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Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence  
St. Petersburg State University, Russia



*Saint-Petersburg 2016*

*Research Brief No 25*

## **Legal aspects of Russia-EU relations in studies abroad**

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One important (and historically first) tendency of studying Russia in the EU was based on the distribution of the powers and instruments of the EU, as well as on its relations with third countries. The latter traditionally includes the EU's dissemination of its values, as well as the system of law, technical regulation. In this context, it was natural to suggest that instruments similar to those used for candidate countries as well as the idea of extending EU legislation and its informal norms (the so-called *acquis communautaire*) are applied to Russia.

These borrowings, as non-Russian studies suggested, had to be rational since the norms were universal (in the opinion of Brussels), but socialization, i.e. the process of training officials of citizens, entrepreneurs, through their awareness of all the advantages offered by the transfer of norms, also played a role. At the same time, it was important to form political networks for the norms' transfer, including through regular exchange of information and socialization, as well as the importance of the principle of political conditionality, according to which the EU provides some (most often economic) benefits to its partners in exchange for the adoption of its legal norms, as well as values.

The possibility of using the model of the European Economic Area (in which Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein accept most of the legislative innovations of Brussels) were also discussed. It was assumed that Russia could become a similar satellite of the European Union.

The requirements to institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the principles of democracy were also logical. Relevant reforms were presented as a condition for deepening the

dialogue with the EU, and their absence and rigid centralization in Russia were seen as barriers. These reforms were also conceptualized as the creation of an appropriate context for the transfer of legislation, norms and administrative practices of the European Union.

Researchers (including lawyers) made a very interesting connection with the normative leadership of the EU, and political scientists - with the concepts of the normative and soft power of the European Union.

However, already in the first decade of this century it turned out that the recipes of the European Union do not work in Russia. There were many reasons for this. One is the lack of prospects for Russia's accession to the EU. The other is the specifics of Russia, the return of its political elite to fundamental historical categories, to the traditional definition of national interest, to the demand for equality. These changes on the Russian side have caused abroad a natural crisis of legal studies of the relations between Russia and the European Union and, in general, scepticism towards the attempts to extend EU legislation and its logic of relations with third countries to Russia. Thus, in non-Russian studies there has been an evolution from the notion that Russia is only a case of the EU's interaction with third countries to the understanding that it is a special partner that requires its own, and not just a standard set of tools.

Studies that were devoted to the topic of transfer of EU norms to Russia naturally used the concept of Europeanization, both rationally (conscious learning and copying of good practices) and sociological (the assimilation of norms and practices in the process of socialization). But the concept of Europeanization was used much less frequently than could be inferred from the numerous reproaches of Russian scientists (and compared to similar work on the countries of the Eastern Neighborhood). In other words, Russia was not perceived as a normal, ordinary neighbour of the European Union, rather, it appeared as an international actor, to which it is necessary to apply the methodology of international relations, rather than political science or integration approaches.

It was also logical to use neoinstitutionalism to explore the possibilities of transferring European norms to Russia. However, lawyers rather used classical institutionalism, which was the logical result of their professional paradigms. Little attention was paid to how institutions function on a daily basis, how they shape the preferences of participants, change them, and outline the agenda. In addition, compared with integration studies or studying EU relations with the United States, China, little attention was paid to the problem of political networks, building cross-border and transnational relations. In general, in comparison with the attention paid to the problem of transfer of norms and regulation of the European Union to Russia, the use of the corresponding

methodology (concepts of Europeanization, neoinstitutional approaches) is disproportionately small.

Finally, non-Russian literature did not meticulously study what was acceptable and what as not, what recipes in Russia were integrated easily, and for which the relevant prerequisites, as well as the administrative apparatus, were not available.