

BABES-BOLYAI University Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Economics and Business Management
Doctoral School of Economics and Business Management
Domain: Economy and International Affairs

PhD Thesis Summary

Russia's economic position in the post-Soviet space: the
evolution between 2000-2019

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Coordinator:

Prof. Univ. Dr. Mihaela Luțaș

Cluj-Napoca,

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Keywords:

Geoeconomics, market transformation, Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian Economic Union, Eastern Partnership, Russian Federation, economic transition, state corporatism.

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Introduction

The main motivation of this thesis is to change the paradigm in international relations, from geopolitics to geoeconomics, in the context of the re-emergence of the Russian Federation on the international stage. This process has evolved over time, and academic analysis has failed to cover sequentially because there were other important research topics that were limited to global or regional events, such as the economic crisis, the migrant crisis and the wars in the Middle East.

As a secondary motivation, in Romania, there is currently a growing concern about the possible economic but especially political and military implications of a strong Russian state on the eastern borders of the European Union and Romania. The strategic dimension of this new policy challenge NATO security has also had some very interesting developments. We also mention here the fact that the Russian Federation created the CSTO - Organization of the Collective Security Treaty.

For a better understanding of the concepts and structures of analysis that we used in the doctoral thesis, we clarified some aspects related to the concepts used but also to the structures with which we worked in the analysis of the thesis. The Eastern Partnership, as a political instrument between the European Union and part of the ex-Soviet bloc states, was created to establish institutional relations with Eastern European states that are not yet members of the European Union (states except Romania and Bulgaria).

Other aspects of the Eastern Partnership would involve: strengthening democracy in the Member States of the partnership, economic development and political stability. Since 2015, the states involved in this political and economic process have been: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The latter state, Ukraine, has a higher stake in the regional and European context.

The best incentive for the creation of new policies on the countries in the immediate vicinity of the European Union was the restructuring of Russia's foreign policy. Russia, especially during the Putin-Medvedev period, has developed and is developing foreign policy activities different from the previous periods and which also contain economic instruments, which we find

in Russian corporatism, or bilateral agreements with the EU, which bypass the *acquis*. and are concluded with Member States such as Germany, Hungary or France.

We could say that the Russian Federation, which I also called Russia during my doctoral dissertation, is engaged in a "regional geo-economic offensive" against the EU, in the context of the existence of a crisis of European leadership. This crisis of European leadership is based on the different interests of the most important Member States of the European Union, which, in many cases, mainly related to foreign policy, do not reach a common solution. The rhetoric of a much-needed common vision at Union level could be a solution in the negotiations with its eastern neighbor - Russia, so that it embraces European views and values. This rhetoric appears in line with the European Union's goal of becoming a single voice in the system of international relations.

Regarding the technical approach on the concepts of geopolitics and geo-economics, the thesis analyzes the paradigm shift in the conditions in which the former theories of pure geopolitical thinking are changing now and are approached within and together with an economic approach. This is where geoeconomics comes into play. Applied to the relationship between Russia and the former Soviet states, but also in relation to the European Union, we can believe that the former political considerations are now accompanied by strong economic motivations.

The economy is driving interests within Eurasia and both the European Union and Russia admit that military power is still an economic and political factor in relations between the parties, the best example being Russian investment in the military industry which, directly or indirectly, led to the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine.

The thesis continues its course with the analysis of the countries that are members of the Eastern Partnership and that also have strong relations, both economic and political, with Russia. The need for an institutional approach is present in Western political debates and has been used since the establishment of the neighborhood policy with the Eastern states, transforming it into the Eastern Partnership.

Another aspect to be analyzed in this thesis is that of the Russian economic pressure on the former Soviet republics. The analysis of Russian instruments for exerting economic pressure on CIS countries focuses mainly on the energy component but also on trade and investment. If we deepen the analysis, the result is the understanding that Russia has used its most attractive product,

energy resources, to enter tacitly the western markets but also of the CIS member states and with other investments.

In this context, we can accept that this way of approaching foreign policy is the most effective, involving economy and politics, without involving measures of force, such as military actions and security threats.

In support of the above-mentioned issues, we will choose for the case analysis Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, to emphasize the assertiveness of the EU and also the Russian economic influence. The two countries are relevant due to their proximity to the European Union and are a basis for analysis for each study that must connect political and economic issues in the former Soviet Union.

Objectives

The objectives of the thesis are related to the change of the paradigm from geo-politics to geo-economy in the context of the re-establishment of the position of economic and political actor of the Russian Federation in the ex-Soviet space, in the last two decades. The new aspects of trans and interdisciplinary thinking and approach in this space is also one of the main objectives of my thesis.

Another objective of my thesis comes from the need to have a bilateral vision on the influence of Russia in this species, both from the perspective of bibliographic sources in Western and Russian literature, and is related to the fact that Russian scientific literature on geoeconomics is not currently analyzed and taken into account in most research works dealing with the post-Soviet Russian space.

Another objective is to assess the economic specificities of the Russian Federation, which are important due to the complexity of the Russian Eurasian space.

One of the limitations of my research is the rather extensive period of time I have tried to analyze and explain, regarding the stages of the process of transformation of the former socialist republics of the Soviet Union into the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States and in addition to EurAsEC, so it was impossible to include in my analysis all the important details of this process.

As a final objective of the study, I would like to bring to light a number of new views in the field of Russia-EU research studies and alternative views for a more effective policy format towards Russia. To build my arguments, I used the existing literature on this topic, together with statements by politicians and key people involved in policy-making processes at EU or Russian level.

