

EU AND RUSSIA
DEVELOPING COMMON VALUES OR PROJECTING WESTERN VALUES ONTO RUSSIA

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of Cold War, the European Union and Russia have been actively developing their relations. Over a short period they managed to move from the trade agreement inherited from the Soviet Union to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and finally the ambitious project of Four Common Spaces. Common values are an important requirement for a steady development of any relations. The cooperating international actors either originally share values or the values of one of the actors should be projected onto the other actor. In the EU and Russia's case, the European and Russian authorities have agreed on the issue of "shared common values". They have referred to them in various official documents and confirmed their support for these values. However, they tend to interpret these values differently. It is manifested through their contradictory perceptions of the state of democracy in Russia. The EU is trying hard to promote democratic values in Russia using a wide range of its policy instruments, but it faces serious opposition from the Russian officials who deny having significant problems with democracy in the country and claim that the misunderstanding is a result of the civilization differences. I would like to compare the official positions of the EU and Russia on the common values, the EU's policy of promoting democracy in Russia and Russia's reaction to this policy, in order to understand whether it is possible to speak about real common values, or the European Union is trying to project "western" values onto Russia.

1. THE EU AND RUSSIA: DEVELOPING THE COMMON VALUES

Originally relations between the European Union and Russia were based on those principles that had been determined years before by the Soviet Union and the European Communities in 1989 when they signed economic and trade agreement. That agreement limited relations mainly to trade issues and did not correspond neither to the ambitions of the European leaders in early 90s nor to the political interests of the new Russian authorities. In fact, the EU-Russian relations went well beyond the 1989 agreement, but a new legal framework was necessary to support development of these relations. A number of economic issues was supposed to be revised; political consultations required special institutional structure to be created.

Eventually, in 1994 almost two years of negotiations resulted in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, a new fundamental document that was meant to provide a legal basis for the EU-Russian relations in different political and economic areas and stimulate their further

development. In the preamble of agreement, the very first sentence referred to “the common values that they share”, meaning the European Community, its Member States and Russia. When the shared common values were first mentioned, they were not defined; it was only a general reference. It creates a possibility for different interpretation. But later in the text one can find explanation of the shared common values: “importance of the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly those of minorities, the establishment of a multiparty system with free and democratic elections...”² I believe it interpreted “the shared common values” as democratic values. The Agreement definitely demonstrated the Parties’ unity on the issue of the shared common values. While mentioning them in preamble indicates importance of this issue for development of cooperation, multiple references in the further text and the articles describing objectives and principles of cooperation make it clear that both the EU and Russia concerned about the common values. Among the objectives of the EU-Russian partnership the agreement mentioned EU’s readiness “to support Russian efforts to consolidate its democracy” (Art. 1). One of general principles stated in the PCA was “respect for democratic principles and human rights” (art. 2). Political dialogue was designed to

...foresee that the Parties endeavor to cooperate on matters pertaining to the observance of the principles of democracy and human rights, and hold consultations, if necessary, on matters related to their due implementation (Art. 6).

Joint declaration annexed to the agreement stated that “reference to the respect of human rights constituting an essential element of the Agreement and to cases of special urgency”. Thus the shared common values were recognized, they were included in the principles and objectives of the EU-Russian partnership and they were reinforced by instruments of Political dialogue. But it was believed that reference to democracy and democratic principles appeared in the Agreement because of the EU influence, while Russia was interested in further development of economic cooperation and agreed to political cooperation in exchange to developed economic cooperation. The PCA became a compromise solution as it corresponded to interests of both parties³.

In order to understand real relevance of “shared common values” to the parties, I would turn to the Community and Russian law to see whether internal legal acts reflect the European Union’s and Russia’s concerns about democracy. For this purpose, I am going to review the Community

² Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation. Full text signed in Corfu on 24 June 1994 by the European Union and the Russian Federation, Preamble.

³ More about development of EU-Russian relations read in Tatiana Romanova and Natalia Zaslavskaya, “EU-Russia: Towards the Four Spaces” // Baltic Defence Review, No. 12 Volume 2, 2004, pp. 84-103.

primary law meaning the Treaties establishing the European Communities, on the European Union and amending them treaties⁴, and the Russian Constitution.

