions. Most evidently, it is achieved through increased EU exports via Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, which are part of the Eurasian Economic Union with Russia (Darvas et al., 2023, p. 5). The most vivid picture demonstrates EU exports of manufacturing goods to Kazakhstan, which rose from €200-400 million in 2015-2021 to €21 billion by the end of 2022. The EU thus decided to ban dual-use goods transit through Russia even if the destinations are third countries (Darvas et al., 2023, p. 10).

Although the seaborne crude oil imports from Russia were sanctioned, the pipeline supply has been in place and continued through the Druzhba pipeline. In January 2023, Germany decided to halt these deliveries, cutting their total value by half compared to the numbers of 2022 (Darvas et al., 2023, p. 7). In general, the decoupling from Russia has been successful for the EU after the embargo on oil imports came into force (Darvas et al., 2023, p. 4).

In terms of German-Russia gas relations (apart from Nord Stream projects), they have been supported since the occupation of Crimea by the Wintershall Dea, a company involved in joint projects with Russian counterparts, with Wintershall being the staunchest proponent of the Nord Stream project (Stefanov et al., 2023). Another German subsidiaries VNG AG and Gazprom Germania worked on the construction of a gas storage site in Peissen, named after the Empress Catherine the Great, and connected with the Yamal pipeline (Stefanov et al., 2023, pp. 20-21). The companies had faced bankruptcy in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine when Russia unilaterally cut supply through Nord Stream 1 (Stefanov et al., 2023, p. 21).

Rosneft also had assets in key German oil sectors, such as the Schwedt oil refinery, which is the last stop of the Druzhba pipeline, which satisfied 25% of German oil demand (Stefanov et al., 2023, p. 22). To somehow control Rosneft actions, the German government took over the Rosneft subsidiary and Gazprom Germania assets in Germany (Stefanov et al., 2023, pp. 22-23). As the EU, Germany has also remained dependent on Russia's nuclear industry imports, with its companies operating closely with Rosatom. A vivid example is German Siemens Energy, which helped Rosatom to construct new nuclear power plants in Russia and recently was involved in building the new Hungarian nuclear power plant Paks II (Stefanov et al., 2023, p. 23).

Giegerich and Schreer (2023) argue that one year later, *Zeitenwende* in Germany was still incomplete, but the main progress was made in reducing energy dependence on Russia. Figure 3.2. (Annexes, p. 68) demonstrates the evolution of German imports of Russian natural gas from the 1990s to 2022. The graphic shows that while the share of Russian natural gas was quite stable in the period prior to 2012, its share began to increase ever since, with 2017 and 2021 being the years when Russia was Germany's biggest supplier of natural gas, on which now it no longer relies. Indeed, in 2021, Russia accounted for 53.6% of Germany's gas imports (Labunski, 2023). In the face of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Germany was one of the most vulnerable states, especially with regard to the energy sector, climate policy, and stable supply vis-a-vis Russia, as the Energy and Climate Security Risk Index showed (Stefanov et al., 2023, p. 1).

In terms of geopolitical change, the actions were less reassuring, and it was not evident whether Germany really perceived Russia as the main threat or just used harsh rhetoric to reassure its commitment to support East-European states (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023, p. 38). For instance, during the Munich Conference, Scholz declared that Putin should not be allowed to dictate the terms of peace in Ukraine instead of saying that Ukraine should win or Russia must be defeated (Vinocur, 2024). After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Germany has been in a difficult position and needed to regain the trust of its partners since its initial and long-term convictions towards Russia were wrong (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023, p. 38).

Accordingly, there is also room for change in public opinion that for decades was against the idea of military culture. The opinion polls conducted in February 2023 showed that only 11% of Germans were ready to defend their country with arms (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023, p. 39). According to the annual Munich Security Index, as of 2024, Germans no longer perceive Russia as the main security threat, giving priority in security concerns to radical Islam and migration (Lynch, 2024).

Despite successful attempts at energy diversification from Russia, Germany still has a wide network of so-called multiple channels developed as a result of complex interdependence with Moscow, including individual lobbies and corporations. As of the end of 2022, there were still 1713 companies affiliated with Russian ownership in Germany (Stefanov et al., 2023). Big German companies have continued to function in Russia, such as the retailer *Metro AG*, which started cooperation with Russian Sberbank and declared it would not leave its employees and customers in Russia (Stefanov et al., 2023).

