



Erasmus+

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



*Saint-Petersburg 2017*

*Research Brief No 40*

**Tatiana Romanova**

**Europeanisation problem in the Studies of EU-Russian Relations:  
English-Language Publications**

The term "europeanisation" in its most general form in modern Western political science is used to analyse the influence of the European Union on member countries. This interpretation is based on the monopolization of the concept of "Europe" by the European Union (which can not but be disputed in Russia in social, political and academic spheres). The processes that the EU is launching would be more appropriately called "EU-isation" but in English-language literature the term "europeanisation" has established itself. This often leads to some ambiguity in Russian-language research.

The general theory of europeanisation has not evolved, despite the fact that this concept has been actively developed since the 1990s. It combines a variety of approaches. This can be an analysis of the processes at the EU's level (the placement of national practices as common to all), the impact of the EU on member countries, the effect of horizontal exchange of member countries by practices and norms (especially in the open method of coordination), mutual influence between member countries and supranational level. At the same time, the logic of europeanisation can be both rational (the spread of clear rules and norms), and constructivist (the dissemination of certain discourses). It can affect policies, politics and polities. D. Olsen famously identifies five ways of using the term europeanization, ranging from changes in the external borders of the EU to the EU's influence on member states.

The concept of "europeanisation" arose as an element of the study of internal processes in the EU, as a form in-between the IR theory and political science (as, indeed, the theory of integration in general). However very soon this tool began to be applied also to the third countries, i.e. outsiders of the European Union. At first, these were candidate countries, the position of which implied changes in their entire political and economic system. Then Switzerland and Norway attracted the attention. Finally, it came to neighboring countries. At the same time, if candidates, as well as Switzerland and Norway were most often positioned as successful europeanisation, the neighbouring countries already have a more complex picture. Researchers have repeatedly emphasised that rational (or thin, in terms of F. Schlimmelfennig) europeanisation is not typical for them because of the lack of material incentives, understandable benefits, and dense europeanisation (as a result of socialization with the EU) takes a long time.

Russia was analysed through the concept of europeanisation in few studies. As a rule, it is concluded that europeanisation conflicts with the discourse of the Russian political elite regarding the country, challenges the Russian understanding of sovereignty, and is also viewed as neo-imperialist practice of the West.

There is, however, a small number of works that recognize the possibility of a partial europeanisation of Russia or certain spheres of EU-Russian cooperation. For example, G. Melloni suggests using the concept of europeanisation to analyse Russia's strategy for reforming competition law, company law and consumers' protection. T. Romanova showed some examples of the europeanisation of energy regulation, including in the framework of the Energy Dialogue between Russia and the EU. P. Kalinichenko, together with R. Petrov, showed curious cases of europeanisation of the legal culture and legal system of Russia. The concept of europeanisation often arose when analysing the practices of cross-border cooperation between Russia and the EU, regional cooperation, especially in the context of the Northern Dimension, as well as cooperation in the Baltic Sea region in general and in Kaliningrad in particular.

T. Romanova, analysing both domestic and foreign works on europeanisation, and the practice of Russia, in 2017 suggested that Moscow agrees only with instrumental europeanisation, which is customary for Russia because of its historical experience. At the same time, Moscow resists normative europeanisation that would imply fundamental changes in the political, legal, social and economic spheres of life, i.e. a total orientation towards normative and value parameters of the European Union.

Finally, Russia is actively present in the work on the europeanisation of the common neighbourhood region, but not as a recipient of europeanisation, but as an actor that hinders EU-ization of the countries located between the EU and Russia. Russia then appears as an actor that

increases the costs of europeanisation towards Brussels. This increase in costs may take the form of natural gas prices hikes, problems with the export of certain goods to the Russian market (due to new barriers, including phytosanitary nature) or with the import of oil and natural gas (for example, for technical or environmental reasons character). On the other hand, Russia can also stimulate the europeanisation of the common neighbourhood, since Russia's actions lead to the fact that europeanisation is defined as "a governmental strategic choice between Russia and the EU". As a result, europeanisation might acquire a new legitimization.

At the same time, some non-Russian research notes that Russia is not a homogeneous actor, not only in domestic but also in foreign policy. In particular, some players (primarily business) support the europeanisation of the neighbourhood region, since this guarantees greater predictability in political and legal regulation, potentially, a new interesting channel for entering the EU market, as well as the opportunity to test some provisions of European law within a system that is similar to the Russian one.

Finally, it is also possible to identify a Russian strategy of coherent technical EU-isation in Russia's actions on europeanisation in the neighbourhood region. In other words, Moscow does not object to the adoption of EU rules and norms in a number of spheres but this should not be a large-scale reform of the political and legal system, i.e. normative EU-isation. In addition, an important condition for Moscow is the coordinated progress on the path of EU-isation, for example, within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, and not differentiated, without maintaining ties with Russia or developing into an opposition to it.

The application of the concept of "europeanisation" to Russia proper has almost disappeared after the events of 2014. At the same time research on how Moscow influences the europeanisation of the common neighborhood region has attracted increasing interest of researchers and experts.