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The European Union in Russian State Duma Debates, 1994–2004**

IZVLEČEK

EVROPSKA UNIJA V RAZPRAVAH V RUSKI DRŽAVNI DUMI, 1994–2004

Čeprav je bila Evropska unija (EU) v obdobju 1994–2004 v spodnjem domu ruskega parlamenta (državni dumi) občasno predstavljena pozitivno, je bilo na splošno mogoče slišati veliko kritik EU in "Evropske skupnosti". Razprave so spremljale glasno izražene skrbi tistih frakcij, ki so bile v opoziciji proti predsedniku in vladi, vendar so imele močno oporo v parlamentu, kot so konservativna Komunistična partija Ruske federacije (KPRF), desna populistična Liberalna demokratska stranka Rusije (LDSR) ter desna stranka Rodina ("domovina") in njene predhodnice. Te skrbi so se nanašale na Čečenijo, Jugoslavijo, Ukrajino in baltske države kot dozdevne prostore merjenja moči med Rusijo in EU. Projekti (ponovne) izgradnje ruske (sovjetske) imperialne tvorbe na podlagi Skupnosti neodvisnih držav (SND) ali Zvezne države (Rusije in Belorusije) so bili predstavljeni kot alternativa zahodnoevropskemu združevanju v okviru EU in Organizacije Severnoatlantske pogodbe (NATO). Retorika v dumi, ki je bila usmerjena proti EU in jo je spremljalo obsojanje zveze NATO, je bila diskurzivna podlaga za končno spremembo politike predsednika in vlade. Člani Združene Rusije, vladne stranke brez jasne ideologije, ki je leta 2003 dobila ustavno večino, so leta 2004 prevzeli elemente konservativne in desničarske retorike formalne opozicije. To se je zgodilo v kontekstu širitve EU, ko so v parlamentu razpravljali o vprašanjih dostopnosti Kaliningrajske regije in pravicah rusko govorečih v Latviji in Estoniji. Pozneje istega leta je začetek oranžne revolucije v Ukrajini dodatno spodbudil protievropski diskurz Dume, ki je v ruski politiki kmalu prevladal.

Ključne besede: Rusija, Evropska unija, EU, državna дума, parlament

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** The research for this article was done as part of the project *ENTPAR: Entangled Parliamentarisms: Constitutional Practices in Russia, Ukraine, China and Mongolia, 1905–2005*, which received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Grant Agreement No 755504).

ABSTRACT

Although the European Union (EU) was occasionally presented in a positive light in the lower house of the Russian parliament (the State Duma) during the period 1994–2004, the EU and the “European community” were often criticized. The discussions were accompanied by expressed anxieties from those factions that were oppositional to the President and the Government but had a strong foothold in the parliament, such as the conservative Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), the rightwing populist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and the rightwing Rodina (“Motherland”) Party and its predecessors. These anxieties pertained to the Chechen Republic, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states as ostensible areas of contestation between Russia and the EU. The projects of (re)building the Russian (Soviet) imperial formation on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or the Union State (of Russia and Belarus) were presented as alternatives to Western European integration based on the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The anti-EU rhetoric in the Duma, which came hand in hand with the denunciation of NATO, provided a discursive foundation for the eventual shift of both the President’s and the Government’s policy. The members of United Russia, the Government’s party that won a constitutional majority in 2003, adopted elements of conservative and rightwing rhetoric of the formal opposition in 2004. This occurred in the context of EU enlargement when the issues of the accessibility of the Kaliningrad Region and the rights of Russian speakers in Latvia and Estonia were discussed in parliament. Later in the same year, the start of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine became further impetus for the Duma’s anti-EU discourse, a discourse that would soon become mainstream in Russian politics.

Keywords: Russia, European Union, EU, State Duma, parliament

Introduction

The analysis of Russia’s foreign relations usually centers on the executive branch (the Government) and the President.¹ Indeed, the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation placed the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly, in a position of weakness vis-à-vis the President, and the regime was often called “super-presidential.”² The policy of the President and the Government shifted from (Euro-)

1 The 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation proclaims the separation of legislative, executive and judicial authority. The Government is said to represent the executive. The President has functions in the executive and some legislative competence. – Rossiiskaia Federatsiia, “Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Priniata Vsenarodnym Golosovaniem 12 Dekabria 1993 g.,” Konstitutsiia Rossii: Vse redaktsii, accessed November 29, 2022, <https://konstitucija.ru/1993/1/>.

2 Paul Chaisty and Petra Schleiter, “Productive but Not Valued: The Russian State Duma, 1994–2001,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, No. 5 (2002): 701.

Atlanticism of 1991–1995 to great power claims (or at least those of being a “significant international actor”) since 1996 and especially since the Yugoslav crisis of 1999. The shift was accompanied by the discourse of multipolarity.³ (Euro-)Atlanticism implied that Russia would eventually join the European Economic Community (the European Union or the EU since 1993) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴ The discourse of multipolarity treated the EU and Russia as different global powers, although initially it favored cooperation. In 1999, the Russian Government adopted a strategic document on relations with the EU between 2000 and 2010, which stated that Russia did not seek full or associate membership in it.⁵

The debates in the State Duma presented a much more distorted image. The President and the Government did not rely on a stable parliamentary majority until *United Russia*, the executive’s own party, won the 2003 legislative election. During the period 1994–2004 discussions about the EU featured anxieties by those factions that were oppositional to the President and the Government and had a strong foothold in the parliament, such as the conservative Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), the rightwing populist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and smaller likeminded factions, such as that of the All-Russian Political Party *Rodina* (“Motherland”) and its predecessors. These anxieties pertained to Soviet and Russian imperial projects and centered on the Chechen Republic, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states (Lithuania in particular) as the ostensible spaces of contestation between Russia and the EU. The projects of (re)building the Russian (Soviet) imperial formation on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or the Union State (then of Russia and Belarus) were presented as being threatened by the policies of both NATO and the EU. The debates culminated in the State Duma’s resolution to include Yugoslavia in the Union State in 1999, which ultimately was to become an alternative project of European or wider Eurasian integration. The State Duma also discussed the EU in its resolutions and appeals that were political rather than normative documents.⁶