The Russian disinformation and influence networks continued operating in the EU. The vivid example illustrates a recent Czech investigation into the Voice of Europe, a media outlet located in Prague, the executive of which is Viktor Medvedchuk, who is sanctioned by the EU (Baumgärtner et al., 2024). The channel spread pro-Russian propaganda and conducted interviews with European MPs, including the AfD candidate for EU Parliament elections, Maximilian Krah, and his other AfD colleague, Petr Bystron,

who are suspected of being paid by Russia and China for spreading propaganda (Baumgärtner et al., 2024).

As Mello (2024, p. 4) points out, changes in German foreign policy during 1990-2020 did not amount to the international orientation change, meaning the entire shift of the orientation toward international affairs, the country's role, activities, and goals. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a change in self-perception of the German national power is evident in the article written by Scholz for *Foreign Affairs* in January 2023, where he mentions that Germany continues to be a civilian power and supports multilateralism, but he also states that Germany aims to become a guarantor of European security (Mello, 2024, p. 5). This notion possibly bears the necessity to develop hard security power in the evolving international security system (Mello, 2024, p. 5). However, at the beginning of the warnings of the possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, Germany was very careful in aiding Ukraine, helping only in humanitarian and financial terms. It caused a lot of controversy, particularly with the announcement in January 2022 to send 5,000 helmets to Ukrainians by then German defense minister Christine Lambrecht (Mello, 2024, p. 9). Just before the Russian invasion, Scholz attempted to diplomatically convince Russia to continue the Minsk process during his last visit to Moscow on February 15, 2022 (Rathke, 2022).

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the German Chancellor rather has been the follower than the leader, cautiously acting and fearing escalation from the Russian side (Feldenkirchen et al., 2022). The 76-pages long National Security Strategy also does not mention term "leadership" at all, but only focuses on German "special European responsibilities" (Fix, 2023).

This tendency leaked into the year of 2024 as well. The response to the Russian invasion has been drifting, with US Republicans blocking its aid to Ukraine for six months and the European countries dependent on the US defense capabilities, being unable to satisfy Ukraine's needs in arms (Vinocur, 2024). The dependence in security terms on the US raises serious questions about the EU's own defence capabilities. This matter was even further engraved by US presidential candidate Trump's controversial statement that he would not abide by the alliance defense principle and would encourage Putin to attack

NATO members who do not meet the defense spending requirements (Sullivan, 2024). It should be acknowledged that the 2% of GDP on defense requirement is rather the guide and not a binding commitment for any member state (Sullivan, 2024).

Politico article sees the cautious German strategy as a direct result of the response towards Russian aggression at the beginning of the invasion when it was based more on the fear (by the US and Germany) of Russia's using nuclear weapons and less on the real long-term support for Ukraine to help it win (Vinocur, 2024). Any type of weapon aimed for delivery to Ukraine first went through a cautious analysis of how, how far, and where it would be used on the battlefield (Vinocur, 2024). Such debates surrounded the decision to send German Leopard II tanks and the US Abrams to Ukraine (Vinocur, 2024). Eventually, Scholz approved delivery in January 2023, which was accompanied by the US decision to send Ukraine M1 Abrams tanks (Mello, 2024, p.10). However, the same pattern and long discussions surrounded the deliveries of other arms systems (Vinocur, 2024). At the time of writing this paper, such debate relates to German Taurus cruise missiles, as well as to what to do with €300 billion of Russian frozen assets (Vinocur, 2024). The move not to send Taurus finds, however, public support as well in Germany, according to a poll by YouGov research institute, with 58% of the population standing behind the Chancellor in this case and only 28% supporting the delivery of Taurus (Dpa, 2024). This, however, is not the case in the Bundestag, where opinions differ and critique from Greens and FDP of Scholz grows (Dpa, 2024). Scholz gained the call “peace chancellor”, and his ratings are generally low in Germany along with the harsh economic situation in the country, but interestingly, his policy on Ukraine is the one where he has the population’s support (Karnitschnig, 2024).

At the same time, on separate occasions, Germany showed initiative and leadership. Following the push from the High Representative of the EU, Josep Borell, to search for ammunition for Ukraine in the non-EU countries, Germany started direct negotiations with India on artillery ammunition, while the US Congress was halting its \$61 billion aid package for Ukraine (Court, 2024). Germany has also shown signs of mobilizing the EU for action. For instance, its defense minister, Boris Pistorius, warned

the European partners that the Union could face war with Russia by the end of the decade (Alipour & Michalopoulos, 2023).

