

# THE EU INTEGRATION DISCOURSE IN THE ENERGY RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

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## Abstract

The energy issue is a long-term one of the most discussed, controversial topics in relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation. The intention of the present article is an attempt to overcome the largely non-discursive and in the security conditions anchored way of looking at the energy interaction of the EU and the RF and through an integration discourse to analyze EU energy relations with Russia in the years 2004 - 2014. In the theoretical level, the article is based on a critical constructivism, which in relation to the discourse as the main concept reflects a number of fundamental knowledge. At the methodological level, the article is based on the discourse analysis as a basic methodological tool through which the author examines the EU text documents.

**KEY WORDS:** European Union, Russian Federation, integration discourse, critical constructivism, discourse analysis, energy

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of energy has been one of the most discussed topics in the long run that has been at the heart of many a controversy in the relations between the European Union (EU) and its biggest eastern neighbor, the Russian Federation (RF). On the one hand, the topic of energy is a key factor in strengthening the formal and informal relations between the EU and Russia. However, on the other hand, the question of the continuous and secure supply of oil and natural gas has caused distress between the EU and the RF and has contributed to a deterioration of mutual relations. This may be currently observed in the example of the continuing political and military crisis in Ukraine, which has led to a significant deterioration in the EU's relations with Russia and which has at the same time provoked concerns about energy security taking the form of continued, uninterrupted and stable supplies of Russian oil and gas via Ukrainian territory to Europe for many EU member states.

The importance of the topic is evidenced by the growing number of scientific

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publications covering the issue of energy relations between the EU and the RF (see Bušuev, 2003, 2007; Aalto, 2008; Emeljanov, 2009; Prill, 2012). A large number of expert studies has also been published on the issue of energy relations between the EU and the Russian Federation (see cf. Milov, 2008; Liuhto, 2009; Böhme, 2011; Belikova, 2013), including also scientific articles (see for instance Baghdad, 2006, pp. 961-975; Romanova, 2007; Haukkala, 2008, pp. 317-331; Sherr, 2010, pp. 55-68; Machnáč, 2013).

However, these studies and articles largely focus on material factors of the energy interactions between the EU and the RF, or the institutional structures embedded in these relationships, which, however, lie outside of the discursive framework. The main emphasis is placed on exploring the possibilities and obstacles to closer cooperation in terms of energy security. On the contrary, the generalization of these aspects of EU-Russia relations, which could contribute to a deeper understanding of the issue of energy relations in its complexity, has been – with just a few exceptions (discussed below, see Youngs, 2009; Kurz, 2010; Kuzemko, 2014, pp. 58-75) – disregarded in the expert literature.

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to overcome this largely non-discursive and security-conditioned way of looking at the EU-Russia energy interaction and to use a discursive approach in order to explore the EU-RF energy relations in the years 2004 - 2014. Specifically, the author focuses on the EU integration discourse, which - despite the current media coverage of the concept of “energy security” - remains clearly dominant in the energy relations with Russia (see Khasson, 2009; Kratochvíl, Tichý, 2013; Tichý, Kratochvíl, 2014). The strong presence of the integration discourse in the energy sector is also based largely on the nature of the mission of the EU itself, or the European Commission respectively, which is to ensure continued integration not only within the EU itself, but also its expansion beyond its borders towards its partners, including Russia (see Kratochvíl, 2008; Gilbert, 2011).

There are two main objectives of the paper. The first is to analyze the integration discourse on the energy relations of the European Union with Russia in the years 2004-2014, and within this framework to define the main topics. The second objective is to identify the similarities and differences of the EU integration discourses of the period of the so-called first Barroso Commission (2004-2009) and the period of the so-called second Barroso Commission (2010-2014). The main objectives of this paper will be achieved by finding answers to the following sub-questions: (1) What are the basic themes of the EU integration discourse on energy relations with the Russian Federation? (2) How is the RF perceived in the EU integration discourse? (3) In what ways do the two EU integration discourses overlap or differ?

The structure of the paper is the following. The first part describes the theoretical

and methodological framework for examining the discourse analysis of the EU integration discourse. Further, the paper defines the criteria for selecting the text documents of EU institutions and the speeches and statements of European Union political leaders. The second part identifies the main characteristics of the integration discourse. Subsequently, in the context of the individual EU integration discourses on energy relations with the Russian Federation, it focuses specifically on their main themes, on the perception of Russia by the EU, on their differences and similarities, in order to answer the defined research questions.