The anti-EU rhetoric in the Duma, together with the denunciation of NATO, provided a discursive foundation for the shift in the executive’s policy. This shift occurred not because the oppositional parties got a chance to form or directly influence the cabinet but, first, due to Vladimir Putin’s initially close and cooperative relations with the Duma and,⁷ then, through the adoption of elements of conservative and rightwing rhetoric by *United Russia*, which did not have a clear ideology of its own. In 2004, in the context of EU enlargement, the issues of accessibility of the Kaliningrad Region and the rights of the Russian-speakers in the Baltic states came to the foreground. The

3 Helen Belopolsky, *Russia and the Challengers: Russian Alignment with China, Iran and Iraq in the Unipolar Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 15.

4 Glenn Diesen, *EU and NATO Relations with Russia: After the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 25.

5 Oleh Protsyk, “Domestic Political Institutions in Ukraine and Russia and Their Responses to EU Enlargement,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 36, No. 4 (2003): 432.

6 *Ibidem*, 436.

7 Thomas F. Remington, “Putin and the Duma,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 17, No. 4 (2001): 285–308.

EU was presented as a competitor by members of the opposition and *United Russia* alike. Later in the same year, the start of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine became further impetus for the Duma's anti-EU discourse, which the executive continued to refer to in the ensuing years.

Pro-European Discourses

The idea that Russia is a European country is usually dated to the reforms and foreign policy of Peter I in the early eighteenth century. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Russian intellectuals fiercely debated Russia's (and eventually the USSR's) cultural affinity to Europe. The pro-European discourse in the early Russian Federation relied on the perestroika discourse in which the notion of the "Common European Home" was an important part of a post-Cold War international system.⁸

The notion of a common European space and Russia's belonging to it was articulated *inter alia* by the representatives of the executive branch in the State Duma. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Krylov, who spoke in the State Duma of the first convocation (January 11, 1994–December 22, 1995) on February 10, 1995, on the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Russia and Spain, argued that bilateral treaties between Russia and European states laid the foundation for the "political, socio-economic and humanitarian European structures of the twenty-first century." The treaty with Spain in particular, Krylov stressed, contained "a fundamentally important provision on joint efforts aimed at finally overcoming the consequences of a division in the European continent and forming a single European space."⁹

It was not, however, the bilateral treaties that were given special importance in the construction of this space but international organizations. Vladimir Lukin, whose center-left *Iabloko* ("Apple") Party had 45 out of 450 seats in the Second Duma (December 17, 1995–January 18, 2000)¹⁰ and who chaired the Duma's committee on international affairs, articulated the popular view that European international life was institutionalized through four organizations along four "large issues" on February 16, 1996. These organizations, according to Lukin, were the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the EU (to which he still referred to as the European Economic Community), the Council of Europe and NATO.¹¹ Speaking earlier in February 1996, Lukin called for the ratification of the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed on June 24, 1994, arguing that it would open up European markets for Russia and stressed that Europe made up 40 percent

8 Neil Malcolm, "The 'Common European Home' and Soviet European Policy," *International Affairs* 65, No. 4 (1989): 659–76.

9 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 10 Fevralia 1995 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=15484.

10 "Gosudarstvennaia Duma II Sozyva: Fraktsiia 'Iabloko,'" accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120301193542/http://www.politika.su/fs/gd2fya.html>.

11 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 16 Fevralia 1996 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=27644.

of Russian imports and exports.¹² On February 16, 1996, Lukin claimed that the EU was “the main engine of European unification, European integration.” He also hinted at Russia’s eventual membership of the organization, although he saw it in the distant future: “We are not part of it and will not enter it for a long time: our historical paths and, what is the main thing, our economies are very different.”¹³

The main topic of Lukin’s speech on February 16, 1996, was that of Russia’s possible accession to the Council of Europe after the latter’s Parliamentary Assembly supported it. It was in this context that Lukin described Russia as a European country.

Of course, Europe is a special continent for us. Since the time of Peter I, we have been “cutting a window to Europe” with varying degrees of success. Of course, Russia is a great Eurasian country, two-thirds of whose territory is in Asia, but another thing is also true: four-fifths of our population live in Europe, our main historical and economic interests are here – up to 40 percent of our trade is connected with Europe. Of course, we are more of a European country than, for example, Turkey and a number of other countries that are already members of the Council of Europe. Our absence there is simply a historical aberration and injustice.¹⁴

Joining the Council of Europe, according to Lukin, would mean that Russia was a “constructive European country.”¹⁵ Adrian Puzanovskii of the Agrarian Deputy Group (an ally of the KPRF with 35 members in the Second Duma)¹⁶ articulated similar arguments, suggesting that “Russia does not need to look for historical arguments to prove that it belongs to the European civilization according to cultural tradition, historical-cultural tradition” since this was self-evident. Russia’s accession to the Council of Europe, Puzanovskii argued, corresponded to the national interests of Russia since the country needed to participate in the “integration process” of “creating a Common European Home.”¹⁷ The majority of deputies supported Russia’s accession, which was formalized later the same month.