Overall, the main change in German foreign policy as a result of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine was the prioritization of its national interests and the drafting of the first NSS. Apparently, the defense interests that were neglected by Germans for many years now became of vital importance. This was also exacerbated by the dynamics in Europe's asymmetrical dependence on US defense capabilities and may continue to be at the top of Germany's agenda, especially with the upcoming uncertainty over the 2024 US presidential elections. However, the substance of the strategic change in Germany is still weak because of the public opinion and overall cautious rhetoric and actions of Chancellor Sholtz when it comes to causing possible escalation with Russia.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the early 1990s, the relations between the EU and Russia and Germany and Russia have been interdependent. The concept of complex interdependence used in this study was proven useful in defining the motives behind German and EU foreign policy decisions. Indeed, EU and German Russia policy was characterized by growing vulnerability, multiple channels, and prioritization of the energy supply over human rights issues and security up to 2022. In Germany, the lobby networks that led to the launch of such big Russian geopolitical projects as Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines were especially active.

Although the EU member states are integrated into the single market, their foreign policy perspectives are determined by national interests rather than the common approach. The Lisbon Treaty institutionalized the common foreign and security policy of the EU, giving more prerogatives to supranational institutions such as the European Commission, including on trade and energy issues. However, the member states remain in support of the intergovernmental approach and maintain autonomy in their foreign policy decision-making.

In this matter, Germany represents a vivid example of a country whose foreign policy decisions often contradicted the EU common foreign policy goals. At the same time, it exposed the ideas of *change through trade* with Russia, the civilian power model, and multilateralism at the EU level. German policy towards Russia followed a bilateral track. Strategic partnership with Russia during the 1990s and 2000s was driven by economic interests, given the German need for economic development and Russian market growth at that time. It was Germany that initiated the institutionalization of EU-Russia relations in the 1990s by pushing for the adoption of PCA and EU Common Strategy, which, in spite of being vague and lacking conditionality, clearly communicated the goal of economic convergence with Russia.

Amidst Russian wars against Chechnya and Georgia, trade and energy interests remained major for the German government and overrode the ideological and world-order interests based on pacifism and multilateralism. Even though the Russian initial invasion

of Ukraine in 2014 did bring about a more pragmatic stance on both the EU and member states' level towards Russia, it is hard to assess whether the ideological and world order interests became of major importance for Germany. The sanctions against Russia were only sectoral, allowing Germany to secure its economic interests. Berlin thus rather guided a dual policy towards Moscow by leading European diplomatic efforts to resolve conflict and, at the same time, advocating for a new symbol of interdependence – the Nord Stream 2 project.

However, the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 reversed the long-standing Ostpolitik. The geographically close interstate war led Germany to rethink its defence interests, which may be argued to be now of high priority and even survival intensity and gave more impetus also to prioritize values in foreign policy. However, the shifts here may come slower than expected, as was evident with low public support for strategic military culture, overdependence on US defense capabilities, and fear of escalating confrontation with nuclear power - Russia.

Other German interests, including ideological and world order, now became vital. With the support of harsh sanctions against Russian aggression and with a focus on its security, Germany even sacrificed some of its economic interests. Although in the current economically weak state, Germany managed to learn through its past experience of interdependence with Moscow and eliminated the dependence on Russian energy supplies. The changes in perceptions of Russia were also reflected in the EU Strategic Compass and Germany's first National Security Strategy, which called Russia a direct, immediate threat to the Euro-Atlantic region.

The external shock from the Russian invasion of Ukraine has also determined the type of interdependence of EU-Russia and Germany-Russia relations. While the former was vulnerable to cuts in Russian supplies, being unable to find alternatives in the short run and maintaining the imports of nuclear industry products, gas from Russia, Germany-Russia relations served as an example of sensitive interdependence.

Being less vulnerable to the energy crisis due to its diversification of the market, Germany used the momentum to commit to sustainable development. However, the country was more sensitive to the internal shifts brought by the change in its relationship

with Russia, which led to the rethinking of the military power concept and the challenge of returning the trust of the EU and Eastern European states that have been warning Berlin about the dangers of excessive interdependence with Russia for decades. Therefore, Germany took the *follower* rather than the *leadership* position in the response to the war. Still, in the wake of Germany's redefining its security and past misperceptions of Russia, the return of Ostpolitik and old interdependence seems impossible and irrelevant at both national and EU levels.