In line with the general objectives mentioned above, we have set the following sub-objectives:

1. Presentation of the concept and role of geoeconomics in the reform of the global order, in the vision of Edward Luttwak;
2. Analysis of the trend in the evolution of the post-Soviet space, from a geo-economic point of view, between 2000 and 2019.
3. The evaluation of the Russian space, with its strengths and weaknesses, correlated with its geo-economic position in the post-Soviet space, but also in relation to the European Union.
4. Assessment of Russian economic influence in the former Soviet republics, together with a brief analysis of the intra-regional structure and relations of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
5. A brief analysis of the two countries that are, more or less, under the influences of the EU and the Russian Federation: Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.
6. Assessing the evolution of Eastern Partnership relations as an instrument of foreign policy in relation to Russia and the former Soviet republics - Ukraine and Moldova.

Methodology

Methodology is important in interdisciplinary research studies and not only, for this purpose it is necessary to use a set of methods, both quantitative and qualitative for my thesis.

The main research tools and methods we have used are:

- a) analysis and synthesis of scientific literature in the field;
- b) primary or generated sources, such as empirical analysis and observation;

c) secondary sources or captures consisting of: strategic planning documents and meeting minutes;

d) reports of national and international institutions and studies from the national and international academic environment, including Russian language sources coming from the academic environment.

It is important to note that among the qualitative tools that will be used is a small sample of ethnographic research - which is important for the course of the case study on Ukraine and its political choice, process monitoring - important for issues related to EU and Federation decision-making bodies. Russian.

All the tools and methods mentioned above are applied based on data from international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the EBRD, the European Union, etc.

Other sources / research tools that should be mentioned are: transcripts of negotiations, corporate information and international investigations.

The analysis, which will cover the steps listed below, will use deductive, inductive, logical-intuitive, historical and descriptive comparative methods, as well as the method of evaluations performed by experts.

1. Assessment of the economic and political position of the Russian Federation vis-à-vis CIS members.
2. Analysis of information about the Eastern European region as a whole, analysis of the characteristics and dynamics of the development of the region based on the causes and classification of the stages in the formation of the Eastern Partnership.
3. Identify the problematic aspects in the relations in the “Eastern Partnership” region based on the analysis of the specialized literature and the policy documents on this topic.
4. Analysis of the possibilities of implementing mutually beneficial economic projects in the region, of the potential and prospects of interregional cooperation.
5. Brief analysis of the trade balance for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova in relation to the Russian Federation and the European Union.

Research hypothesis

The Russian Federation is facing a renaissance of its economic and political power in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and with it, in a multipolar world, is consolidating its leading position.

Research questions

The research questions that led me to this hypothesis are:

1. What is Russia's position, either geographically or economically, in the Eurasian space and how are the former USSR states still linked to this position?
2. What influence has remained or reverted on the CIS Member States in recent years, based on the economic balance of the States concerned?
3. What is the European Union's response to the rebirth of Russia's foreign policy?
4. Is the Eastern Partnership a viable response and a framework for the European Union against the ambitions of the Russian Federation?

The focus of the economic analysis will be on the geo-economic reality of the Eurasian space and only on the tangential connection with the European Union and how it influenced the course of events after 2014. In my opinion it is important to assess not only the quantitative aspects of CIS economies, with a focus on the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, but also the qualitative aspects, because the socio-economic implications tend to be more important.

1. Literature review and fundamental concepts

The issues addressed in this thesis are, in principle, quite well explored in the literature. The European Neighborhood Policy can be seen in the works of authors such as T. St. George, N.Y. Kaveshnikov, N. Popescu, Andreas Marchetti, Arkady Moshes, Giselle Boss, Elena Korosteleva. The Eastern Partnership is analyzed in detail by Yannis Tsantulisa, Elena Rakova, Paul Svebody, Martin Lapchinskii, Jos Boonstry and Natalia Shapovalova and Irina Bolgova. The development of the Eastern Partnership in the context of EU-Russia relations and the common

neighborhood space is analyzed in the articles of the authors I.V. Bolgova, O.V. Shishkin, M. Strezhneva, Sebastian Schaffer, Michael Emerson and Constanze Stelzenmüller.

Edward Luttwak is considered to be one of the founders of research studies in geo-economics. In the early 1990s, he predicted the beginning of another type of international order in which economic weapons would replace military weapons as tools for states in their struggle for power and position on the international stage. External threats will still be needed to ensure the unity and internal cohesion of nations and countries, but they will turn into economic or, more precisely, geo-economic threats, Luttwak said.

The approach developed by Edward Luttwak undoubtedly marks an important step in understanding the new international architecture and its constituent actors, especially with regard to the positioning of states. The emergence of geoeconomics seems essential in that it reflects the contribution to the implementation of economic issues - especially in their trade dimension, but not only, and in the global geopolitical agenda.

2. A brief analysis of the Russian Geo-economics

2.1. Market transformation of the Russian Federation

The position of the Russian Federation in the global economy is largely determined by the specifics of its space. The territorial density of the population and the organization of economic life, the level of development of the territory's infrastructure but also factors of a political nature greatly affect the competitiveness of the Russian economy and its ability to become a center of regional integration.

The well-known Russian historian Kliuchevsky considers the history of Russia to be the history of a country that had periodic waves of colonization, which were uneven, reflecting the dynamics of the political and, to some extent, internal and external economic situation of the Russian Empire at that time. The regional structure of the economy has had a major impact due to the "Cold War" and military-strategic competition with the United States and the current member states of the European Union.

The territorial structure of the Russian economy has historically evolved as a chain of economic enclaves (nodes, centers, areas), most located in the center of the Federation. The

distance between the enclaves increases as it moves north and east. There are also a number of demographic and structural disparities, which affect Russia's competitiveness as a global player, but also its ability to control and influence the former post-Soviet space.

GDP at the regional level in the periphery is lower than in the central regions of the country. In an area of one square kilometer in the Moscow region (Moscow and the metropolitan area), the gross regional product (GRP) is more than 95 times higher than the Russian average (respectively 645 million and 677.3 thousand rubles) and 690 times higher than the average of the federal district of the Far East (93.4 thousand rubles) - the least developed part of the Russian Federation.

