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EU-Russia shared neighborhood and EU-Russia relations in the studies abroad

The issues of the EU-Russia shared neighborhood and its implications for the EU-Russia relations have got much attention by the scholars especially since the beginning of 2010s. The interests of the researchers in this topic was stimulated by three factors: the development of the EU policies towards the region of the common neighborhood (European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP)); the important political events or processes in the countries of common neighborhood or the conflicts between the regional countries; development and changes in Russia's policy towards these countries.

The independence of the states of the shared neighborhood in 1991 had formed the initial interest of the researchers towards this region. Then the EU enlargement to the East (2004 and 2007), the launch of the European Neighborhood Policy (2003-2004), as well as the phenomenon of "color revolutions" and mass popular protests in a number of common neighborhood countries contributed to the next wave of the scholars' interest towards this region that was reinforced with the Russo-Georgian military conflict (2008), multiple gas disputes and the establishment of the Eastern Partnership initiative by the EU (2008-2009). Finally, the crisis in the Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2014 that resulted in the deepest deterioration of the relation between Russia and the Western community (including the EU) have significantly increased the relevance of the issue of the EU-Russia neighborhood for the research agenda.

Regarding the researches within this domain, first of all, it is possible to single out a number of studies that have been devoted to the conceptualization of the "eastern neighborhood" region of the European Union within the framework of the general concept of "EU neighborhood" (that includes the regions of the "southern" and "eastern" neighbors of the EU).

Thus there have been studies on the political, social and economic analysis of the EU eastern neighborhood.

Also, a number of the academic literature have focused on the shaping, adoption, decision-making and implementation of the EU policies (European Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership) towards the countries of the common neighborhood of the European Union and Russia. Some studies have analyzed the development of relations between the EU and the countries of the common neighborhood in the context of their participation in the ENP and the EaP.

Quite many researches have been devoted to the certain particular aspects of the implementation of EU policies towards its eastern neighborhood (political reforms and democracy, administrative reforms and anti-corruption policies, security problems ect.) where such issues as the conditionality, neighborhood Europeanization, and the EU external governance have been discussed.

A number of studies have discussed the important events and processes (e.g. "color revolutions", "frozen conflicts") in the countries of the common neighborhood, including their international implications. In general, most of the researches have considered the EU eastern neighborhood countries as relatively young and fragile states, whose political consolidation (political institutions, statehood and sovereignty) depends on their Europeanization.

As well there are researches that have compared the EU and Russia's approaches to the region of their shared neighborhood and its countries. A significant number of papers have been devoted to the analysis of Russia's policies towards the post-Soviet space, the projects of Eurasian integration and its institutions (Eurasian Economic Union). Also quite many papers have focused on the Russia's-Ukrainian relations, their current crisis and its impact on the relations between Russia and the EU / Western community. Also, some papers have analyzed the EU policies towards the crisis in and around Ukraine and its implications for the development of the EU international actorness.

Last but not the least the issues of the EU-Russia shared neighborhood and the policies of the EU and Russia towards this area have been discussed in a set of the sub-regional frameworks (first of all, the Black Sea region and the South Caucasus).