The ratification of the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, however, was not as swift. Viktor Chernomyrdin, who addressed the Duma on August 10, 1996, when being reapproved as Prime Minister, supported the pragmatic argumentation also expressed by Lukin when requesting the deputies to speed up the ratification. Chernomyrdin claimed that the agreement was part of the Government’s economic program and its “consistent line on Russia’s integration into the most important international economic and financial organizations, on the elimination of discriminatory restrictions that still remain in world trade, hindering the entry of domestic producers on the world market.”¹⁸ Lukin himself reaffirmed this pragmatic position on October

12 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 7 Fevralia 1996 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=26840.

13 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 16 Fevralia 1996 g.”

14 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

15 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

16 “Gosudarstvennaia Duma II Sozyva: Agrarnaia Deputatskaia Gruppy,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120301193450/http://www.politika.su/fs/gd2fag.html>.

17 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 16 Fevralia 1996 g.”

18 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 10 Avgusta 1996 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=26994.

18, 1996, when the ratification was discussed in detail, and insisted that the agreement would open up much better opportunities for Russian industry and all spheres of economic life in Europe. The agreement was supported by all of the Duma's factions and ratified during the same meeting.¹⁹

On November 15, 1996, all of the Duma factions supported the adoption of the Address of the State Duma to the European Parliament and the Parliaments of the Member States of the EU. This political document connected Russia's accession to the Council of Europe and the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement calling the latter another step “in joint construction of a new Europe of the twenty-first century.”²⁰

The peoples of Europe are united by common goals – achieving economic progress for the sake of ensuring decent living conditions for the people, strengthening democracy, respect for human rights and national minorities, developing culture and protecting the environment.

The states of Europe will be able to solve their problems only by joint efforts, based on respect for each other's traditions and opinions, strengthening mutual understanding, [and] in the spirit of equal partnership.²¹

The EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement entered into force on December 1, 1997, creating *inter alia* the EU–Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.²² Interestingly, it was not a Russian politician but Oleksandr Moroz, the Speaker of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, who claimed in his speech in the State Duma on December 3, 1997, that both Russia and Ukraine intended to join the EU.²³ President of the European Parliament José María Gil-Robles y Gil-Delgado, who addressed the Duma on April 22, 1998, however, did not imply Russia's future accession to the EU, even though he supported further cooperation. He called Russia “an inseparable part of Europe” and suggested that “Europe is and will always be something more than the European Union itself.”²⁴

Although according to Lukin's speech on February 16, 1996, NATO and the OSCE supposedly represented two different issues in European integration, other politicians tended to discuss them as part of the same sphere of European security. NATO was a source of anxiety for most of those who spoke on the matter in the State Duma. Chernomyrdin, for instance, claimed that the issue of “genuine security” in Europe could not be solved without Russia. He argued that NATO's “eastward expansion” contradicted the “expansion and deepening of pan-European cooperation on an equal and mutually

19 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 18 Oktiabria 1996 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=28976.

20 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №48 Ot 25 Noiabria 1996 Goda, St. 5439,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1001996048000&docid=1787>.

21 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №48 Ot 25 Noiabria 1996 Goda, St. 5439.”

22 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Mezhdunarodnye Parlamentskie Organizatsii: Spravochnik* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 2003), 42.

23 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 3 Dekabria 1997 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=58168.

24 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 22 Aprelia 1998 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=58577.

beneficial basis.”²⁵ The Duma’s address of November 15, 1996, did not mention NATO explicitly but implied it and used similar language when welcoming the negotiations within the OSCE and elimination of “genuine” rather than “phantom” threats.²⁶

Relics of the Cold War period should have no place in Europe. The policy of blocs and dividing lines must be countered by the strengthening of pan-European institutions, the creation of a new, comprehensive pan-European system of security and cooperation. The OSCE can play a central role in this process.²⁷

Oleg Gonzharov, who represented the Government’s *Our Home – Russia* Party (with 65 seats in the Second Duma) also acknowledged these anxieties about NATO in an undelivered speech dated March 21, 1997. In his opinion, Russia, like other former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, needed to cooperate with NATO. Furthermore, Gonzharov argued that in the future, with Russia’s “economic and cultural integration in the world community,” it would be necessary to raise “the issue of Russia’s joining (in the foreseeable future) this military-political organization.”²⁸ This was an extremely marginal opinion in the State Duma.

The issue of possible accession to the EU was never raised in concrete terms. Furthermore, the discussions on Europe in positive terms became rare after 1996. A notable exception is the report by Valerii Draganov of *United Russia* (which had a constitutional majority in the Fourth Duma December 29, 2003–December 24, 2007) as the head of the committee on economic policy, business, and tourism on April 29, 2004. Draganov claimed that the EU enlargement, which was to enter into force on May 1, 2004, and include ten new members, opened up new opportunities for Russia. They were connected to the decisions of the Russia–EU summit in Saint Petersburg on January 31, 2003, on the formation of “four common spaces” (pertaining to trade and economy, internal and external security, freedom and justice, and science and culture), and the more recent agreements related to the enlargement.²⁹

When discussing the protocol to the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement on October 22, 2004, Konstantin Kosachev of *United Russia*, who headed the Fourth Duma’s committee on international affairs, reaffirmed that the EU had become Russia’s strategic partner, citing *inter alia* that over 50 percent of all Russian foreign trade was conducted with its members. Furthermore, he cited the acknowledgement by two Duma committees that the enlargement of the EU corresponded to Russia’s national interests. Kosachev admitted that there were problems in relations. So did Draganov, but he insisted that even though the process of Russia’s integration into the “European community” had a difficult history it needed to continue.³⁰

25 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 10 Avgusta 1996 g.”

26 “Sobranie Zakonodatel’stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №48 Ot 25 Noiabria 1996 Goda, St. 5439.”