## **THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING DISCOURSE**

The paper is based on the assumption that international relations (and specifically the EU energy relations with the RF) are not only the result of material and physical factors, but that they are in equal part a socially constructed phenomenon influenced by ideological factors, such as intersubjective meanings, norms, discourses and discursive power that encompasses knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology and language (see Adler, 1997; Hopf, 1998). It follows that discourses are not just a simple reflection of the material or physical reality, but that the ideas that shape them have the power to change the conduct and behavior of actors. Without their presence, our actions would be based solely on material interests, and as such would become purely mechanical (see Kratochvíl, Tichý, 2012, p. 96).

### **1. The Concept of Discourse**

The definition of the discourse, which presents the basic interpretive framework for the energy relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation, is a challenge, because this concept does not have a clearly and universal definition. Quite on the contrary, there are many conflicting and overlapping definitions of discourse, which is used in different contexts and with different meanings.

Although the discourse may differ from the behavior of a political actor (Searle, 1979), it plays an important role in social analysis, because it always reflects the basic ideological framework of the actor and his learning process. Discourse reveals the basic principles on which the attitude of an actor is based, and through which he interprets the political reality. The study of discourse allows us to reveal the internal inconsistencies of actors' rhetoric or manipulative techniques that are present in the discourse (Kratochvíl, Tichý, 2013, p. 393).

This paper understands discourse as a set of ideas, concepts and categories

through which meaning is given to reality. The discourse is thus used for framing a problem; this means that discourse may distinguish certain aspects of a situation, provide tools with which problems are constructed and control the way society conceptualizes the world (see Hajer, 1993, pp. 45-46).

## **2. Constructivism and Critical Discourse**

The main theoretical approach used in the examination of the EU integration discourse on energy relations with the Russian Federation is critical constructivism (i.e. radical or consistent constructivism, see Hopf, 1998; Dias, 2013; Cho, 2009; Fiala, 2007), which in relation to the discourse reflects a number of fundamental findings (see Simmerle, 2011, p. 5). Firstly, although critical constructivism sees the relationship between (discursive) structure and (interpretations by) the actor as mutually constitutive, based on the acceptance of the findings of post-structuralism theory, it gradually leans on the structural side of the actor-structure debate. In other words, critical constructivism is trying to understand the constitutive effects of discursive structure in the creation of the position of the subject and intersubjective understanding as a basis for social order. This kind of ideological and structural perspective does not see individual actions as primary consequences of individual options, but as authorized by discursive structure that controls the formation of rationality (see for example Simmerle, 2011, p. 6).

Secondly, critical constructivism assumes that actors seek to dominate discourses and enforce their interpretations in structured discursive fields. In the struggle for enforcing dominant interpretations - widely perceived as a shared intersubjective knowledge - power plays a crucial role. It does so not only in disciplinary and productive terms, which are influenced by discursive structures in shaping the scope of interpretation, but also in terms of the different capacities of the actors for the implementation of their interpretation. This awareness of power is a prerequisite for unleashing the potential for critical constructivism, as it focuses on the way dominant actors influence the significance of the structure of world politics, and the political consequences of research in the context of the reproduction of this interpretation (see Zehfuss, 2002).

For critical constructivism, discourses and interpretations are not mere instruments serving the interests of actors, but the basic building blocks of the definition of their identity, that defines their interests and their method of pursuing them (Kratochvíl, Drulák, et al., 2009, p.126). Critical constructivism thus holds that ideas are constructed in the context of discourse, which then take root in society, where they determine its norms, values and political practice. At the same time, these values and norms, framed by discourse, influence and form a

common identity that the author understands as a concept describing the tangible and intangible forces that construct the political and social reality (Howarth, Torfling, 2005). In order to understand the behavior of actors, it is important to understand their collective identity, because only the identity of the actor that can change and evolve, determines their interests, which must be reflected by the political discourse (Kratochvíl, 2008, p.182).

### **3. Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis**

The main methodological tool employed by the author in the paper is primarily discourse analysis (to discourse analysis see Philips, Hardy, 2002; Paltridge, 2012; Johnstone, 2012), which is commonly associated with either the language structure of the texts, or the augmentative and rhetorical organization of text and speech. Discourse analysis is furthermore based on the assumption that the various ways of using language represent different views of the world and a different perception (see Paltridge, 2012, p. 3).

