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**Realist paradigm in the Russian publications devoted to
the EU-Russian relations**

The realist paradigm and realist theories of international relations (classical realism, neo-realism and neoclassical realism) are widely used by the Russian IR scholars. Russian representatives of these theories usually study international system with an emphasis on the centers of power and their influence. They describe Russia as a great power and argue that its behavior in the international arena is determined by this status. Representatives of neo-realism refer to the structure of international relations, key role of antagonistic environment, and states' activities to maintain a balance of power. Today neoclassical realism is relatively less popular among Russian scholars, but it has lots of potential an analytical framework to explain Russian foreign policy as it helps to explain state's response to environmental challenges depending on the situation within the state.

Realist approaches are actively used by Russian scientists to analyze the development of the contemporary international system, the key security problems, the role of Russia in the international relations and the main areas of interaction between the Russian Federation and other international actors, primarily the United States and NATO. It should be noted that realist approaches were used less often among experts in relations between Russia and the European Union. But nevertheless, there have always been researchers who focus on the spheres of influence and balance of power, the development of European security and various security problems, and their impact on general development of relations between the EU and Russia. Representatives of realist approaches also research such issues as energy aspects of EU-Russian relations and disputes over the Arctic region.

Realist approaches became more popular among the Russian scholars as a result of the EU's expansion to the East, active cooperation with the "Eastern partners" and the crisis in

Ukraine. In the Russian epistemic community, realist approaches became a dominating interpretation of the Ukrainian events and their influence on the relations between Russia and the European Union. The Russian scholars described Russian and the EU as competing actors, seeking to expand and consolidate their spheres of interests. Some scholars started to compare the current situation of confrontation between Russia and the European Union over Ukraine with the Cold War period.

Realist theoretical assumptions are actively used by Russian representatives of geopolitics. They examine various geopolitical dimensions of Russian foreign policy, including European and 'Near Abroad' and analyze Russia's efforts to change the balance of power.

Therefore, use of realist approaches as an analytical framework is determined by the special research agenda and interest to such topics as security and international conflicts. However, It seems difficult to classify Russian realists according to the "Western" IR theories (classical realism, neo-realism and neoclassical realism). There were different attempts to classify Russian realists. Some scholars divide the Russian realists using a combination of theoretical and disciplinary approaches: the system-historical approach, the structuralist school, geopolitics and geo-economics, political philosophy and sociology, political psychology and political economy. Others concentrate on foreign policy interpretations: (1) the school of "balance of power" and (2) the school of "security through expansion." The first interpretation is actually neo-realism, it also has defensive and offensive dimensions; the second interpretation is a kind of version of the geopolitical approach with an emphasis on the idea of an antagonistic environment and the need for expansion to ensure security.

This review of publication of the Russian realists about relations between Russia and the European Union is based on the examination of publications in academic journals (*Pro et Contra*, *Vestnik of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, *Vestnik of the St. Petersburg University*, *Political Science*, *International Life*, *International Processes*, *World Economy and International relations*, *National security / nota bene*, *National interests: priorities and security*, *Policy*, *Political studies*, *Problems of national strategies and Russia in Global Politics*, *Contemporary Europe*), materials from the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies. These publications demonstrate growing popularity of the realistic paradigm after intensified activities of the European Union in the post-Soviet space, contradictions between the Russian Federation and the EU for the spheres of influence, events in Ukraine and further crisis in relations between Russia and the EU.