Therefore, in terms of the internal market, the European regions are in a much more favorable position, rather than the Asian part of Russia. For example, in the area of a thousand kilometers around Saratov, there is about 40% of Russia's population and more than half of the total regional GDP is generated in the same area.

Another feature is the placement of the main export industries. More than 60% of industries with export potential are 3,000 to 4,000 kilometers away from European and Far Eastern border crossing points. This type of "reverse model" of export production, due to high transport costs, objectively decreases its efficiency rate and, given the price fluctuations in world markets, is not reliable in the budget forecasts.

Some of the distinctive features of the Russian economic space compared to other similar countries or regions, located in other parts of the world, in addition to the above, are:

- a) the concentration of a significant part of the producing branches with export potential in the heart of the Eurasian area;
- b) low average population density, most of the territory concentrating low levels of population density with impact on the type of development and diversification of economic activities and, thus, having a limited market capacity;
- c) dispersion - the territorial structure of the Russian economy is composed of several major regions and economic centers, proving large disparities between the center and the periphery. Russia's economic development has been accompanied by the emergence and deepening of differences between its regional structures, including investment

attractiveness and the level of development of the business environment. These characteristics of the economic space, together with the existence of a multi-ethnic structure of the population, with multiple multicultural traditions, which leave their mark on the model of economic development, create a mosaic picture of the development of the geo-economic space of the Russian Federation.

The growing disparities and weakened cohesion of the Russian space reflect the economic and social fragmentation of the country, which, of course, poses a threat to its unity.

2.2. Impact assessment of the differences between the constituent regions of the Russian Federation on its trade potential

A great influence on the position of the country's economic space in the global economy is related to the specialization of Russia's regional economy, which is more developed in the west, infrastructure with large regional differences in levels of socio-economic development and export potential.

The analysis shows that in 2020, at the level of the Russian Federation there were 30 regions with exports of over \$ 1 billion, including direct and intermediate deliveries of goods and services: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tyumen region, (Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo -Netset Autonomous District), Krasnoyarsk (with the Autonomous District of Taimyr and Evenk), the territories of Krasnodar and Khabarovsk, the Republic of Bashkortostan, Komi, Tatarstan and Sakha, Volgograd, Vologda Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Leningrad Lipetsk Moscow, Murmansk, Nizhn, Rostov, Saratov and Chelyabinsk.

There are also some foreign investments placed unevenly in the regions of Russia, their main volume being concentrated in 10-15 regions: Moscow and Moscow region (city), Sakhalin region, Tyumen region, St. Petersburg and Leningrad region, Krasnodar, Omsk, Samara, Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk regions.

The share of the top ten regions consistently accounted for 4/5 of all foreign investment. At the same time, foreign investment is either not attracted at all or to a very limited extent, in the border regions and in the less developed ones throughout the Federation. The main territorial and structural advantage of Russia's participation in the globalization process is the key position of the Moscow region. By concentrating its production on exports and attracting investment, Russia's

metropolitan region is the main gateway to the rest of the world. It represents over a third of the country's foreign trade turnover, more than half of the total foreign investment and offers global services such as mediation, banking, consulting, insurance, etc.

Banks in Moscow carry out about 4/5 of all their financial operations in the country with foreign currency. In Moscow, 105 of the 346 banks had major participation shares in foreign banks in 2020.

Russia's foreign economic relations can be divided into three directions: (i) West - to Europe because its eastern border coincides with the eastern borders of the Ural Federal District; (ii) To the east, which is directed in particular towards the APEC market, its western border extends along the western border of the Irkutsk region and the same area covers the Republic of Tyva and the Altai; and (iii) other western regions; and east, such as Siberia, which is a kind of intermediate or transition zone.

Entering a large market is an important goal for Russian companies. These are mainly driven by corporate interests and are not directly driven by Russian integration projects. The acquisition of the assets of large Russian companies in foreign countries due to the desire to reduce corporate risks guarantees a presence in foreign markets and thereby increases the profitability of business and the capitalization of companies.

2.3. The economic impact of the geographical location of the regions of the Russian Federation

The nature of socio-economic and ethno-social problems in the regions of Russia is very different. In general terms, it is determined by factors such as:

- a) The geo-economic position of the region;
- b) the creative potential of the regional structure;
- c) the accumulated economic potential;
- d) the regional financial base;
- e) the international political and economic ties that Russia has developed in this region.

Based on the socio-economic indicators, we analyzed the role of border regions. Depending on them, several types of border regions can be distinguished:

1. The most prosperous and dynamic type comprises developed regions with significant innovation and economic potential, which are widely included in external economic relations such as St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region or the Krasnodar Territory.

2. Relatively prosperous form of border regions covering a significant share of international trade and transport routes, such as Russia - Astrakhan, Arkhangelsk (including Nenets Autonomous District), Kaliningrad, Murmansk, Sakhalin region, Khabarovsk and Primorsky Krai, Republic of Karelia.

3. A special group of border regions along the new borders, which generally adversely affect their socio-economic status. This group of regions can be divided into three subtypes

3.1 relatively prosperous regions with significant external economic potential and are widely included in cross-border connections - Belgorod, Tyumen, Samara, Chelyabinsk region;

3.2 - regions which are widely included in international relations but which show forms of economic downturn, such as Volgograd Orenburg, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Saratov, the Rostov region, and,

3.3 - regions that are poorly included in external economic relations and have forms of underdevelopment, such as the Altai region, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kursk, Kurgan, Pskov or Smolensk.

4. A different type of regions, which are remote, economically underdeveloped and have a very low level of innovation. In this group I mention areas such as Kamchatka and Magadan, Chukotka and the Autonomous Republic of Koryak Altai and Tyva.

5. Border regions with economic devastation; there is a separate group of regions in the Far East and the Eastern Siberian Region, which play an important role in the relationship with Asia, mainly with China, and are widely included in cross-border cooperation, but with a weak export and innovation base, such as it would be the Republic of Buryatia, Chita and Amur, or the autonomous Jewish region.