Discourse analysis therefore constitutes a suitable research tool for the study of the EU integration discourse on Russia in the energy sector (Karaivanov, 2012, pp. 21-22). The aim of this paper is thus to explore a series of speeches and texts that deal with the energy relations between the EU and the RF, and to use discourse analysis as a tool for the analysis of the EU integration discourse on energy relations with the Russian Federation. It follows that discourse analysis will not be understood as a specific method, but rather as a general methodology that embodies a strong social constructionist view of the world within which it is possible to combine different methods of data analysis (Philips, Hardy, 2002, p. 3).

The main method of data analysis, by which is examined the existence and content of the individual topics of the EU integration discourse, is thematic analysis. Although no academic consensus exists on whether a thematic analysis may be counted among the methods suitable for the analysis of discourse, the author builds on literature that does not rule out the use of thematic analysis as a method of discourse analysis (see Hynek, Střítecký, 2010a, p. 9; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun, Clarke, 2006, pp. 77-101; Rice, Ezzy, 1999). Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytical method which is based on the strategy and the process of searching and finding the key themes appropriate for characterizing a given phenomenon. In essence, this strategy is based on multiple readings of source texts. The key is to detect patterns of content organization and relationships within the analyzed data, by means of which the emerging themes become analytical categories (Hynek, Střítecký, 2010b, p.88). Using thematic analysis provides a more detailed account of one particular subject or a group of subjects

analyzed in the context of the EU integration discourse.

**4. The Corpus of Documents and the Criteria for their Selection**

On a practical level, the author initially focused on the criteria for the selection of the documents to be examined, furthermore on the creation of a corpus of text documents, statements and speeches, and finally on defining the time range of the selected documents. This process is divided into two stages.

**Table 1.** Key terms related to the integration discourse

Discourse of	Terms
Integration	Integration Cooperation Partnerships and relationships Interdependence Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) Energy dialogue EU-Russia

Source: compiled by the author

In the first stage, the paper focused on a set of criteria for the selection of documents. Firstly, each individual corpus included mostly textual and verbal documents of two kinds, namely: (1) documents published by the EU institutions and (2) statements, speeches and interviews by selected representatives of the EU. Conversely, the corpus did not include television or radio speeches, nor interviews with selected EU officials, where there was no textual transcript of the interview available. Secondly, the author chose only documents with an occurrence of the keyword “Russia” or “Russian” and at the same time “energy”. At the same time, the documents, were analyzed in such a way that on the basis of repeated reading, keywords and concepts that are directly related to the integration discourse are identified, see Table 1.

**1.4.1 Selection of the EU Documents from the Years 2004-2009**

Subsequently, in the second phase, a clearly defined time range for the analysis of the documents included in the first corpus was chosen, which covers the period from early November 2004 to the end of November 2009, i.e. the so-called first Barroso Commission. Based on the above criteria, the corpus was expanded by initially the speeches, statements and interviews of European Commission President José M. Barroso, European Commissioner for External Relations

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mendelson (2004-2008) and since October 2008, Catherine Ashton, European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn and Head of the EU Delegation in Russia Marc Franco (2004-2009), and since November 2009, Fernando M. Valenzuela. To avoid excessive focus only on the representatives of the European Commission, the paper also incorporates into the corpus selected speeches and interviews by Javier Solana, EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and a speeches by the President of the European Parliament, Josep Fontelles Borrelli (2004-2007), followed since January 2007 by Hans-Gert Pöttering (2007-2009) and since July 2009 by Jerzy Buzek (2009).

In this way, 117 documents were compiled into the corpus (official and unofficial speeches, statements and interviews). Table 2 shows the authors and the year of origination of the statements, speeches and interviews.

**Table. 2** Speeches, statements and interviews of the EU representatives

An overview of selected European Commission Representatives, the High Representative for the CFSP, Permanent Representative of the EU in Russia, and the President of the European Parliament	Year						Total public statements by author
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
J.M. Barroso	1	0	3	2	2	6	14
J. Solana	0	1	1	3	2	3	10
B. Ferrero-Waldner	0	1	2	2	3	4	12
A. Piebalgs	1	2	3	4	3	6	19
O. Rehn	1	1	4	1	3	4	14
P. Mendelson	0	2	3	3	1	0	9
C. Ashton	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
M. Franco	0	0	2	3	4	6	15
F.M. Valenzuela	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
J.F. Borrell	2	2	3	2	0	0	9
H.G. Pöttering	0	0	0	2	3	4	9
J. Buzek	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total public statements by year	5	9	21	22	22	38	117

Source: compiled by the author

In the same way, subsequently incorporated into the first corpus are key documents that were published by various bodies of the European Union, especially the European Commission, Council of the European Union, the European Council and the European Parliament. Table 3 shows the distribution of the documents among the various EU institutions and over time.