27 Ibid.

28 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 21 Marta 1997 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=49011.

29 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 29 Aprelia 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=150408.

30 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 2005), 56, 57, 75.

Anxieties

Anxieties about the West and Europe in general and the EU in particular were more frequently voiced to in the Duma. There were several major issues that pertained to imperial, great power and national anxieties of Russian deputies. Practically all of them stemmed from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some related to the undetermined status of Russia as being between an empire and a nation state, as well as between a global power and a regional power. Others were caused by changes in European borders and the independent foreign policy of the post-Soviet states.

The two Chechen wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2000/2009) were a major issue. The first Chechen War was accompanied by an exchange of resolutions by the European Parliament and the State Duma. On December 23, 1994, the First State Duma issued a statement in connection with the European Parliament's resolution on the situation in the Chechen Republic. The Duma's statement stressed that the conflict was Russia's internal affair and deemed the support of "only one part of political forces in Russia," that is, the Chechen leadership, inadmissible.³¹ Gennadii Ziuganov, the leader of the KPRF (with 45 deputies in the First Duma at the start of its term),³² argued on January 11, 1995, that "all of civilized Europe" could not stop the violence in Yugoslavia. The "international community" would hence be incapable of resolving the situation in the Caucasus, which Russia had to resolve by itself.³³

On January 27, 1995, the Duma discussed a new resolution of the European Parliament, adopted on January 19, 1995. Presenting the Duma's response, Viacheslav Nikonov of the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (one of the two parties representing the Government with 30 deputies in the Duma), lamented that the new resolution did not contain a provision that the European Parliament supported the principle of Russia's territorial integrity.³⁴ The Duma's response, adopted on the same date, once again denounced attempts to intervene in Russia's internal affairs, rejected the interpretation of the conflict as one between the Federal Government and a national minority, stressing its more complex character, and protested against the calls of the European Parliament to halt the signing of a EU–Russia agreement on trade and to postpone the discussion of Russia's accession to the Council of Europe. "It would be very imprudent to break off the cooperation of the European Union with the Russian Federation, which contributes to the movement towards the creation of a united Europe."³⁵ Criticism of the EU was hence made from the perspective of Euro-Atlanticism and still implied that Russia was part of Europe.

31 "Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №1 Ot 2 Ianvaria 1995 Goda, St. 31," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&tissid=1001995001000&docid=269>.

32 "Fraktsiia KPRF v Gosudarstvennoi Dume I Sozyva," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121222110355/http://www.politika.su/fs/gd1fkp.html>.

33 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 11 Ianvaria 1995 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=13406.

34 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 27 Ianvaria 1995 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=15139.

35 "Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №7 Ot 13 Fevralia 1995 Goda, St. 507," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&tissid=1001995007000&docid=12>.

Although the language used in the two Duma statements was moderate, the report on the activities of the Duma acknowledged that Western interparliamentary organizations exhibited two approaches: to develop relations with Russia, integrating it further into the international community, and to keep it in the waiting room, giving it the role of a junior partner. According to the report, it was the second approach, aiming at the limitation of Russia's freedom of action and establishing new demarcation lines in Europe, that predominated in the first half of 1995.³⁶

The issue again became relevant during the Second Chechen War. On April 24, 2002, the Duma responded to a resolution of the European Parliament on the situation in the Chechen Republic. The language of the Duma's statement was much harsher. The Duma denounced the resolution's "anti-Russian spirit" and claimed that it was "extremely politicized" and "unconstructive." The statement employed whataboutism claiming that the European Parliament continued not to notice the violation of human rights in those states that were "traditionally called democratic," such as the USA, citing the discrimination of Russian-speakers in the Baltic states and pointing at the lack of reaction to civilian casualties in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan after bombings by NATO members, the USA in the first place. The Duma's statement accused the deputies of the European Parliament of double standards in the sphere of human rights and claimed that the European Parliament resolution contradicted the "spirit of partnership between the Russian Federation and the European Union in the fight against new threats to European and global security, primarily international terrorism."³⁷

Individual deputies made much harsher statements in the context of the debates on European involvement in the Chechen issue. Commenting on the World Chechen Congress for a peaceful resolution of the Russian–Chechen conflict, which took place in Copenhagen on October 28–29, 2002, Aleksei Mitrofanov of the LDPR (with 17 deputies at the start of the Third Duma January 18, 2000–December 29, 2003)³⁸ referred to it as an insult by the EU. He suggested reminding the EU that it received "forty percent of natural gas from Russia" and turning it off "for a couple of hours" to see what would happen. "So, we can generally, so to speak, just bring them to their knees. Therefore, Europe must proceed from this. And I think that we should reflect such things in the statement [on the Chechen forum]."³⁹ Mitrofanov again raised the issue in the Fourth Duma (where the LDPR had 36 deputies)⁴⁰ on June 11, 2004, demanding that the Government reacted to the activities of the Chechen leader Akhmed Zakaev in Europe.⁴¹

36 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma v Vesenniiu Sessiu 1995 Goda* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 1995), 44, 45.

37 "Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №17 Ot 29 Aprelia 2002 Goda, St. 1656," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002002017000&docid=102>.

38 "Fraktsiia LDPR v Gosudarstvennoi Dume III Sozyva," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20101126173621/http://politika.su/fs/gd3fld.html>.

39 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 1 Noiabria 2002 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=126480.

40 "Fraktsii i Gruppy v Gosudarstvennoi Dume IV Sozyva," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20211019223214/http://politika.su/fs/gd4frac.html>.

41 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 6 (133), 2004 God, Vesennia Sessia, 10 Iiunia - 7 Iiulia* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 2005), 133.