Starting with the *Community law*, it is important to say that originally the treaties establishing the European Communities did not mention democratic values and human rights, though they did unite only democratic states. For several decades the European Communities specialized only in economic issues. For a very long period they failed to transfer European integration process from purely economic area to political one.

The Single European Act was the first treaty to introduce democracy issue into the Community law as its preamble mentioned importance of democracy principles both inside the Communities and outside on the international arena and the Community's responsibility to act:

Determined to work together to promote democracy on the basis of the fundamental rights recognized in the constitutions and laws of the Member States, in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms...

Aware of the responsibility incumbent upon Europe to aim at speaking ever increasingly with one voice and to act with consistency and solidarity in order more effectively to protect its common interests and independence, in particular to display the principles of democracy and compliance with the law and with human rights to which they are attached...

The Single European Act also indicated the democratic nature of the Communities' Member States: "democratic peoples of Europe". The Southern enlargements when Greece, Spain and Portugal joined Communities demonstrated the European Communities' commitment to support democratic reforms in the neighboring countries even at the expense of economic interests.

The Maastricht treaty further developed democracy dimension in the Community law. Its Preamble confirmed "attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law" and expressed desire to "enhance further democratic and efficient functioning of the institutions". Before the Maastricht treaty it was supposed that the Communities allowed only democratic states in, but then Article F clearly stated that Member States' governance systems were based on democratic principles. The treaty also opened new opportunities for external activities and strengthened democracy objectives there, for example, it launched the CFSP, which was as well supposed to "to develop and

⁴ Some scholars consider these treaties similar to Constitution, e.g., J.H.H. Weiler, *The Constitution of Europe: "Do the New Clothes Have an Emperor?"* and Other Essays on European Integration. Cambridge, 1999

consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”.⁵ Democracy objective was also introduced in the Development policy: “general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms”⁶. The Treaty of Amsterdam reinforced democracy dimension by declaring that “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States”⁷. Treaty of Nice confirmed that economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries should “contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to the objective of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms”⁸. Hence steadily democratic principles were introduced into the Community law; they were declared the principle foundation for the Union and included into its external activities.

Another important step forward in development of democratic dimension of Community law could be produced with the Constitutional treaty. Its text had a special title devoted to “Democratic life of the Union”. It was targeted at consolidation of democracy inside the European Union, which was widely criticized for “democratic deficit”. It was not enough to ensure democratic nature of Member States, but it was important also to ensure democratic basis of the EU institutional structure and decision-making process. The Constitutional treaty would introduce principle of democratic equality, the principle of representative democracy, the principle of participatory democracy, transparency of decision-making. The second part represented the Charter of fundamental rights of the Union. This Charter consisted of a combination of political and social rights, freedoms and principles. The Constitutional treaty reconfirmed importance of democracy to different EU policies. However, problems with its ratification made the further development of democracy dimension in the Community law very uncertain.

The turning point for the *Russian law* was the new Constitution, which was adopted in 1993 almost after two years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia’s sovereignty de jure. The 1993 Russian Constitution declared Russia a democratic state responsible for respect of human rights in the country. Preamble confirmed respect for human rights and democratic nature

⁵ TEU, Art. J.1

⁶ TEC, Art. 130u

⁷ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Related Acts, Official Journal C 340, 10 November 1997. Art. 1.8.

⁸ Consolidated version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, Official Journal C325, 24 December 2002. Art. 181a

of the Russian state. The main text of the Constitution several times referred to democratic principles. Article 1 called Russia “democratic federal rule-of-law state”, article 2 recognized high value of human rights and freedoms and the state’s responsibility for protection of human rights. The 2nd Chapter defined the human rights largely in accordance with international law, e.g., European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Constitution determined democratic principles as the basis for the Russian governance system. It recognized the people of Russia as the source of legitimacy in the country, who directly and indirectly participate in the process of decision-making⁹. It confirmed division of competences principle¹⁰, determined procedures to elect the President¹¹ and representative institutions¹² and established multiparty system¹³. Therefore, already in early 90s Russia demonstrated its concern about democratic values, particularly respect of human rights and democratic institutions.