**Table. 3** Documents of the individual EU institutions

Year	The numbers of documents of the selected EU institutions				
	European Commission	Council of the European Union	European Council	European parliament	Total
2004	1	0	0	0	1
2005	0	1	0	0	1
2006	3	1	0	1	5
2007	1	1	1	0	3
2008	3	1	0	1	5
2009	1	1	0	0	2
Total	9	5	1	2	17

Source: compiled by the author

Overall, the corpus counts 117 formal and informal speeches, statements and interviews of key representatives of the EU and 17 official EU documents, both of a legislative and non-legislative nature, altogether 134 units.

#### **1.4.2 Selection of the EU Documents Covering the Period of the Years 2010-2014**

In an identical manner as in the case of the first corpus of documents, a compilation of text and speech documents, covering the period from the beginning of February 2010<sup>2</sup> until the end of October 2014, i.e. the so-called second Barroso Commission forms the second corpus.

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<sup>2</sup> In the period after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, ie. from 1 December 2009 to 30 January 2010 were appointed by the Commissioners and was then approved by the full Commission led by President José M. Barroso.



**Table 4:** Speeches, statements and interviews of the EU representatives

An overview of selected European Commission Representatives, President of the European Council, Permanent Representative of the EU in Russia, President of the European Parliament	Year					Total public statements by author
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
J.M. Barroso	1	0	3	2	2	14
H. Van Rompuy	0	1	1	3	2	10
C. Ashton	0	1	2	2	3	12
G. Oettinger	1	2	3	4	3	19
Š. Füle	1	1	4	1	3	14
K. de Gucht	0	2	3	3	1	9
F.M. Valenzuela	0	0	0	0	1	2
V. Ušackas	0	0	2	3	4	15
J. Buzek	0	0	0	0	0	2
M. Schulz	2	2	3	2	0	9
Total public statements by year	0	0	0	2	3	9
J. Buzek	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total public statements by year	5	9	21	22	22	117

Source: compiled by the author

The second corpus includes speeches, statements and interviews of European Commission President José M. Barroso, as well as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton, European Commissioner for Energy, European Commission Vice President Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Trade Karl de Gucht, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Stefan Füle and Head of the EU Delegation in Russia Fernando M. Valenzuela (2009-2013) and since September 2013 Vygaudas Ušackas (2013-). Furthermore, the second corpus includes speeches and interviews of the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, and European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek (2009-2012), and since January 2012, Martin Schulz (2012-).

In this way the paper has a collection of 97 documents (official and unofficial speeches, statements and interviews). The distribution of selected speeches and the time of their publication is shown in table 4.

In the same way as with the speeches and statements, key documents dealing with EU-Russia energy relations published by various European Union institutions, especially the European Commission, the EU Council, the

European Council and the European Parliament were collected. The distribution of documents between individual institutions and their time of publication is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Documents of the individual EU institution

Year	The numbers of documents of the selected EU institutions				
	European Commission	Council of the European Union	European Council	European parliament	Total
2010	1	2	0	0	3
2011	2	2	2	0	6
2012	1	2	0	1	4
2013	1	2	1	1	5
2014	2	2	1	2	7
Total	7	10	4	4	25

Source: compiled by the author

Overall, there are 97 official and unofficial speeches and interviews by key officials of the European Union and 25 official EU documents, both of a legislative and non-legislative nature, together 122 units in the second corpus.

## **THE EU INTEGRATION DISCOURSE ON ENERGY RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE YEARS 2004-2014**

As has already been mentioned above, in the analysis of the selected documents, the author proceeded in such a way that on the basis of repeated reading, he identified the keywords that appeared most frequently in the context of the integration discourse. The keywords were also inspired by existing links, which gave rise to the diagnostics of the topics. “The principle of operationalization became the search for organized relations between the thematic links and keywords. This process was helped by the fact that the selected documents have a very similar argument structure that builds on key issues” (Hynek, Střítecký 2010a, p.12). In other words, individual keywords that formed the foundation around which emerged the main topics of the integration discourse were identified.