The Yugoslav Wars in general and the Kosovo War (1998–1999) in particular also contributed to anxieties about Europe. In February 1994, the factions of the KPRF, the Agrarian Party of Russia (with 55 deputies at the start of the First Duma) and the unregistered rightwing group *Russian Path* (with 11 deputies at the end of the First Duma) adopted a joint statement. It criticized the “European community” for “a hasty ill-conceived policy” that brought Europe and the world to the brink of a large-scale conflict. It also criticized the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an unclear policy on the Yugoslav question.⁴² On September 9, 1995, Aleksandr Dzasokhov of the deputy group *New Regional Policy* (which was without a clear political platform and had 67 deputies at the start of the First Duma) also spoke of the “European community” in general. He urged it to respect the principle of territorial integrity in the context of the Yugoslav crisis.⁴³ The discussion regarding Yugoslavia may be seen as a means of projecting the anxiety of deputies about Russia’s own territorial integrity in the context of the First Chechen War.

Whereas the initial criticism of Europe in the Yugoslav crisis was formulated in broad terms, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia changed the rhetoric. The rightwing deputy Sergei Baburin, who in the Second Duma belonged to the deputy group *Narodovlastie* (“People’s Power,” with 41 members) and was one of the leaders of the inter-factional group *Anti-NATO* (with 110 deputies on its creation), deemed it necessary that the Duma and the Government coordinated their response to the actions of the EU and “other NATO and pro-NATO organizations in Europe.”⁴⁴ For him and other rightwing deputies, there was no substantial difference between the EU and NATO, with the latter being vilified by many Russian politicians. The Yugoslav issue led to concrete steps on behalf of the Duma, which are discussed below.

The Yugoslav issue was again evoked on October 22, 2004, when the ratification of a supplementary protocol to the EU–Russia agreement of 1994 was discussed in the context of the EU enlargement on May 1, 2004, which included three of the former Soviet republics, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Albert Makashov, a rightwing politician and at the time member of the KPRF (with 47 deputies in the Fourth Duma), delivered a brief anti-Western statement claiming that when NATO was bombing Yugoslavia, Russia had to halt the export of oil and gas to Europe. Interestingly, he mixed up the Council of Europe and the EU, suggesting that Russia had been lured into the latter. This allowed Kosachev of *United Russia*, who reported on the protocol, to dismiss Makashov’s statement as unrelated to the matter of relations with the EU.⁴⁵

Previous enlargements were addressed only briefly, for instance, in March 1996, when a Government representative raised the issue of fishing in the context of Finland’s

42 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 18 Fevralia 1994 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=3708.

43 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 9 Sentiabria 1995 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=17679.

44 “Gosudarstvennaia Duma II Sozvyva: Deputatskaia Gruppy ‘Narodovlastie,’” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120301193401/http://www.politika.su/fs/gd2fna.html>.

45 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Osemnii Sessii, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 63, 64.

accession to the EU the previous year.⁴⁶ The Baltic states' eventual accession to the EU had been discussed in the State Duma since 1999. One of the key issues was the possible separation of the Kaliningrad Region from the rest of Russian territory.⁴⁷ On December 13, 2001, the State Duma adopted a resolution requesting President Putin to task the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with demanding unrestricted movement of people and transfer of goods, including military ones, between the Kaliningrad Region and the rest of the Russian territory during negotiations with the EU.⁴⁸

The discussions on the matter became especially intense in 2002. Mitrofanov of the LDPR suggested adding the issue of the Kaliningrad Region to the agenda on June 7, 2002, claiming that it was a threat to the territorial integrity of Russia not by “terrorists” but by “civilized Europe.”⁴⁹

I don't understand ... Why, when it [the threat] arose in the Caucasus, we started bombing the Chechens. Why are we silent about Lithuania now? Lithuania does not have to join the European Union. If there are problems and objections, then it should not join the European Union. Let's engage with this issue. Any of the European countries can block Lithuania's accession to the European Union, but we are silent.⁵⁰

Later the same month, the Duma discussed the adoption of a statement on the Kaliningrad Region. The statement, approved on June 21, 2002, argued that the restrictions of visa-free travel and unimpeded transportation of goods between the Kaliningrad Region and the rest of Russia could be considered disrespectful of Russia's sovereignty and a violation of the principles of international law by the EU. The statement requested the executive to take up a more firm, uncompromising position on the matter.⁵¹ On January 24, 2003, the Duma adopted a statement on the enlargement of the EU, which called for continued dialogue on the Kaliningrad issue and suggested eventual visa-free travel between the EU and Russia. Another issue underlined by the statement was that of new tariffs for Russian trade with the eventual new members of the EU.⁵² The Duma returned to the issue of transit between the Kaliningrad Region and the rest of Russia on March 7, 2003, protesting against new border control rules introduced by Lithuania despite agreements between the EU and Russia.⁵³

The statement, adopted on January 24, 2003, also stressed another issue connected to enlargement, namely the situation of the “1.5 million Russian-speaking inhabitants”

46 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 15 Marta 1996 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=28904.

47 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 19 Fevralia 1999 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=75446.

48 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №52 Ot 24 Dekabria 2001 Goda, St. 4943,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002001052000&docid=35>.

49 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 7 Iiunia 2002 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=130904.

50 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

51 Kommersant, “Gosduma Priniala Zaiavlenie Po Kaliningradu,” June 21, 2002, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/943434>.

52 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №5 Ot 3 Fevralia 2003 Goda, St. 430,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002003005000&docid=59>.