Moreover, on the international level Russia has accepted commitments for respect of human rights as a member of the OSCE. Later the Russian authorities struggled hard in order to prove democratic nature of the Russian state and to make it possible for Russia to join the Council of Europe. Eventually, they managed to finalized accession negotiations and Russia also accepted responsibilities of the Council of Europe member, became a party of the European Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and enabled its citizens to apply to the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Therefore, it seems that the both parties included democratic principles into their primary law and constitutional acts. The European Union and Russia did have common values at the point when they negotiated the PCA. By then the EU had had long traditional of democratic governance, even though it was included into the Community law relatively late, and Russia had indicated its intention to follow democratic principles, which became the basis of the 1993 Constitution, and accepted international commitments for respect of human rights.

However, series of dramatic events raised the question about political stability in the country and perspectives of political reforms. If in case of the European integration *finalité politique* is not clear because it is the first case of that kind and different integration theories can not provide clear understanding of its future, in case of Russia political instability made it difficult to predict

⁹ Constitution of the Russian Federation, 1993. Art. 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., Art. 10.

¹¹ Ibid., Art. 81.

¹² Ibid. Art. 96

¹³ Ibid. Art. 13

the future development of the country. In October 1993 confrontation between the Parliament and the President ended with the federal military forces' attack against the parliamentary building and numerous casualties. Actually, only after those events a new constitution was prepared in order to emphasize the democratic nature of the Russian state and the authorities' intention to pursue political reforms and democratization of Russia. Another dramatic event that again caused certain doubts about "shared values" was the Russian military mission in Chechnya in 1995, which developed into real war and resulted in multiple cases of human rights violations. It did deteriorate relations between the EU and Russia; the European Union even delayed ratification of the PCA. But in 1996 the war was over; ratification procedure was resumed, and the PCA came into force late in 1997.

The 1999 became a year to verify validity of the EU-Russian relations. In 1999, the European Union and Russia almost simultaneously decided to determine the main principles of their policies towards each other and adopted strategies of these policies. The first to come was the strategy from the European Union. It just got the Amsterdam treaty come into force providing the CFSP with a new instrument – common strategies. It seems very important that the first such common strategy that was adopted in June 1999 was the strategy towards Russia¹⁴. Then in a few months period Russia replied with its Middle Term strategy towards the European Union¹⁵. The strategies described partners' priorities and their vision of this EU-Russian partnership. Comparison of these two documents demonstrated difference in the perception of their partnership. On the one hand, the European Union indicated high importance of further democratization in Russia. The EU document explicitly stated that the European authorities wanted Russia to be "a stable, open and pluralistic democracy". Further development of the EU-Russian relations was possible only on the basis of "shared democratic values". The European authorities were particularly concerned about consolidation of democracy in Russia and indicated it as one of the EU's principle objectives. To consolidate democracy in the country, special attention was supposed to be paid to development of public institutions and emergence of civil society. The strategy suggested a number of actions to ensure democracy in Russia, including support of institutional reform, training of young politicians and civil servants, assistance in organization of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, prevention of human rights violation, contacts between the Russian and European politicians at different

¹⁴ Common Strategy of the European Union of 4 June 1999 on Russia (1999/414/CFSP) // OJ of the European Communities 24.6.1999. L157/1 – 9.

¹⁵ Strategia razvitiya otnosheniy Rossiyskoi Federatzii i Evropeiskogo sojuza na srednesrochnuju perspektivu (2000-2010 gg.) (The Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy towards the European Union (2000-2010)) // Diplomatichesky vestnik, No 11, 1999

levels, support of independent NGOs, support of freedom of media. Of course, other areas of cooperation were also mentioned in the EU strategy, but definitely the greatest concern was given to the problem of Russia's democratization. On the other hand, the Russian authorities in contrast to their European counterparts paid almost no attention to the democracy issue. They only mentioned the EU's experience to promote further construction of a democratic rule-of-law State that could be used in Russia. Much more attention was paid to other areas of cooperation, including widening the scope of political dialogue, development of trade and investments, cross-border cooperation, approximation of technical standards, etc. Among other important issues was mentioned necessity to protect the Russian interests from the negative impact of enlargement. Obviously, the two strategies demonstrated that even though the EU and Russia were willing to cooperate and expressed interests in further development of their cooperation, the parties' expectations and preferences were rather different. Growing misunderstanding became more obvious due to the new military campaign in Chechnya, which was started almost at the same time when the Russian strategy towards the EU was published.