## **2.1. Integration Discourse**

The integration discourse emphasizes the positive potential of the relationship of the EU and Russia, because both actors are seen as mutually complementary. However, at the same time it stresses that there are significant asymmetries between them, particularly in terms of the maturity of both actors, the efficiency of their political systems and the degree of democratic and economic freedoms. Therefore, the mutual cooperation in the energy sector should be based on a gradual takeover of the EU access by the Russian Federation; not only in order to ensure mutual compatibility of the two economic actors, but also to accelerate economic, social and political development of the RF. The integration discourse emphasizes the specific ties between the EU and the RF – i.e. that they are not simply business partners, but that there is a special bond between them, which is reflected in the need for special institutions that regulate their energy policy (see Kratochvíl, Tichý, 2012, p. 100).

From a theoretical perspective, the integration discourse is based on the concept of the EU actors, which emphasizes the privileged position of the EU as a specific actor, a normative power (see Manners, 2002), whose model of governance other global players would be well advised to adopt. At the same time, the integration discourse is grounded exclusively on economics as regards the area of energy policy. Russia's integration with the EU is understood in the sense that Russia should adopt the relevant norms on competition, economic rule of law and transparency and investment climate (Kratochvíl, Tichý, 2013, p. 394). Conversely, the political and security aspects of the mutual cooperation between the European Union and Russia are left out from the integration discourse.

The integration discourse is furthermore tied to a second theoretical concept, which is interdependence. Interdependence stipulates that as the EU and the RF are mutually dependent on each other (the EU needs Russian raw materials, the RF needs the EU payments), according to the theory of complex interdependence (see Keohane, Nye, 1973), both sides must strive to overcome conflicting situations and seek long-term, mutually beneficial solutions.

## **2.2. The Main Themes and Content of the EU Integration Discourse in 2004-2009**

The EU integration discourse is characterized by considerable ambivalence. On the one hand, it emphasizes the benefits of both sides, where “the goal should be the integration of the EU and Russian energy markets in a mutually beneficial, reciprocal, transparent and non-discriminatory manner” (European

Commission, 2006a, p. 4, as well as Rehn, 2006). Similarly, emphasis is also placed on terms like “partnership” or “relationship”, which are frequently used, suggesting a symmetrical understanding of the relationship. That is why the European Commission in its Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy in 2006 argued that “a real (energy) partnership would offer both sides security and predictability and thus pave the way for the necessary long-term investments in new capacities” (European Commission, 2006b, p. 16, but also Buzek, 2009).

On the other hand, the symmetry between the two partners is often interpreted in a utilitarian sense: that both partners are not in an identical situation (which is, after all, given by the fact that Russia owns the raw materials, while the European Union needs them), but their relationship is beneficial for both because “Russia is more than just a supplier of oil, it is an economic partner” (Franco, 2006a). Therefore, “The European Union and Russia should see mutual long term benefits stemming from a new energy partnership, which would be based on a balance between the expectations and the interests of both sides” (European Commission, 2006a, p. 3). It remains essential for the integration discourse, however, that the symmetry in terms of the usefulness of the partnership is connected with a large asymmetry in terms of adaptation.

At the same time, the proponents of energy integration see as a precondition for successful cooperation the creation of a clear regulatory institutional framework for the mutual relations between the two actors. The term “cooperation” thus often occurs in connection with appeals to create a regulatory and legal framework for the energy relations of the European Union and Russia, or even a completely “new (legal) model of cooperation between Russia and Europe as a whole” (Franco, 2006b, 2009).

The main legal instrument governing the energy relations between the EU and Russia should thus be the revised Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), “which is to replace the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement...” (Rehn, 2008a, but also Ashton, 2008). At the same time, “part of the new partnership and cooperation agreement between the EU and Russia should be a safeguard ensuring supply for the whole EU (Pöttering, 2007a, b, as well as Valenzuela, 2009; Rehn, 2009, 2008b). At the same time, however, the European Commission argues that it is necessary to build consensus “on the proposed principles for future energy cooperation” (European Commission, 2006b, p. 4; Pöttering, 2008). These principles most frequently include the creation of a reliable early warning system in case of power supply cuts (see Solana, 2007, 2009; Ferrero-Waldner, 2007a, b, 2009) and regular consultations, whether in the context of an “energy dialogue” or beyond it (see Ferrero-Waldner, 2007a, p. 5,

but also Piebalgs, 2007a, Barroso, 2007a, b, 2009).

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that the call for a new PCA, early warning mechanisms and other similar measures stems from the negative experiences of the past, in the context of the integration discourse, these measures take on a genuinely positive form. These requirements of the EU towards Russia demonstrate a certain degree of Europeanization, which is further manifested, for example, in the recommendation to make the “European a reference framework for the reform of the energy sector, which should be realized in the RF” (European Commission, 2004, p. 14, Valenzuela, 2009). The same document from the European Commission states on a different page that “the principles of the internal energy market, such as energy efficiency, reform of the electricity and gas sector, as well as unbundling should become part of the reference framework for the restructuring of Russia’s energy sector” (European Commission, 2004 p. 11).