6. The type of border region located in the republics of the North Caucasus with Kalmykia, which is characterized by high unemployment, low incomes, very low innovation, weak involvement in foreign trade, including low cross-border links. The most problematic border regions are located in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

2.4. Russia's position in the Commonwealth of Independent States

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia had no reasonable alternative to expanding and deepening cooperation within the constituent states of the former Union, except by participating in the processes of integration of the post-Soviet space into a new economic and political structure.

The creation of more favorable conditions for domestic companies by concluding various types of preferential trade agreements, the formation of trade blocs and integrative structures are considered as the main vectors for improving the global market position of these states.

It should be noted that the basis of Russia's geo-economic relations with the CIS countries has a number of important economic, social and political consequences.

3. Economies of the CIS countries

3.1 General background

CIS countries (excluding Russia) play a modest role in the world economy: in 2019 they accounted for 1.9% of global GDP and 1.7% of global exports of goods and services.

In 2019, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan accounted for over 6% of world oil exports, Turkmenistan - more than 6% of sales of natural gas, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, Ukraine - more than 5% of global exports of ferrous metals, etc.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan account for 25% of total world uranium production, and Kyrgyzstan together with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan supply 4% of world gold production. In the global stocks of strategic minerals, the share of CIS is 5-10%, and for certain types such as uranium, zinc, lead, etc., about 10%.

3.2. Main trends and features of economic cooperation between the Russian Federation and the CIS

3.2.1. Trade in goods

The role of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States as Russia's trading partners has decreased significantly over the last fifteen years: in 1994, they accounted for 24% of total turnover, in 2009 - only 14.6% and in 2019 a decrease to 10, 2%.

The highest rate of diversification of Russia's exports to the twelve largest customers in 2019 was recorded in Kazakhstan (200 items with an export value of more than \$ 10 million for 4-digit HS codes (nomenclature of goods of foreign economic activity), except for closed groups - precious stones and metals, weapons, etc., followed by Belarus (191 articles), Kyrgyzstan (188) and with a large share outside the CIS - Germany, China, Turkey, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy, USA, Poland, United Kingdom.

In imports, the share of CIS countries in Russia has steadily decreased: in the 1990s it was 30%, and in 2009 it was reduced to 13%. This is due to the fact that Russia has actively developed imports of high quality products, both for investment and direct consumption.

CIS countries provide most of Russia's needs for imports of mineral products (ores and concentrates, metals, construction materials).

Building a new transport infrastructure in the CIS countries (pipeline network, road construction and other communication networks) and the possibility of diversifying the supply of hydrocarbons in external markets, expanding foreign direct investment that normally stimulates export and import flows, such as and loans from international organizations, the conditions for liberalizing the CIS's economic cooperation with the rest of the world - all of which strengthen the processes of the CIS Member States' reorientation towards external markets.

Russia provides about a third of the Community's import needs (CIS) (including about 2/3 of imports of mineral products, up to 70% of fuel purchases, almost 50% of total imports of metals and their products, wood products and paper and remains the main trading partner. In comparison, in 2019, exports fell to about \$ 4.69 billion due to the Ukrainian conflict and economic crisis, but still the Russian Federation remains the main partner for Ukraine with a favorable trade balance for the Russian Federation.

3.2.2. Integration under the CIS umbrella (Eurasian Economic Union and Customs Union)

Economic integration in the post-Soviet space is by no means a new phenomenon, rather, the first efforts to create an economic union of the twelve members of the CIS have been made since 1993.

Looking at the evolution of the integration process so far, it can be seen that the establishment of the customs union and the development of the Single Economic Area have taken place at a rapid pace and that political activism has clearly been put before administrative feasibility. These experiences suggest that economic integration provided that political will is maintained and that the desire to surrender sovereign rights is granted will advance.

A decisive factor that could make the customs union attractive to other states would be a clear economic benefit without Russia's political patronage. In order to assess these potential benefits of economic integration, the economic effects of the merger on Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia are analyzed, and the reasons for the establishment of the customs union are examined in more detail.

3.2.3. Trade in services

The evolution from 2000-2009

An important part of trade between Russia and the CIS countries is trade in services. In 2009, the share of services in the total turnover of goods and services amounted to 16.7%. From the beginning of the last decade to the present, there has been a steady expansion of trade between Russia and the CIS in services.

The sectoral structure of Russia's trade in services with the CIS countries is poorly diversified. Russian exports are dominated by traditional services, related to transport and tourism, which cover about 4/5 of total transactions.

There is also a small volume of sales of high-tech services to CIS countries (\$ 792 million in 2008 and \$ 669 million in 2009) compared to the total volume of Russian exports of services (\$ 7.4 billion). and \$ 6.7 billion, respectively).

Trade in services in the period 2010-2019

Russia is in the top 20 countries globally in terms of foreign trade in services.

According to the WTO, in the period 2005-2018, foreign trade in services worldwide increased by an average of 6.2% per year, exceeding the dynamics of trade in goods.

According to the World Bank, in a number of developed countries, the share of services has already reached three quarters of GDP, compared to 40% in the middle of the last century.

Developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including Russia, are also increasingly oriented towards the services market, which has increased their share from 23 to 30% in total transactions with planned services. globally during that period.

According to the Bank of Russia, from 2010 to 2013, foreign trade in services in Russia increased at an average annual rate of about 16.8% / year, which was due to increased imports, mainly those related to tourism.

To improve the export of services, the Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation has launched a federal project called "Export of Services". The project continues and some partial results show that, by the end of 2019, Russian exports of services amounted to 62.8 billion USD, even if the target was not fully achieved.

In the medium term, it is planned to implement a number of measures of the action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the development of service exports by 2025 and the sectoral complexes of measures to increase the volume of service exports.