Again the question about the shared common values was raised together with suspicion that those values were not really shared but rather were projected by the European Union and accepted by the Russian authorities as a result of bargain during negotiations. In fact, the European Union always demonstrated its concern about democratization in Russia. No wonder that support of democratic reforms and democracy consolidation was an important element of the EU's policy towards Russia as it was part of CFSP, which objective was development and consolidation of democracy.

2. THE EU'S POLICY OF PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA

Implementation of this ambitious CFSP objective required various political and economic resources. Similar resources were used in the framework of Development policy to support democratization in the 3d world countries. The EU's obvious advantage was its economic power with great influence on the world market. The EU had gained a reputation of "economic giant but political dwarf". Its activities since early 90s were meant to overcome this reputation and to guarantee political influence of the European Union. Development of CFSP was an important part of this policy. The EU step-by-step has increased its political influence on the international arena. But when it comes to policy of promoting democracy to a country like Russia, then the EU political resources were not efficient.

For Russia and other countries cooperating with the European Union, an important fact is that the EU's policy towards third countries is based on conditionality principle meaning that EU requires the countries it is dealing with through different external policies to correspond to its conditions for example functioning democratic institutions. Of course, efficiency and credibility of such policy depends on the EU's resources, the variety of instruments that the EU can use towards particular country, and on type of dependency between the EU and a third country.

Frankly speaking, political resources still mainly belong to the Member States. Though the European Union has developed its own external policies, usually it has to rely on the resources of its Member States. However, the fact that it is trying to promote democratic values in the world demonstrates growing political ambitions of the EU. There are several reasons that prevent further increase of the supranational authorities influence over the external relations. The first reason is a special nature of the CFSP decision-making when the intergovernmental institutions play a major role meaning that the Member States still keep their influence over this policy. The result is that the common decisions taken by the EU authorities usually present a compromise of different positions and national interests. Another reason is the complicated decision-making on the European level which makes it more favorable for the third countries to deal with particular Member States instead of European Union. It is especially important for those countries, which have traditions of intensive relations with certain EU countries but have little interest in developing relations with the EU as a whole. Even Russia, which is definitely interested in development of its relations with the European Union, seems to be more successful in dealing with the EU Member States. Only the states planning to join the European Union are very sensitive to the EU political demands. But for the majority of countries bilateral relations with Member States are preferable as they have been developed in a more pragmatic and more efficient way. At the same time common foreign policy decisions usually are determined according to the principle of the lowest common denominator meaning that controversial relations with one Member State can ruin relations with the whole Union. Of course, the fact that supranational authorities' role is limited and the non-EU states prefer to deal with particular Member States undermines the EU opportunities to use political resources as an instrument of influence over the third countries. Yet the EU has been trying to put pressure on the third countries using their interest in developing economic relations with it as it was during ratification of the PCA with Russia when war in Chechnya caused delay of ratification by the EU. Of course, credibility of such measure is higher in those cases when non-EU countries are dependent on the EU and interested in keeping good relations with it.

However, the major instrument that the EU can use to influence the third countries and to promote democratic values there is its economic power. As European integration was launched in the economic area, after several decades of cooperation the EU has accumulated substantial economic resources. It has become one of the principle economic actors in the world. Access to the European common market opens tremendous opportunities for exporting countries. Considering its economic importance on the international arena, the EU exercises significant influence over all international actors. Even such economic giants as the United States are sensitive to some decisions of the EU's institutions, e.g. Commission's competition policy decisions. As for the countries with less economic resources and trade ties with the European common market, they are even more dependent on the EU's policies.

In contrast to limited political opportunities, there is a wide range of economic measures that the EU officials can use in order to promote democratic values from economic sanctions to limitation of financial assistance and suspension of trade benefits. Importance of economic influence of the EU is higher in cases of disproportional relations when the third countries are more interested in relations with the European Union.