The interdependence of the two actors is conceived very specifically as well. Despite the usual media image, all documents agree on the fact that the EU is not unilaterally dependent on Russia, but that this is a mutual dependence: “Russia is trying to ensure the demand for its energy supplies through the European market. The EU needs Russian resources ... There is a clear interdependence” (European Commission, 2006b: 4, likewise Ferrero-Waldner, 2009, p. 2 or Piebalgs, 2006a, b, 2007b, 2008). At other times, this statement is reinforced by statements such as “our interdependence is very strong” (Solana, 2008; Piebalgs, 2007a) or by the pleonasm “mutual interdependence” (Solana, 2007, 2008b, p. 2; Barroso, 2006a, b; Borrell Fontelles, 2006a), where the “supply of Russian energy plays an important role in meeting the energy needs of Europe, representing almost 30% of oil imports into the EU and 44% of our gas imports. Equally, however, 67% of oil and gas exports from Russia are supplied to the European market .... (Ferrero-Waldner, 2007b).

According to most of the reviewed documents, this interdependence not only will persist in the future, as is for example evidenced by the statement “the EU and Russia are and will continue to be interdependent in the energy sector” (Piebalgs, 2006a; Solana, 2007), but its continuation into the future is not perceived as something problematic at all. Quite on the contrary, for example, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner confirmed that the objective of EU policy was not to eliminate this dependence, but to “manage it”. She furthermore stressed that the EU “does not want to replace Russia” (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009, p. 2). At the same time, according to Ferrero-Waldner, “our (energy) linkage allows us to create a mutually beneficial situation; with improved opportunities for access to upstream capacities in Russia and downstream markets in the EU” (Ferrero-

Waldner, 2008a, 2007b, Borrell Fontelles, 2006a, b). Similarly, according to Olli Rehn, provided that “our relationship is based on mutual access to energy markets and a level playing field for Russian and European companies in most energy sectors, our energy interdependence could form a basis for a mutually beneficial cooperation in the future” (Rehn, 2008b, Ferrero-Waldner, 2008b, p. 3; Mendelsohn, 2008).

### **2.3. The Main Themes and Content of the EU Integration Discourse in the Years 2010-2014**

Although the EU integration discourse in the period of the second Barroso Commission takes over many of the themes and content of the previous integration discourse, there are differences to be found between the two discourses. Firstly, the EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014 partially modified the previous character that was characterized by a largely complementary nature of the energy interactions between the EU and the RF, who may have and do have naturally divergent energy interests. Secondly, the intensity of the previous demands of the EU integration discourse for unilateral integration and adaptation of Russia to the EU was partially mitigated and the integration discourse thus subsequently underlined increasingly the importance of a mutual approach and the creation of a new framework for energy relations between the EU and the RF, which is characterized by the concept of interdependence.

Both the EU integration discourses, on the other hand, agreed on the significance and importance of the Russian Federation for the European Union in the field of energy, which is demonstrated, for example, in the following statement by Günther Oettinger: “Russia is our most important external supplier of energy resources” (Oettinger, 2010a, 2013). Under the new European Commissioner for Energy Oettinger, however, the RF was not merely a producer and exporter of oil, gas, coal, uranium and electricity without a deeper relationship with the EU, but a “key (strategic) energy partner ...” (Oettinger, 2011, but also the Council of the European Union, 2011a, p.10; De Gucht, 2012; Barroso, 2014).

The emphasis in the EU integration discourse on the strategic position of the RF as the main energy partner is associated with the relatively frequent use of the term “partnership”, which underlines the importance of this country in EU energy policy, while it clearly characterizes the relationship of both actors. This positive notion of strategic partnership is nothing new, quite on the contrary. This was confirmed, for example, by European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, who stressed that “we have had a long history of (energy) relations with Russia” (Van Rompuy, 2013). The main prerequisite for a successful promotion

of a strategic partnership in the energy sector is particularly the reinforcing of close energy relations between the two partners, where “the EU stands ready to further develop and deepen its energy relations with the Russian Federation” (Oettinger, 2010b, but also Buzek, 2011), which “have the character of a strategic partnership” (Ušackas, 2013, 2014).