53 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №11 Ot 17 Marta 2003 Goda, St. 997,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002003011000&docid=72>.

of the Baltic states, of which “520 thousand [were resident] in Latvia and 170 thousand in Estonia” and did not have citizenship. The statement maintained that by inviting the two states into its membership, the EU assumed “serious moral and political responsibility for the humanitarian situation there.”⁵⁴ The matter was raised in March and April 2004 by members of the *Rodina* faction (with 36 members in the Fourth Duma).⁵⁵ Viktor Alksnis argued that the EU would never resolve the issue of the violation of the rights of the Russian speakers in the Baltic states.⁵⁶ Dmitrii Rogozin, the head of *Rodina*, presented a draft of the Duma’s statement on the responsibility of the Latvian government for violation of human rights, arguing that Latvia behaved “almost like a hooligan, ignoring pan-European, pan-democratic standards.”⁵⁷

The statement was prepared by *Rodina* and adopted on April 28, 2004,⁵⁸ thanks to the support of *United Russia*. It was the first instance that the Government supported the rightwing party’s initiative.⁵⁹ The convergence between the Government’s position and that of the Duma’s conservative and rightwing forces began earlier when Rogozin was appointed as the President’s Special Representative on Kaliningrad Region on July 13, 2002. His radical suggestions on the matter, however, had no effect on the ultimate agreements and he was removed from office on January 20, 2004.⁶⁰

The convergence continued during the discussion of the EU enlargement on April 29, 2004. Draganov of *United Russia*, who made the aforementioned report on behalf of the committee on economic policy, business and tourism, acknowledged that there were problems in EU–Russia relations, including the issues of the Kaliningrad Region and of human rights of national minorities (implying Russian speakers) in Latvia and Estonia, but expressed hope for constructive dialogue at the anticipated summit.⁶¹ Konstantin Zatulin, also of *United Russia*, however, did not share the overall optimism.

It seems to me that we should not fall into some kind of self-deception: along with the fact that the European Union is a partner, and we would like to develop this, it is at the same time a competitor, both economically and politically. As far as I understand, today no one is seriously raising the question of Russia’s accession to the European Union, and today the European Union is expanding at the expense of the last countries that, as it were, are not part of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Tomorrow it may very well be that ... It is known that a number of countries have a desire to join the European Union. I don’t think we should evaluate this so positively. Maybe [we] remove these words about additional opportunities that open up before us, so as not to get into a strange situation?⁶²

54 “Sobranie Zakonodatel’stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №5 Ot 3 Fevralia 2003 Goda, St. 430.”

55 “Fraktsii i Gruppy v Gosudarstvennoi Dume IV Sozyva.”

56 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 3 Marta 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=145344.

57 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 28 Aprelia 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=150279.

58 “Sobranie Zakonodatel’stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №19 Ot 10 Maia 2004 Goda (Chasti I-II), St. 1870,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002004019000&docid=30>.

59 *Kommersant*, April 29, 2004, 2.

60 *Kommersant*, January 23, 2004, 11.

61 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 29 Aprelia 2004 g.”

62 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

When the ratification of the protocol to the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was being discussed on October 22, 2004, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Chizhov acknowledged the persistence of problems with the Kaliningrad Region, the Russian speakers, and other matters but was optimistic about their resolution. Kosachev of *United Russia*, however, was more cautious suggesting that the Government needed to continue talks with the EU on these matters.⁶³

Members of *Rodina* opposed ratification of the protocol, with Alksnis calling it “another capitulation by Russia.”⁶⁴ Vladimir Nikitin stressed that the problems of the Kaliningrad Region and the Russian speakers were not resolved and the situation had in fact deteriorated. He proposed withholding ratification of the protocol, which would nevertheless continue to be in force as provisional.⁶⁵ Zatulin of *United Russia* suggested excluding Latvia and Estonia from the protocol.⁶⁶ Thanks to the majority of *United Russia* and the marginality of Zatulin’s position within the faction, the protocol was ratified, although the Duma statement, which accompanied it, reaffirmed that there were problems in EU–Russia relations.⁶⁷ Vladimir Zhirinovskii, the leader of the LDPR, returned to the issue of the Kaliningrad Region later in October 2004, suggesting that the EU would annex the region as “Prussia.”⁶⁸

Alternative Projects of Integration

In the State Duma, the criticism of the EU and other Western organizations often went hand in hand with discussion on alternative integration projects. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was occasionally deemed a Western conspiracy, while the CIS was presented as a successor to the USSR and an alternative to the EU. Some deputies viewed the Union State of Russia and Belarus as a possible foundation for an alternative to the EU and Western bodies in general. Finally, some deputies suggested taking over the existing European organizations, the Council of Europe in particular, anticipating the rise of rightwing populism in Europe. The tensions between Western integrative projects and those led or to be led by Russia became especially acute in the context of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (November 22, 2004–January 23, 2005).

The members of the LDPR and the KPRF alike treated the disintegration of the USSR as a Western conspiracy. Speaking in the Second Duma on March 15, 1996,

63 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 54, 55, 57, 58.

64 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, 68, 69, 71, 72, 78.

65 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 22 Oktiabria 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=157378.

66 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 74.

67 “Sobranie Zakonodatel’stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №44 Ot 1 Noiabria 2004 Goda, St. 4309,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1002004044000&docid=56>.

68 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 160.