Though the EU had very limited political impact on Russia and the PCA did not provide it with instruments of influence over the Russian policy-formation, it had its economic resources that could be used for different purposes, including consolidation of democracy in Russia. The major financial instruments to provide assistance to Russia were Tacis and Tempus programmes. Since 1994 Tacis have become one of the programmes responsible for financing the EU's Democracy and Human Rights programme (EIDHR), which was planned to "promote democratic societies" and to "consolidate democracies that have emerged in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the New Independent States and Mongolia". Another special Tacis programme, which was supposed to support NGOs was "Link into European NGOs" (LIEN), which was meant to provide help to NGOs. However, limited financial resources minimized influence of these programmes. EIDHR had an annual budget around 10 mln ECU for the whole CIS region. Financial resources of LIEN were even smaller than resources of the Democracy programme, in 1994 the programme's budget was around 4 million ECU. Though these programmes demonstrated EU's intention to support democratic reforms in the post-Soviet area and particularly in Russia, it was difficult to expect substantial impact from them.

While the European authorities tried to support democratic reforms with their financial resources, they also examined carefully results of political transformation in Russia, the way of

election campaigns' organization, situation with mass-media and particularly case of Chechnya. By late 90s they discovered multiple facts that did not correspond to their perception of a democratic country. Use of force in Chechnya, information about human right violation, prevention of international observers to investigate cases of human rights violations, limitation of independent media opportunities to follow those events and to make their comments freely (particularly in case of independent NTV channel) required some action on behalf of the European Union.

As it was mentioned the PCA did not provide the EU with any political instruments but it seems that Russia at that time was still quite sensitive to the EU economic measures, especially considering difficult economic situation and intensive trade with the EU Member States. It was a case of disproportional relations. Therefore, it was possible to expect the European authorities to be more active. The European Parliament members discussed a possibility to put economic pressure on Russia and to freeze financing of Tacis projects apart from the ones promoting democracy and civil society¹⁶. However, the efficiency of such measures was not clear as they could totally undermine the EU-Russian relations instead of solving the problem of human rights in Russia. Eventually the risk of damaging the EU-Russian relations was considered too high. It means that relations were not that disproportional, as they seemed to be. Russia was also important for the EU. The European Union definitely demonstrated intention to preserve relations and finally made a choice in favor of milder measures to influence Russia even at the risk of undermining credibility of its policy towards Russia. It appeared more efficient to develop relation and cooperation and to use the existing mechanisms like political dialogue to discuss the controversial issues like Chechnya and independent media. The 2004 Commission's communication stressed importance of developing relations with Russia. It definitely indicated that cooperation instead of confrontation would contribute more to the human rights problems' solutions. It would enable the EU officials to discuss frankly the sensitive political issues with their Russian counterparts, including "Russian practices that run counter to universal and European values, such as democracy, human rights in Chechnya, media freedom and some environmental issues"¹⁷.

Today when the Russian economy demonstrates a stable growth rate, Russia is not really interested in the financial assistance from the European Union. Instead the Russian resources,

¹⁶ Report with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on EU-Russian relations. A5-0053/2004, 2 February 2004. Rapporteur: Bastiaan Belder.

¹⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on relations with Russia COM(2004) 106, 09/02/04

especially energy resources, have become an important matter for the Europeans and caused a growing concern about the EU's energy security and its dependence on Russia. Finally, EU and Russia are in the situation of mutual economic dependence when no party can abuse economic instruments. This situation makes it extremely difficult for the European Union to pursue its common policy towards Russia as it lacks real instruments to influence Russia and to make its policy credible.

3. RUSSIA'S REACTION TO THE EU'S POLICY OF PROMOTING DEMOCRACY

To estimate impact of EU's policy of promoting democracy in Russia, I want to evaluate national conditions and political situation in the country. Though national conditions have changed dramatically since early 90s, I will try to underline the main tendencies throughout this period.

In early 90s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian authorities fought hard to get rid of the "Soviet heritage" and restore the country's international reputation. They wanted radical transformation of the country and they launched political and economic reforms that were supposed to bring Russia from authoritarian past with state-run economy to democratic and market economy future. President Yelstin and his political allies declared necessity of democratic reforms in Russia. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was led by Kozyrev, a big advocate of close relations with the Western countries. At that time the Russian authorities were eager to accept assistance from the EU and European recommendations concerning political reforms. It was then that the PCA was negotiated.