On the one hand, and EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014, as well as the previous discourse of the so-called first Barroso Commission, emphasizes the specific ties between the EU and the Russian Federation and the positive potential of their interaction, where the energy cooperation should be steadily deepened towards mutual, symmetrical partnership, which “will bring both parties common economic gains” (Barroso, 2012, 2013, 2013b). In addition to this utilitarian conception of the EU-Russia partnership, the EU integration discourse also employs a regulatory approach, which calls for the energy partnership between the two actors to be based primarily “on the development of a reliable, transparent and principled framework for energy cooperation” (Council of the European Union, 2011b, p. 4; but also Schulz, 2013; Valenzuela, 2011).

On the other hand, as indicated by the examined documents and speeches, the two EU integration discourses diverge in some characteristics that are related to the cooperative framework for energy relations between the European Union and the RF. This concerns mainly the following aspects.

Firstly, compared to the previous EU integration discourse, the EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014 pays more attention not only to the complementary side of the energy relations, but also notes the fact that both actors are in a different position, which affects the character of their global energy interactions. This was confirmed, for example, by G. Oettinger, when he pointed out that “we have ups and downs in our (energy) relations,” which is caused by - among other things – the fact that the EU and Russia have “different energy interests, which do not always have a common denominator” (Oettinger, 2010b). Secondly, the EU integration discourse in the period of the so-called second Barroso Commission, compared to the integration discourse from the period 2004-2009, found a new focus on the issue of bilateral relations of the member states with the RF, which undermine the EU efforts to speak with one voice on energy issues. High Representative of the Union Catherine Ashton sees the main problem in the fact that “Russia prefers to talk with individual EU member states” (Ashton, 2010, 2011), and “if we have 28 different national positions, Putin may become more successful against the EU with his strategy of “divide et impera” (Oettinger, 2014).

In addition, the EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014, compared



with the previous integration discourse, puts greater emphasis on mutual and symmetric approach of the EU and the RF, rather than on unilateral adaptation. This is evident in the example of the EU-RF Energy Dialogue, which “significantly contributes to building mutual trust between the EU and the Russian Federation in the strategically important energy sector” (Council of the European Union, 2012, p. 4). The EU-Russia Energy dialogue, being a “tool for the approximation of our legislation in the field of energy” (Oettinger, 2010c; Füle, 2013), has achieved great success “including the adoption of an updated early warning mechanism, an EU-RF Energy Plan until 2050, ...” (Council of the European Union, 2011b, p. 4; European Commission, 2011, p. 8).

Recently, the energy cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation at an institutional level has also been taking place within the framework of the Partnership for Modernization, which “will give a new impetus to our relations and will help develop our cooperation in energy security” (Van Rompuy, 2010). The Partnership for Modernization is not only based on the process of a gradual adaptation of Russia, where “our partnership will be useful in making sure that the modernization of the energy sector, which is crucial for the RF, becomes a reality ...” (Van Rompuy, 2012), but at the same time, “the modernization of the energy sector is a challenge for the EU ...” (Barroso, 2011, but also Ashton, 2013; Buzek, 2010).

The last theme of the EU integration discourse is the persistent energy interdependence between the EU and the RF, where the “trade in energy is an area where we are strongly interdependent” and “the EU and Russia are interdependent main partners in the field of energy” (Ušackas, 2014). The state of interdependence, like in the previous integration discourse, is explained simply as a relationship in which “Russia needs our energy markets, just as much as we need its oil and gas” (Füle, 2012). Greatest importance is attached to the condition that “this close interdependence remains in the future” (Oettinger, 2010c).

#### **2.4. A Comparison of EU the Integration Discourse in 2004-2009 and 2010-2014**

Table 6, in its first part, compares the main topics within the two EU integration discourses on energy relations with the Russian Federation in 2004-2009 and 2010-2014. It also focuses on the comparison of the perception of Russia by the EU.



**Table 6:** Comparison of the EU Integration Discourse in 2004-2009 and 2010-2014, part 1

Examined area	EU integration discourse in 2004-2009	EU integration discourse in 2010-2014
<b>Main topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis on economic benefits;</li> <li>- Emphasis on the concepts of „partnership“ and „cooperation“, which refer to the equivalent standing of these two actors;</li> <li>- Preference of institutional and legislative framework as an essential condition for successful collaboration;</li> <li>- Focus on the unilateral convergence and gradual adoption of the EU acquis by the RF;</li> <li>- Emphasis on the economic superiority of the EU and the consequent need for the Europeanization of Russia;</li> <li>- Emphasis on energy interdependence;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis on economic gains;</li> <li>- Emphasis on the concepts of „partnership“, „relations“ and „cooperation“ that characterize the symmetrical nature of the two actors;</li> <li>- Preference of institutional and legislative framework as an essential condition for successful collaboration;</li> <li>- Focus on mutual approximation in energy relations;</li> <li>- Emphasis on the process of modernization of the energy sector of the European Union and the Russian Federation;</li> <li>- Emphasis on energy interdependence;</li> </ul>
<b>Perception of the RF by the EU</b>	- The Russian Federation as a strategic trade and energy partner of the European Union.	- The RF as a major strategic supplier of energy for the EU with somewhat differing interests.