Zhirinovskii of the LDPR (with 49 deputies)⁶⁹ maintained that the Russian state had to fight for survival in the context of “the cunning maneuvers of the West.” The Russian state was for him a direct successor of both the Russian Empire and the USSR.⁷⁰ In the spring of 1997, Iurii Nikiforenko of the KPRF (which with 139 members was the largest faction in the Second Duma) claimed that the stronger “the desire of the fraternal peoples [of the former USSR] for reunification, for the restoration of a single union state” was, the more militant “the resistance of those forces that destroyed the USSR” became. The leaders of the West, he continued, sought to separate Russia from Europe with the help of NATO and reduce it to a semi-colony.⁷¹

On December 25, 1998, when the issue of ratifying the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine was being discussed, Ziuganov of the KPRF claimed that the division of the “single state and the single, triune Russian people – the Great Russians, the Little Russians [Ukrainians], and the Byelorussians [Belarusians]” was a crime and that it was necessary to reunite them when the “best forces [of the West], professional psychologists are thrown in to prevent us from connecting again.”⁷² Zhirinovskii claimed that the treaty should not be ratified since this would open a path for Ukraine to the EU and NATO by resolving border issues with Russia. Baburin argued that the treaty did not prevent Ukraine from joining NATO.⁷³ Speaking on October 22, 2004, when ratification of the protocol to the EU–Russia agreement was being discussed, Zatulín of *United Russia* claimed that the inclusion of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania into NATO and the European Union was “payment for their anti-Russian position” and “for their participation in the destruction of the Soviet Union.”⁷⁴

The Duma’s November 15, 1996, address on the occasion of ratification of the EU–Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement mentioned the CIS, claiming that the Russian Federation also intended to facilitate integration with Europe within the framework of this organization.⁷⁵ Hence it was not necessarily treated as a process that contradicted the broader European integration. Two days before the adoption of the address, however, when speaking in the Duma, President of Belarus Aliaksandr Lukashenka implied that integration in the post-Soviet space was not complimentary to that in Western Europe. He maintained that although the integration of Russia and Belarus was part of global integrative processes, it was an alternative rather than part of integration in Western Europe and North America.⁷⁶

69 “Gosudarstvennaia Duma II Sozyva: Fraktsiia LDPR,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120301193903/http://www.politika.su/fs/gd2fld.html>.

70 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 15 Marta 1996 g.”

71 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 17 (40), 1997 God, Vesenniia Sessiia, 19 Marta - 4 Aprelia* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 1999), 657, 658.

72 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 25 Dekabria 1998 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=82401.

73 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

74 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 74.

75 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №48 Ot 25 Noiabria 1996 Goda, St. 5439.”

76 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 11 (34), 1996 God, Oseniia Sessiia, 13 - 29 Noiabria* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 1999), 24.

It cannot be that integration in the West is necessarily good and integration in the East is necessarily bad. It is time for our foreign partners, who in any rapprochement in the east of Europe see the threat of the revival of the empire, to calm down.⁷⁷

The bilateral process, which started earlier in 1996, culminated in the establishment of the Union State (of Russia and Belarus), which was formally created on December 8, 1999.⁷⁸ In the process, the State Duma protested against the non-recognition of the Belarusian election by the EU in 1997.⁷⁹

The State Duma used the Union State, which was not yet formalized at the time, as the foundation for an alternative project of broader integration. The discussion was initiated by the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia, which submitted its resolution on the accession to the Union State to the State Duma, adopted on April 12, 1999, soon after the NATO bombing began. During the discussion of the resolution in Duma committees, only *Iabloko* opposed this initiative, suggesting that the accession of Yugoslavia threatened Russia with a war and could lead to the collapse of the CIS and complete isolation of Russia. Aleksandr Shabanov of the KPRF insisted that this was a political gesture, a union of states in the making, rather than creation of a new state.⁸⁰

During the plenary debate on April 16, 1999, Nikolai Ryzhkov, who had been the Soviet Prime Minister and at the time headed the *Narodovlastie* group, implied that this union was a successor to the USSR, the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). The emergence of a unipolar world after the destruction of the Soviet Union, he argued, led to new conflicts, including that in Yugoslavia.⁸¹

All these eight years after the destruction of the Soviet Union, we have been talking about this and insisting that it cannot continue like this, when each country is left alone. We have been saying all along that we need to integrate, we need to create a new union, [based] on new conditions, in order to protect the interests of each country both economically and politically. That is why we then welcomed the union between Russia and Byelorussia, we believed that this was the first step – the first but a significant step in the creation of a new union. Therefore, our deputy group welcomes Yugoslavia's accession to this union. Our opinion: this is a natural process. And we hope that the time will come when there will be not three states in this union but many more.⁸²

Zhirinovskii went further in articulating the vision of such a union.

[The basic principles of the union of Russia, Belarus, and Yugoslavia should include] a common foreign policy, a common defense [policy], and intentions to bring the economies

77 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, 24.

78 "Dogovor o sozdanii Soiuznogo gosudarstva," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://soyuz.by/dogovor-o-sozdanii-soiuznogo-gosudarstva>.

79 "Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №42 Ot 20 Oktiabria 1997 Goda, St. 4737," accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&issid=1001997042000&docid=2125>.

80 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma, 16 Aprelia 1999 g.," accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=80438.

81 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

82 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

into a single whole, in the future to create a common constitution, in the future to create a common parliament, [and] to hold referendums to confirm that this is the will of the peoples. Because some are trying to prove that even the Russians are allegedly against the union. This is a lie. Ninety percent of the inhabitants of Russia, Belarus, and Yugoslavia are for this union, no one opposes it! Only the enemies of Russia can oppose it, for this is a voluntary alliance and an alliance with friends. It [Yugoslavia] is our homeland, Slavic tribes came from there. The Russians came from there. This is our ancestral home. We have one language, one culture, one alphabet, one religion – everything is one! Therefore, the Serbs have always loved and respected Russia, knowing that it is part of our great state. And now we will have, if everything goes well, borders from the Adriatic to Kamchatka.⁸³