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ABSTRACT/АНОТАЦІЯ**Кваліфікаційної роботи**

Тема: Інтереси Німеччини у трансформації політики ЄС щодо Росії в період 1993-2024 років/German interests in the transformation of EU foreign policy towards Russia in the period 1993-2024

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Ключові слова: комплексна взаємозалежність, Німеччина, ЄС, Росія, національні інтереси, енергетика, зовнішня політика

Короткий зміст роботи:

Це дослідження зосереджується на визначенні національних інтересів Німеччини в еволюції зовнішньої політики ЄС щодо Росії з 1993 по 2024 рр. Щоб це досягти, політика Німеччини та ЄС щодо Росії розглядається через теоретичну призму концепції «комплексної взаємозалежності» Р. Кеохейна та Дж. Ная та класифікацію основних національних інтересів Нюхтерляйна (1976). Кейс-стаді російсько-чеченської, російсько-грузинської та російсько-української воєн допомогли визначити підхід Німеччини та ЄС до Росії до 2022 року, який характеризувався насамперед економічними інтересами та пошуком шляхів повернутися до “бізнесу як зазвичай”. Як показало інтенсивне кейс-стаді повномасштабного російського вторгнення в Україну у 2022 році, відбулися зміни у пріоритезації Німеччиною своїх інтересів. Занепокоєння щодо її обороноздатності та стратегічної культури виникло вперше за багато років. Через

попередню “вразливу взаємозалежність” з Росією ці зміни все ще є незавершеними, не мають внутрішньої підтримки та призводять до обережної зовнішньої політики, особливо щодо постачання зброї в Україну для відсічі російським військам. Масштабні санкції, прийняті на рівні ЄС, виявили попередню “чутливу взаємозалежність” від Росії, що спричинило набагато повільніший прогрес Союзу у скороченні енергетичної залежності від Москви, ніж в одній державі-члені – Німеччині, де диверсифікований енергетичний ринок сприяв повній ліквідації залежності від імпорту російських енергоносіїв.

Key terms: complex interdependence, Germany, EU, Russia, national interests, energy, foreign policy

Short summary:

This study focuses on determining German national interests in the evolution of EU foreign policy towards Russia from 1993 to 2024. To achieve this, the German and EU Russia policies are observed through the theoretical lenses of R. Keohane and J. Nye’s concept of “complex interdependence” and the classification of the basic national interests by Nuechterlein (1976). The case studies of the Russia-Chechen, Russia-Georgia, and Russia-Ukraine wars helped to define Germany’s and the EU approach to Russia prior to 2022 as driven primarily by economic interests and looking for ways to return to “business as usual”. As shown by the intensive case study of the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, there have been shifts in the German prioritization of its interests. Concerns over its defense capabilities and strategic culture have been raised for the first time in many years. Because of the previous sensitive interdependence with Russia, these changes are still incomplete and lack domestic support and result in a cautious foreign policy, especially regarding the supply of weapons to Ukraine to fight back Russian troops. The comprehensive sanctions adopted at the EU level have revealed the bloc’s previous vulnerability interdependence with Russia, which caused its much slower progress in reducing its energy dependence on Moscow than in a single member

state – Germany, where a diversified energy market contributed to the complete elimination of dependence on Russian energy imports.

ANNEXES

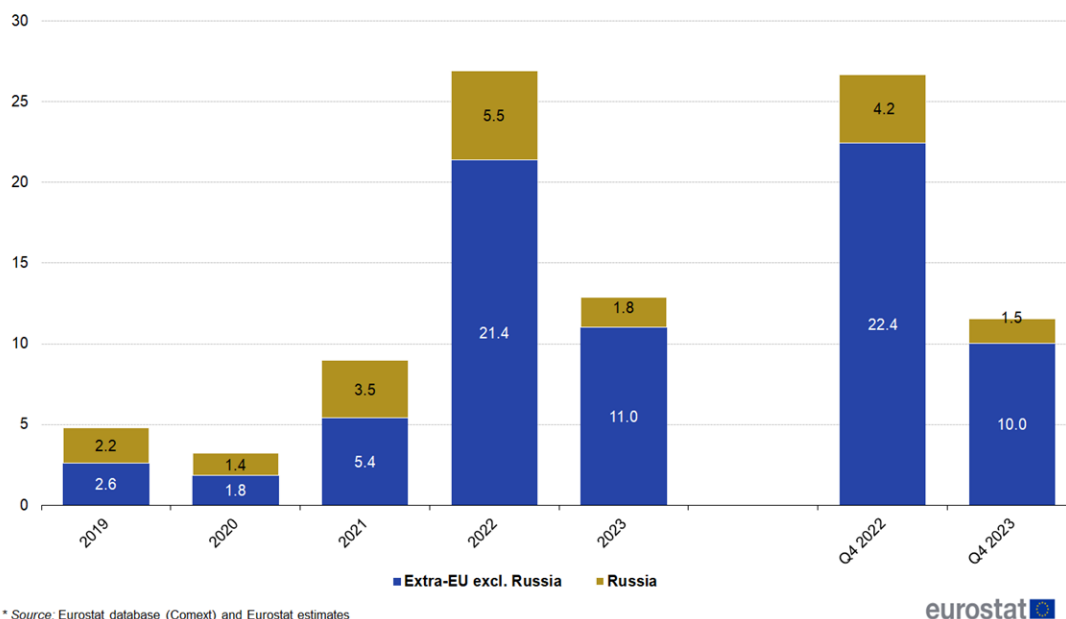
Table 1.1.