Source: compiled by the author

The second part of Table 6 on the other hand compares the major differences between the two discourses in the period 2004-2009 and 2010-2014. It also deals with the main overlaps of the two discourses.

**Table 6:** Comparison of the EU Integration Discourse in 2004-2009 and 2010-2014, part 2

Examined area	EU integration discourse in 2004-2009	EU integration discourse in 2010-2014
<b>The differences of the two discourses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compared to the following discourse, largely emphasizes complementary energy interactions between the EU and RF and vice versa does not reflect different energy preferences of each actor;</li> <li>- Compared with the following discourse, mainly promotes predominantly one-sided, asymmetrical adaptation to EU rules and requirements by the Russian Federation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Compared with the previous discourse, newly focuses on the problem of bilateral relations of Russia and individual member states, which damage the integrity and the capacity of the EU to speak with one voice;</li> <li>- Compared with the previous discourse, places far greater emphasis on a mutual and symmetrical approximation of the EU and the Russian Federation;</li> </ul>
<b>Overlaps of the two discourses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both discourses emphasize the positive potential and specific ties between the European Union and Russia;</li> <li>- Both discourses emphasize the usefulness of bilateral and mutual economic benefits and profits arising from energy cooperation;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both discourses agree on the significance and importance of Russia for the EU in the field of energy;</li> <li>- Both discourses emphasize the need for legislative and institutional framework of mutual energy relations based on interdependence;</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the author

## CONCLUSION

The issue of the EU energy relations with Russia represents a topic that has been intensely discussed in the EU for a long time. At the same time, this issue has been covered by a series of scientific papers and articles. A substantial part of these studies and publications focus on the analysis of the current state of EU-Russia energy relations, on theoretical models of cooperation, or the explanation of the causes of conflict in the energy interaction. Conversely, only a few papers address the issue of the energy discourse of the European Union towards Russia.

The paper is therefore dedicated to the discursive framework of the EU energy relations with Russia in the years covered by the first and the second Barroso Commission. Specifically, the paper focused on the integration discourse, whose focus and content is based on the very nature and mission of the functioning of

the EU, and which occupies a predominant position in the EU-Russia energy relations. In this respect, the main objectives of the paper were twofold. The first was to analyze the EU integration discourse on energy relations with Russia in the years 2004-2014, and within its framework to interpret the main topics. The second objective was to compare the similarities and differences of the EU integration discourse in the period 2004-2009, with the EU integration discourse in 2010-2014.

On the one hand, both EU integration discourses agree on a range of topics. Firstly, both emphasize the positive potential and specific ties between the European Union and the Russian Federation and emphasize the benefits of their bilateral energy cooperation, which results in mutual economic benefits and profits for both actors. Secondly, both EU integration discourses agree on a positive perception of Russia and its significance and importance as a strategic supplier of oil and gas to the European Union. Thirdly, both EU integration discourses emphasize the need for legislative (e.g. PCA) and institutional (e.g. the EU-Russia energy dialogue or Partnership for Modernization) energy frameworks for mutual relations based on mutual dependence, i.e. interdependence.

On the other hand, the EU integration discourses in some partial aspects differ from one another. Firstly, while the EU integration discourse in 2004-2009 mainly emphasizes the complementary nature of the energy interaction of the EU and the Russian Federation, the EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014 in addition accepts a diversity of energy preferences of both actors. While the EU integration discourse during the first Barroso Commission is characterized by symmetry in terms of the benefits of the partnership with significant asymmetries in terms of adaptation of the RF to EU rules, the EU integration discourse during the second Barroso Commission is characterized by symmetry, both in terms of the benefits of partnership and the mutual approximation of the EU and RF. Finally, in comparison with the EU integration discourse in the years 2004-2009, the EU integration discourse in the years 2010-2014 also recently addressed the question of Russia's bilateral relations with individual member states, which damage the EU's effort to speak with one voice in international relations.

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