3.3 Mutual direct investment in the CIS

Evolution of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) 2010 - 2019

At the end of 2019, the main investment flows between Russia and the CIS partner states were as follows:

1. Russia - Kazakhstan (total investment flows of 11.16 billion dollars, of which about 74% represent Russia's foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan).

2. Russia - Belarus (total investment flows of \$ 10.58 billion, of which about 81% are Russia's foreign direct investment in Belarus).

3. Russia - Ukraine (total investment flows of \$ 5.96 billion, of which 87% - Russia's foreign direct investment in Ukraine).

4. Russia - Uzbekistan (total investment flows of 5.35 billion dollars, of which 99% of Russia's foreign direct investment in Uzbekistan).

5. Russia - Armenia (total investment flows of \$ 3.45 billion, with almost 100% of Russia's foreign direct investment in Armenia).

Without Russia's participation, foreign direct investment at the end of 2019 amounted to about \$ 80 million:

1. Azerbaijan - Georgia (\$ 1.95 billion, dominated by Azerbaijani FDI).

2. Kazakhstan - Kyrgyzstan (\$ 0.61 billion, dominated by Kazakh FDI).

3. Kazakhstan - Georgia (\$ 0.46 billion, dominated by Kazakh FDI).

4. Azerbaijan - Ukraine (\$ 0.18 billion, dominated by Azerbaijani FDI).

5. Ukraine - Georgia (\$ 0.18 billion, dominated by Ukrainian FDI).

6. Georgia - Armenia (0.10 billion dollars, over 3/4 are Georgian FDI).

7. Kazakhstan - Belarus (\$ 0.09 billion, dominated by Kazakh FDI)

8. Ukraine - Moldova (\$ 0.08 billion, dominated by Ukrainian FDI).

9. Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan (\$ 0.08 billion, dominated by Kazakh FDI).

3.4. Labor migration

One of the major links between Russia and a number of CIS countries, mainly in Central Asia, is the large migration flows. Since the 2000s, the flow of migrants from CIS countries to Russia has increased significantly. In 2019, according to the Federal Migration Service (FMS), 1,780,000 CIS citizens were legally employed in Russia, compared to 2000 when the number was 106,000.

Due to the low cost of labor, migrants are an important factor in Russia's economic development in the context of declining domestic population. According to some estimates, immigrants from the other CIS Member States contribute to the formation of about 3-5% of GDP. At the same time, the use of migrant workers in cases of illegal and uncontrolled employment hinders the modernization of production and has a negative impact on the quality of economic activities in which they are employed and becomes a source of illegal business, which also leads to increased organized crime.

3.5. Direct and indirect financial transfers

During the Soviet Union, preferential prices were charged within transactions between Member States, which were much lower than those on foreign markets, given that the USSR exported energy, metals and equipment and imported food. or light industry. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was the successor to the rights and obligations of the former Soviet Union, including in the financial sector. More than \$ 107 billion was paid by the Soviets to pay off debts in exchange for foreign assets of the former USSR.

The CIS countries have actually benefited from the expansion of import demand in Russia, based on their geographical proximity, have received government subsidies and have made the most of the cost advantages and benefits of duty-free access to the Russian market. Russia recorded in 2019 about 50-55% of total imports from the CIS of cars, equipment and vehicles.

Significant financial benefits came from the CIS countries as a result of the expansion of Russia's trade transactions with third countries, with the majority of goods transit taking place in the territory of the CIS Member States.

The essence of the adjustment of relations should be the short-term benefits deriving from the cooperation of the CIS countries with a much stronger Russian economy, linked to Russia's long-term strategic acquisitions in the post-Soviet space, largely of a geo-economic nature and which requires a consistent deepening of the integration processes in the CIS until the formation of a common economic space.

3.6. Strategies of the Russian Federation towards the markets CIS member states markets

Ensuring Russia's attractiveness as a regional leader is possible mainly by strengthening its technical, economic and scientific potential, increasing national competitiveness by implementing the commitment to the development of IST (scientific and technological innovation), manufacturing industries, etc.

There has been a vertical evolution in the level of political interaction. The dialogue at the highest level provides a framework for cooperation between CIS countries (CIS political support, CSST, EurAsEC, SCO) and the promotion of a number of important projects could create a favorable framework for trade and investment, export support, policy coordination. economic development, harmonization of legislation, etc.

Russia's political influence in the partner countries is mainly bilateral, but at present it is decided to form an integration nucleus within the Customs Union and then connect in one way or another to this nucleus of other countries.

3.7. State corporatism in Russia – Gazprom and Russian foreign policy

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the most important gas transportation system in the country is grouped within the company "Gazprom", a state-owned company with a monopoly position. "Gazprom" is a company that gives influence to the foreign policy of the state and which was later transformed into a tool for domestic political games.

If we talk about "Gazprom" in the 21st century, it is not only one of the largest gas companies in the world, but also an important conglomerate of energy and chemistry. The main areas of the group's activities so far include: gas exploration, production, transportation, storage, processing and production. "Gazprom" maintains its leading status among global energy companies, diversifying its activities and markets.

As of December 31, 2013, regarding the gas reserves, the Russian classification of the "Gazprom" group was estimated at 35.7 trillion cubic meters. In terms of production, the Gas Group, which accounts for 13% of world production, is a leader among oil and gas companies in the world. In 2013, the company produced 487.4 billion cubic meters of gas. As for the transport system, in Russia the length of the pipeline is about 169,000 km.

4. Economic relations of the Russian Federation with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine

I considered these two countries to be particularly important for my thesis, due to their relationship with the European Union and the fact that they are also the main buffer states between the EU and the Russian Federation.