However, the radical economic reforms resulted in a growing poverty in the country, voucher privatization further increased gap between the small prosperous part of population and the rest of the people, eventually these reforms undermined public confidence. The disappointed people started to criticize the government, its leaders, and surprisingly the democratic values. For the majority of the people, that government was responsible for economic difficulties and for social problems. The fact that together with economic reforms it also promoted democratic values and called itself "democratic" caused growing skepticism about democracy, which was demonstrated by the parliamentary elections' results in 1993 when the communists and nationalists (LDPR) received the majority while the pro-governmental 'democratic' parties failed to get public support. Then the State Duma (Russian House of Parliament) had majority of opposition parties, which refuse to support President Yeltsin and his reforms.

While political and economic reforms in the country faced multiple obstacles, relations with the West, including the European Union, deteriorated. The Russian authorities did not get enough support for their reforms they expected from the West¹⁸. Disappointed in the relations with the West, Russia started to reinforce relations with its “Near Abroad” and intensified its activities on the post-Soviet territory. Attitude towards the EU became more pragmatic. The European Union was still considered an important partner, even “strategic partner”. It was stressed by the 1999 Russian Strategy towards the EU.¹⁹ President Putin continued to transform Russia; he pushed for administrative, judicial, and military reforms. Development of the world market, growing gas and oil prices helped him to achieve economic recovery. He made the country less dependent on external actors and less sensitive both to criticism from domestic opposition and to external pressure, for example, coming from the European Union.

Development of Russia did not undermine its interest in further cooperation with the EU. As in early 90s, today Russia is still interested in stable relations with European Union and access to the European common market. Thus it has had to follow negotiation agenda suggested by the EU officials, including democracy issue. However, reaction of the Russian officials to the democratic requirements of the EU was rather complicated. In fact, it is possible to determine several major tendencies of the Russian officials’ reaction:

- 1) EU’s requirements were considered an important contribution to improve political reforms in Russia, so it was the right way to follow in order to improve situation in the country²⁰;
- 2) EU’s requirements were treated as a formal condition to further development of important relations with the EU, if Russia wanted to increase trade and economic relations, it needed to agree to democratic requirements, the result was only formal agreement with the EU demands and low efficiency of real politics;
- 3) Agreement with democratic values in general, incorporation of them in various legal acts but debate on the meaning of democratic values, as there is even an academic debate on the definition of democracy²¹.

The Russian authorities argue that political situation in the country does correspond to the minimalist approach to democracy meaning political rights and opportunities to the citizens

¹⁸ Stanislav Tkachenko, Russia’s Membership in WTO: implications for economic security of post-Soviet countries // Post-Communist Countries in the Globalizing World. St. Petersburg, 2004. P. 174

¹⁹ The Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy towards the European Union (2000-2010)

²⁰ This tendency was particularly true about the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Kozyrev in early 90s

²¹ Dahl, Robert A., A Democratic Paradox? // Political Science Quarterly, 115 (1), 2000, pp. 35-40

and democratic institutions²². It was also argued by President Putin during the US-Russian summit in Bratislava in February, 2005, when he confirmed Russia's determination to enhance democratic foundations of the Russian state.²³

Eventually 2 concepts were suggested to explain this special nature of the Russian democracy: liberal empire and sovereign democracy. *Liberal Empire* was suggested by Chubais, one of the active leaders of democratic reforms in the 90s and today the head of the Russian electricity monopoly, in 2003, it is a concept about policy towards the neighboring countries through liberal economic instruments, e.g., growing business activities in these countries, without threatening of their borders and territorial integrity²⁴. *Sovereign democracy* was suggested by Surkov, vice head of presidential administration, in 2005, it is about a democratic country that is not influenced by external powers and keeps its full sovereignty²⁵.