Classification of National Interests by Nuechterlein (1976)	
Basic interests	Interests by intensity
Defense protecting state and citizens from external dangers	Survival related to the direct and immediate physical threat of invasion from another state (defense interests)
Economic enhancement of the country's economic welfare in relations with other states	Vital linked to a serious threat but not an immediate one, which gives the nation-state time to prepare for possible harm (vital may be economic, world order, and ideological interests)
World-order maintaining secure international and economic order, which positively contributes to the nation-state's well-being and allows its commerce and citizens to peacefully operate abroad	Major nation-state's economic, ideological, and political interests may be affected by the developments in the international system, and therefore, the state can take measures to prevent those issues from becoming vital, usually by diplomatic means; a compromise may be a solution (however, compromise is harder to achieve when world order interests are at stake)
Ideological protecting certain values that the citizens believe to be universally good	Peripheral when the interests of individual citizens and private companies operating abroad are involved and may be in jeopardy

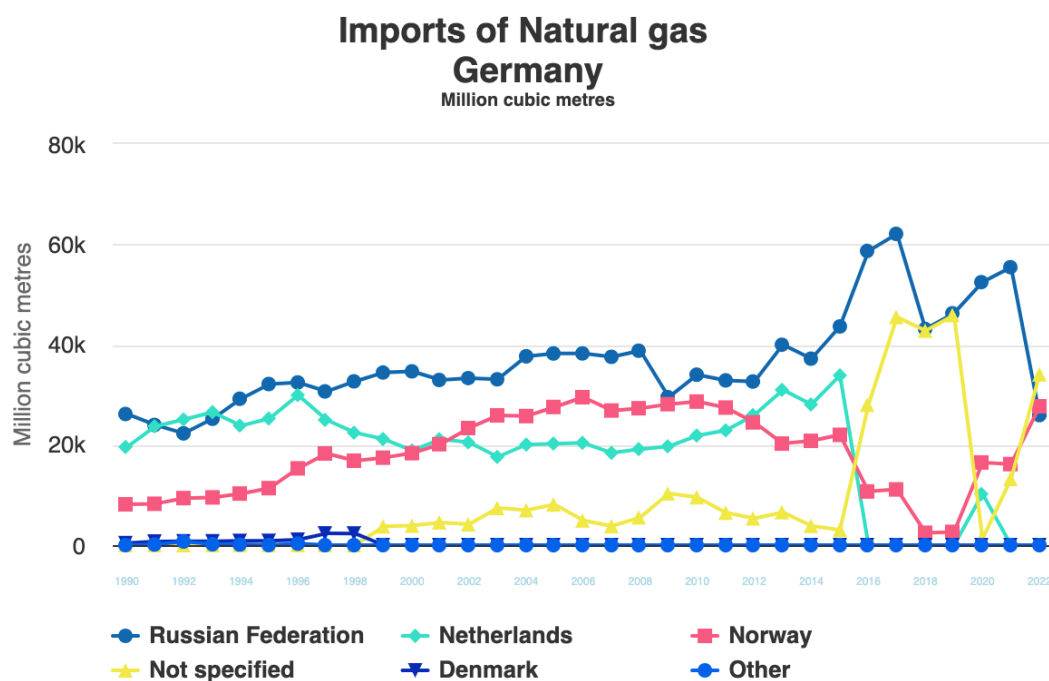
Source: Nuechterlein (1976, pp. 248–250)

Figure 3.1.

EU imports of natural gas, 2019 - 2023
(monthly averages in value - € billion)



Source: (Eurostat, 2024a)

Figure 3.2.

Source: (Eurostat, n.d.); the graphic was extracted by the author using the interactive map on energy trade developed by Eurostat.