4.1. Republic of Moldova

During the transition period, the Russian Federation was one of the main trading partners of the Republic of Moldova, which is due to the recent common historical past, geographical proximity and wide distribution of Russian products on the country's market. The share of trade flows between Moldova and Russia in the total trade flows of the Republic of Moldova has decreased both due to the diversification of trading partners in the case of a state that has become independent, and terms and conditions that the Russian Federation applies to certain partners.

These factors led to a reduction or, at least, fluctuations in certain periods of time, in exports to this destination. Thus, in 2014, Russia lost in favor of Romania the leading position as an export partner of the Republic of Moldova. The signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union and the creation of a deep and comprehensive free trade area with the European Union have led to even greater dissatisfaction on the part of the Russian Federation. Sanctions followed almost immediately: import tariffs were introduced, and some types of imports from Moldova were banned.

4.1.1. Trade in goods. Moldovan exports to the Russian Federation Period 2004-2014

The share of Moldova's exports to the Russian Federation tended to decline, and the volume of transactions decreased significantly in 2006, when Russia imposed an embargo on Moldovan products, starting with viticultural products, and as a result, Moldova's economy was hit hard. of the “wine embargo.

Exports to Russia in that year collapsed, and Russia's share in the total volume of Moldovan exports fell at the lowest rate - 17.3% for the period under review.

Even after the removal of import restrictions, the share of exports to the Russian Federation did not return to the levels recorded before the embargo was imposed.

4.1.2. The evolution of the Moldovan economy after 2014 and the present state

An Association Agreement on the creation of a free trade area was signed with the EU in 2014, and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area has been implemented since July 2016, which, in principle, also applies to the Transnistrian area. Since 2014, Moldovan citizens have also been exempted from visas in the EU's Schengen area.

In 2019, according to World Bank data, \$ 1.91 billion of money earned by Moldovan workers abroad was transferred to their home country, or 16.0% of GDP. For comparison: in 2006, this figure was \$ 1.18 billion or 34.5% of GDP.

According to the data of the National Bank of Moldova, the transfer payments registered only by the banking sector reached a value of 1.49 billion USD in 2020, which represents an increase of 21.6% compared to 2019.

The Republic of Moldova is characterized by a high proportion of the underground economy, which is probably between 30% and 40% of GDP. According to this fact, almost 40% of all employees worked in the “informal” sector in 2018. Thanks to a new calculation system implemented in 2019, this proportion is now officially 23.1%.

4.2. Ukraine

The processes of global integration, as dominant factors that currently shape international economic relations, also affect the formation of trade and economic relations between countries. The nature of this impact depends primarily on when this occurs, on the country involved in global integration processes, as well as on the characteristics of their relationship, historically and in the future.

The area and population of Ukraine is one of the largest in Eastern Europe, its share in world exports being quite small, about 0.3%, which means primarily that its impact on global economic processes is virtually nil and, in second, it is not yet sufficiently integrated into the globalized world economy.

Russia's export volume is about 6 times higher than Ukraine's export volume, as its share of global exports is 1.8%, which is also not enough to really affect the processes taking place in the economy. Global. Therefore, it is possible, in my opinion, to believe that Ukraine and Russia do not have sufficient leverage objectives (factors) on their economic impact on each other.

4.2.1. The role of Russian investment in the Ukrainian economy

Objectively, Russia is an important strategic partner of Ukraine, primarily due to its economic aspect. Over the years of independence, it has firmly held first place among Ukraine's main foreign economic partners: it accounts for about 40% of Ukraine's foreign trade. For objective reasons, Ukraine cannot sever relations with Russia, which is linked to a centuries-old history.

Analyzing Ukraine's ability at the expense of its own production to meet its oil and gas needs, experts believe that natural resources make it possible to cover Ukraine's needs by only 20-30%, while the forecast for full oil and gas consumption will grow. In addition, they believe that there are good prospects for the development of foreign deposits to increase the resource base of Ukrainian oil and gas companies.

The events of recent years bring a dispute with Russia over the price of gas supply and have stimulated the search for new supply routes to Europe, bypassing Ukraine. Officially, Russia ranks 6th in investment in the Ukrainian economy, but given the Russian investment coming to Ukraine through Cyprus, Liechtenstein, the British Isles (British Virgin Islands), experts say that the volume of Russian capital in Ukraine exceeds the from the USA.

4.2.2. Transition of the Ukrainian economy from east to west

In 2020, Ukraine is in a difficult transition from an economy that has been linked in all respects (such as that of the Republic of Moldova) to the economic space of the Russian Federation to an economy that is turning west, towards the European Union. Significant economic diversification has taken place and, although it has created a very difficult situation for the Ukrainian economy, there are signs of improvement. A good sign is the evolution of GDP per capita, which increased from USD 3,104 to USD 3,659 in 2019. It may not seem significant, but Ukraine has an open conflict in the eastern part of the country, and Crimea is under Russian administration. Forced diversification of the economy and exports is much appreciated, but it is a very slow and difficult process, with many obstacles.

Liberalization of reciprocal market access is traditionally considered to be probably the most obvious advantage of the concluded Association Agreement and the creation of a free trade area between Ukraine and the European Union.

The effect of trade liberalization on European exports to Ukraine proved to be very different: in fact, all major EU commodity export groups experienced a period of significant decline under the influence of the 2014 – 2015 hryvnia devaluation avalanche, which contributed to a significant decrease in income and a decrease in actual demand for goods.

With the partial restoration of macroeconomic stability and the beginning of a certain increase in production and revenues, the resumption of EU exports to Ukraine began, which in 2019 reached pre-crisis levels in 2013 or even slightly exceeded them.

Contrary to the fears of many experts and representatives of the Ukrainian business environment, the formation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU did not have a significant impact on Ukrainian production, as EU-27 exports in 2019 were only 3.6% higher than in 2013, when the Free Trade Agreement did not exist.

However, on the other hand, the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union has not yet managed to become a systemic factor of development for most sectors of the Ukrainian economy, which would help to improve its structure, overall competitiveness and diversification of economic activity. and the market spectrum. Hence the urgency of reviewing the emphasis of Ukraine's trade policy in relation to the EU.

