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Russian Foreign Policy and Its Influence on the EU-Russia Relations in Studies Abroad

The foreign scholars researching EU-Russia relations pay special attention to Russia's foreign policy, its objectives and principles, particular activities, and the decision-making process. They argue that development of relations between the two actors depends on their foreign policy traditions and institutions. They tend to explain the current contradictions between the Russian Federation and the European Union with different traditions and priorities. In fact, some of Russia's foreign policy activities led to serious criticism from the European partners and caused deterioration of relations between Russia and the EU: in 2008, after the war in South Ossetia, cooperation between Russia and the EU was actually suspended for several months, in 2014 the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's decisions about the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine put pressure on the EU to reconsider its policy towards Russia and launch sanctions. The EU-Russia "strategic partnership" was destroyed. These events made further cooperation between the EU and Russia impossible.

A review of foreign studies on the impact of Russian foreign policy on the development of relations between Russia and the European Union in the field of security is based on publications in academic journals (for example, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *European Security*, *Geopolitics*, *the International Spectator*, *Journal of Area Studies*, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *the Washington Quarterly*), publications of research institutes and centers (for example, the Institute for Security Studies of the European Union, the Center for European Policy Studies), volumes published as a result of academic

conferences (for example, the conventions of the Association for International Studies), and others.

This review enables to determine key issues studied by the foreign scholars dealing with the influence of the Russian foreign policy on the EU-Russia relations: (1) Russian foreign policy as a whole, (2) Russian international goals or even ambitions, (3) competition between Russia and the West, including the European Union, (4) the special nature of the political regime in Russia and the significance of Russian political leaders, above all, V.V. Putin and D.A. Medvedev, (5) the role of events in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine since 2014, (6) the specific directions of Russian foreign policy. Many foreign scholars consider the problem of competition between Russia and the West, their values and interests, rivalry between Russia and the European Union in the normative sphere. Some publications focus on certain regional priorities of Russian foreign policy, on how Russia builds its foreign policy activities in various regions, and on the impact of Russia's geographical priorities on relations with the European Union. There is growing interest of foreign researchers to the Russian policy towards "Common Neighbors", primarily Georgia and Ukraine. Russian actions against Georgia in 2008 and the policy towards Ukraine since 2014 have caused criticism from the European Union and the EU member states and adversely affected the nature of relations between Russia and the European Union. Researchers try to explain Russia's actions and justify the negative reaction of the European Union to the actions of the former "strategic partner".

Taking into account multiple publications devoted to the influence of Russian foreign policy on the EU-Russia relations, it is difficult to refer to all research tendencies, but this review gives an idea about major tendencies demonstrated by the foreign scholars, their research interests and priorities.