- 4) Criticism of democracy in 'the West', particularly, criticism of the US foreign policy and doubts about its democratic nature, and of institutional crisis in the EU, which has been considered as an indication of democracy crisis;
- 5) The Western policy to promote democracy in Russia is often seen as an attempt to control Russia and to limit its sovereignty. It is wrong when some states try to use democracy slogan and "projection of democracy" goal as an element of their external policy towards third countries and a cover of more practical national interests, for example, if one state wants to get access to oil resources of some non-democratic country and uses democracy argument for purely economic reasons, same sort of logic could be used in other situations as well.

It is important to understand that it is difficult to talk about one particular reaction of Russia towards the EU policy because of multiple actors involved either involved in decision-making or dependent on national politics, and they try to shape domestic conditions according to their interests. Of course, it was never one particular tendency, but always a combination of tendencies with the dominating one. If in early 90s it was mainly a combination of the first two tendencies, when the Russian officials agreed to the democracy requirement both because it was seen as method to improve situation in the country and a necessary condition to develop relations with an important economic actor like European Union; today when Russia has become more

²² Minimalist approach according to Robert A. Dahl, A Democratic Paradox?

²³ Press-conference of President V. Putin and President G. Bush, February 24, 2005, Bratislava, Slovakia

²⁴ Comments of A. Zudin concerning the Liberal Empire Ideologem suggested by A. Chubais, 2003, www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/67705-print.htm

²⁵ Vladislav Surkov "Paragrafy pro suverenituu demokratii (Paragraphs about sovereign democracy)", 2005

skeptical towards the EU's policy, it is another combination of tendencies, of attempt to debate the meaning of democratic values, criticism of democracy in the West, suspicion that policy of democracy projection could be used to threaten Russia's sovereignty, and again a necessary requirement to keep good relations with the EU. If in the first case, Russia was literally ready to learn about democracy from the West, today it relies on its own understanding of democracy.

The Russian officials claim that the country satisfies the major democratic criteria meaning democratic institutions, it provides its citizens with opportunities to elect their representatives to the state institutions and this way indirectly to participate in the decision-making process, its Constitution guarantees protection of human rights, etc. Interesting thing is that the Russian authorities, particularly President Putin, managed to get public support. A relatively high share of the Russian population is still satisfied with the state of democracy in Russia, so according to the opinion poll arranged by the Russian centre of public opinion (WSIOM) around 29% of Russians are partly satisfied with democracy in the country, 32% of Russians are not entirely satisfied and only 21% are not satisfied with it²⁶. The same centre arranged another opinion poll and asked about the major democratic institutions. Then more than 43% named equal legal rights, 33% mentioned direct universal elections of the president, only 11% voted in favour of political opposition and 10% supported independent mass-media, which was the 10th popular answer²⁷. These results could explain the reasons of Putin's support in the country while his policy is so criticized abroad.

CONCLUSIONS

Going back to the original question of this research, whether it is possible to speak about shared common values or the European Union just tried to project onto Russia the values that are acknowledged there as "the Western values". I think through my research I have showed a very complicated nature of this situation.

On the one hand, the Russian state has gone through serious political reforms, which were partly connected with democratization of the country, democratic values were accepted by political elite and by the public, and emphasized in the Constitution. The Russian officials demonstrated different reaction on the EU's policy of democracy projection and to criticism of situation with

²⁶ Russian centre of public opinion (WSIOM): www.wciom.ru, 15.04.2004.

²⁷ Ibid, 28.05.2005 (in this case several positive answers were possible).

democracy in Russia, and even tried to manipulate with the meaning of democratic values, but they never rejected them as such and always agreed with their importance. On the other hand, the European Union was very concerned about democratization process in Russia; it had a very clear idea of democratic values and reacted nervously to those problems with democracy in Russia. However, its well-prepared and well-planned policy failed to produce sufficient result due to lack of efficient instruments. The EU policy did not have enough financial resources to provide assistance to support democratic development. When it was a matter of serious problems with democracy, the EU lacked political instruments, and it was reluctant to economic measures against Russia in order to prevent deterioration of the EU-Russian relations. Eventually, the EU's influence over process of democratization in Russia was limited; this process was mainly determined by internal factors of the Russian politics. My conclusion would be that so far the EU failed to project democratic values onto Russia, which is moving slowly step-by-step discovering democratic values by its own.