Under what conditions Ukraine has to bear rather burdensome costs to adapt the entire system of technical regulation to EU rules, without receiving a proper return on investment, it is still unclear. This asymmetry is becoming particularly visible and less and less socially acceptable in the face of significant burdens on Ukraine, an economy struggling with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2.3. Ukrainian economy after the signing of the Association Agreement and the current situation

By far, the most important economic engine, private consumption, which accounts for 75% of GDP, has recovered unexpectedly rapidly and increased by 0.5% in 2020 as a whole compared to the previous year. The increase in consumption is mainly due to the increase in real

incomes influenced by the high level of remittances sent to the country by Ukrainians working abroad. These transfers amounted to about \$ 12 billion (about 7% of GDP) in 2020.

In 2020, Ukraine could not finance the budget deficit, which increased from 2% to about 8% of GDP, compared to the previous year, without contracting loans from international capital markets but also without a series of aids granted by the western states of this country.

Therefore, Ukraine has negotiated an 18-month \$ 5 billion aid program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is of crucial importance for the country's macro-financial stability and an important sign for investors to keep the country afloat. The loan settlement is linked to several conditions, such as the implementation of anti-corruption reforms. Markets reacted positively to the IMF decision. Moody's has upgraded Ukraine's rating to B3 (from Caa1) with a stable outlook.

Following the successful adoption of major reforms (land and banking reform) and the release of an initial \$ 2.1 billion tranche of the loan, the reform process has come to a halt. So far, no agreement has been reached with the IMF to pay an additional tranche. Given that Ukraine is due to repay the largest amount of external debt in September 2021, it can be assumed that it will step up its efforts to implement major reforms in the coming months.

As one of the most important agricultural producers and exporters in the world (sunflower oil, barley, corn, wheat, soybeans, honey, nuts, apples, cherries, tomatoes, etc.) with untapped potential, Ukraine has a strategic importance in security. global food. International financial institutions also support the development of a sustainable economy of animal husbandry and agriculture with technical assistance and access to finance.

The expansion of Black Sea ports and growing trade relations with Asia and the Middle East strengthen Ukraine's role as a strategic logistics hub.

Ukraine has taken a clear course of rapprochement with the EU since 2014. The most important step in this direction was the signing of the EU Association Agreement, which entered into force on 1 September 2017. As part of a “deep and comprehensive process Free Trade Area” (DCFTA), it promotes economic ties with the European Union and provides the framework for modernizing the Ukrainian economy and aligning laws, standards and regulations with European norms.

The advantages of this agreement are reflected in the development of foreign trade with the European Union. In 2020, the EU is Ukraine's main trading partner: 37.8% of all exports go to the EU and 43.4% of Ukrainian imports come from the EU.

4.2.4. Special mentions – Russian-Ukrainian relations

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine have risen again since March 2021. Attempts by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to resume negotiations with Russia have failed after the first positive signals, an exchange of prisoners and a ceasefire agreement in July 2020, which in most cases were respected.

The government has coined the term "turbo regime": implementing reforms, major projects, increasing foreign investment - everything should be done quickly. In March 2020, the Prime Minister, most ministers and directors of the customs and tax administration were replaced. Since then, observers and the international business community have criticized the lack of progress in implementing important legislative projects, including those aimed at improving the investment climate. The survey on the business climate among the branches of European companies in Ukraine showed that lack of legal certainty, corruption and unpredictable economic policy are seen as the biggest obstacles to investment.

5. Russian Federation and the Eastern Partnership

The development of the "Eastern Partnership" cannot be taken into account apart from EU-Russia relations and the "Partnership for Modernization" program, as the states of the "New Eastern Europe", due to the low diversification of shopping destinations, depend to a large extent on regional players.

EU-Russia relations conflict with the principle of "sphere of influence" and the principle of "mutual interests" (dissemination of interests). Perceiving the "Eastern Partnership" in a negative way from Russia, the European Union imposes on the Kremlin a "zero-sum game" in which the winner in the fight for influence can be only one. The European Union also argues that the "Eastern Partnership" is equally beneficial to the parties, and therefore Russia should support

it, or at least gain an agreement between the parties on the project's objectives by preventing the logic of the Cold War, which is still in the minds of a number of leaders on both sides of this partnership.

Both Russia and the European Union have their own loyalty programs vis-à-vis the states of the new Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, and as a result of the above logic, competition inevitably arises between them. Both players are interested in reaping the maximum economic benefits needed to secure a position of power on a regional and global scale. It is possible to argue that the foreign policy resources of the European Union and Russia to conduct their policy in the Eastern Partnership countries are approximately comparable, as the European Union is not yet ready to allocate more funds to the Eastern Partnership, and Russia remains attractive due to the predominant historical, cultural and social ties, the presence of the visa-free regime and the milder migration policy.

5.1. Multilateral cooperation of the Eastern Partnership and implementation of joint projects

Within the Eastern Partnership, Member States can significantly strengthen relations in the region and improve existing infrastructure. Eastern EU Member States, such as Lithuania and Poland, are actively striving to involve their eastern neighbors in cooperation with the EU, as they are interested in overcoming the consequences of the economic crisis through more intense economic cooperation. Belarus, which is facing the failure of democratic reforms, has had to limit itself to the multilateral project until it changes its policies. Therefore, it is one of the most interested zonal economic actors in joint cooperation projects.

Multilateral cooperation in the Eastern Partnership has made it possible to implement Venezuelan oil transportation projects in Belarus.

In general, it should be noted that multilateral cooperation has developed more actively between Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and its European neighbors, Lithuania and Poland, as they have no territorial claims between them (except for the dispute over ratification of the Belarussian-Ukrainian border agreement). At the same time, cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan is developing more productively in the South Caucasus, while Armenia is largely isolated. With the

help of Azerbaijan, Georgia is strengthening its energy security and reducing its dependence on Russia. For Georgia, Azerbaijan is an important strategic ally.

Some authors tend to emphasize the position of Germany, which could become the locomotive of the new “Ostpolitik”, given its close contacts with Moscow.

5.2. The current state of the Eastern Partnership – objectives and line of action

The Eastern Partnership has undergone some ideological changes since its inception. The evolution of the Eastern Partnership as seen above had to adapt to a new dimension, the war in Ukraine, especially the conflict in Donbas in 2014. If at that time it provoked the Russian side, now it has become the only option for the line of action. Ukrainian, be it political or economic.

Ahead of the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) published the 20 targets for 2020, a set of specific targets to achieve measurable results and improve the living conditions of citizens in Brussels. four priority policy areas - economy, governance, connectivity and society - together with objectives for cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, civil society, media and strategic communication. In addition, the Eastern Partnership supports global policy goals, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Conclusions

My thesis is meant to be an x-ray of the evolution of the position of the Russian Federation in the space of the former Soviet Union, especially the Commonwealth of Independent States, in the period 2000-2019. The process of economic disintegration of a former supranational political and economic space and its transformation into several other integrative structures is complex and has given rise to a series of changes in the balance of global powers. In the middle of the process of transformation after the dissolution of the USSR is the Russian Federation, whose role and position is obviously that of the leader in the region.

Due to the size and complexity of this process, I chose to focus my analysis on Russia's position on the Commonwealth of Independent States and, as a case study, on Russia's particular relations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, including those within the Eastern Partnership.

The above realities are in good agreement with Edward Luttwak's questions and predictions, although some of the issues explored in his writings are criticized. external.

The bipolar world that disappeared after the fall of the USSR paved the way for the multipolar reality in which Russia maintained its influence. This shows, as in Luttwak's view, the fact demonstrated by a number of recent conflicts such as those in Donbass or Transnistria, that economic rationality has a much deeper effect than military interventions. In both cases, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the conflicts did not favor a closer relationship with the Russian Federation - on the contrary.

Both countries that were formally linked to the Russian space by membership in the Soviet Union are now in the process of joining the European Union, following the signing of formalized agreements, the Association Agreements. Although steps are being taken for macroeconomic and political stabilization, the situation is still fragile. The structure of both economies has changed and, as Luttwak said, economically underdeveloped countries are a source of raw materials and not a source of high value-added finished products.

The structure of the former Soviet republics changed in the analyzed period 2000-2020. In some cases - such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan - we can certainly say that this has been an evolution. This trend in Central Asia is mainly due to the existence and exploitation of energy resources, mainly gas and petroleum products. The two countries entered the European Union market through the two national companies SOCAR and KazMunayGaz, which represents a real performance for two countries with historical ties with the Russian space. I mention that these two countries are seen as points of stability for European energy strategies.

Central Asia is considered a region with high development potential, due to its resources, oil and gas products. To the west of the former Soviet space and on the border with the European Union, there are several economies with political problems, whose future development is closely linked to the evolution of the post-Soviet space as a whole, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.

We will refer especially in the next paragraph to the last two Ukraine and Moldova, which have taken a complicated path to the West - signing the association agreements with the European Union. Both Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova have cultural and traditional ties with

the Russian Federation, but they also have one thing in common - open conflicts on their territory. Transnistrian secessionist republic in Moldova and Donbass republic in Ukraine.

When talking about the Republic of Moldova, economic aspects are usually reduced to trade relations and the development of branches producing products with low added value, such as those of the food industry. As a predominantly agrarian country, Moldova has been severely affected by Russian economic sanctions, which have resulted in a ban on exports of pork and agri-food products. This threw Moldova into an undesirable scenario - not accepted on the EU market due to compliance issues and banned in Russia for export.

The case of Ukraine, although close to that of the Republic of Moldova, shows a particular evolution in the decades following the fall of the USSR.

Ukraine was a heavily industrialized Soviet republic, famous for its aerospace, metallurgy, and mining industries, which exported most of its products to the Soviet Union and later to the Russian Federation.

The close economic ties were maintained until 2008, when the "Orange Revolution" took place, the effects of which paved the way for economic instability and strained relations with Russia. This affected the economy and increased disparities, with a developed eastern region due to the existence of high value-added industries and a central and western region that was kept alive by resources such as wood processing and agriculture.

As in 2008, the Russian Federation was in 2019 the main destination for Ukrainian industrial products and this was the time when it faced the first signs of decline. Although we are tempted to analyze only the data contained in the statistics, they must be correlated with the political climate of Ukraine. The sharpest decline in the economy came after the 2014 Donbass conflict and the annexation of Crimea.

Again, the structural economy has changed - from industrial products that were the backbone of the Ukrainian economy, it has tended to transform into a more developed agricultural economy, taking advantage of the vast expanses of agricultural land in Ukraine. Activities in the food industry were among the most favored by foreign direct investment in the European Union.

If we have to take into account the real trends of the former Soviet space, the economic situation would at best be considered stable but fragile. The different trends in economic thinking and reorientation lead us again to Luttwak and Lorot's writings on the influence of geoeconomics. Geographical features, as in the case of Russia, determine the economic orientation of countries in general, and the post-Soviet space does not make a different scenario. Countries bordering the European Union, especially Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, are now responding to the needs of Western markets. Exports to these western markets are different in structure and are undergoing a very dynamic economic transformation.

Together with Western economic actors who are beginning to invest in their economic activity, the transformation process is taking place, associating new emerging markets with the EU's economic potential.

An important factor in this transformation of Eastern Europe has been and is the Eastern Partnership. An objective analysis allows us to claim that the objective of signing the Association Agreements by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova has been achieved and is a step towards the integration of these states in the European Union, which needs other spheres of economic influence.

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