Zhirinovskii stated that NATO was on the brink of collapse, anticipating the USA's departure from the organization. He also maintained that the EU was in the process of destruction due to an inflow of refugees from the Balkans and the Middle East. In this context, he continued, Russia could become a second center of global power, together with the USA. Zhirinovskii then claimed that the Russia-led union would expand rapidly.⁸⁴

And Slovakia is just waiting for this, it is a pro-Russian republic, it will immediately join this union. Czechia is pro-Western but Slovakia is pro-Russian. Bulgaria, sandwiched between Serbia and Russia, under the threat of Turkish annexation, will also turn to us. Cyprus and Greece and even some Asian states – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran – are also tired of wars, of strife. And they know that without a big alliance with Russia, at least on the level of an alliance that would provide security in Asia, the wars there will not end.⁸⁵

On the same day, the majority of the Duma adopted a resolution on the accession of Yugoslavia to the Union of Belarus and Russia.⁸⁶ As a political document, the resolution simply supported the resolution of the Yugoslav Federal Assembly and recommended the Russian President to start considering all issues connected to the Yugoslav resolution.⁸⁷

The union with Yugoslavia never materialized but the issue of a wider union to succeed the USSR returned to the agenda of the State Duma with the start of the Orange Revolution. Already on November 23, 2004, Ziuganov claimed that the issue of Ukrainian elections was an issue of the future history of the Russian and Ukrainian people, suggesting that “without a union of Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia, we will never be a subject of international law and a competitor for either Europe or Asia.”⁸⁸ On November 24, the matter of the Duma's formal response to the events in Ukraine was raised by Andrei Kokoshin of *United Russia*, who headed the committee on CIS affairs and connections to compatriots (Russians living abroad). Kokoshin stressed

83 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

84 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

85 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

86 Gosudarstvennaia Duma.

87 “Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii №17 Ot 26 Aprelia 1999 Goda, St. 2094,” accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.szrf.ru/szrf/doc.php?nb=100&tissid=1001999017000&docid=2540>.

88 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 10 (137), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessii, 23 Noiabria - 3 Dekabria* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 2005), 71.

that the election in Ukraine was very important to Russia due to its “centuries-long close ties” to Ukraine.⁸⁹

Nikitin of *Rodina* and Zhirinovskii of the LDPR pointed out the involvement of the West, including the EU, in Ukraine’s affairs. Zhirinovskii argued on December 26, 2004, that installing a pro-American President in Ukraine would be the first step, while Belarus would follow next and then Russia.⁹⁰ Nikolai Pavlov of *Rodina* formally raised the issue of the EU’s involvement in Ukraine’s internal affairs on December 2, 2004.

But what does the European Union have to do with Ukraine? The European Parliament today will adopt a resolution where Ukraine will be blackmailed. [...] So, I propose to include this issue in the agenda so that the Committee on International Affairs and the Committee on CIS Affairs carefully study this issue and prepare a worthy answer to these insolent people from the European Parliament! We cannot brush aside such unjustified aggression. And I remind you once again that Ukraine is a fully-fledged [...] member of the CIS, that we have twelve million ethnic Russians living there, and [that] we now have every reason to be concerned.⁹¹

This line was continued by Zhirinovskii on December 3, who argued that the EU had no right to intervene in Ukrainian affairs, while Russia had as Ukraine was part of the CIS.⁹² In this respect, the Orange Revolution was presented as a direct clash between the competing project of Western and Russia-led integration.

Zhirinovskii, however, also proposed that Russia used the existing European structures to push its agenda. On May 23, 2002, speaking at a Duma round table rather than a formal plenary session, he suggested forming a Russian-speaking Eastern European faction in the Council of Europe.⁹³ Furthermore, Zhirinovskii anticipated the rise of rightwing populist forces in Europe.

Now a new orientation came into being. We were the originator of this orientation. The LDPR won parliamentary elections almost three times. I mean patriotic orientation, national–state. Today, deputies of the LDPR orientation can be found in the parliaments of many Western European countries. [...] We were the first to mark this course. And it is winning all over Europe today. And now, on June 9, the election [will take place in France], you will see how many votes will be received by the deputies of [Jean-Marie] Le Pen’s [National] Front. Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party [of Austria] is practically the ruling party in Austria. Thus, on average, we can say that 20 percent of European parliaments [deputies in European parliaments] have a patriotic orientation. Where is our influence? [...] This is the Kremlin’s mistake, they did not understand the meaning of this orientation, they did not understand where Europe was heading. This is not all. I will name the

89 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, 159.

90 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, 162, 293, 294, 297.

91 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 2 Dekabria 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=150921.

92 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, “Stenogramma, 3 Dekabria 2004 g.,” accessed November 29, 2022, http://cir.duma.gov.ru/duma/document/text/?doc_id=151408.

93 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Parlamentskoe Izmerenie Vnezhnepoliticheskoi Strategii Rossii: Vtoroi “Krugkyi Stol”: Materialy Obmena Mneniiami v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Federal’nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii: 23 Maia 2002 Goda* (Moscow: Izdanie Gosudarstvennoi Dumi, 2003), 12, 13.

date now, you will remember it. In 2010–2012, the entire current geopolitical model of the world will collapse. We must prepare for this, because in ten years only this will give us the opportunity to rise.⁹⁴

On November 10, 2004, Zhirinovskii once again articulated a prognosis on the collapse of NATO and the EU, suggesting that they would collapse in 2010 or 2015 “in a mere three days,” just like the USSR did in 1991.⁹⁵

Conclusion

During the first years of the State Duma, the notion that Russia was a European country contributed to the positive image of the EU in parliamentary debates. This notion, however, did not go unquestioned and discussions on the EU and the “European community” in general were accompanied with national, imperial, and great power anxieties since the Duma’s early years as expressed by conservative and right-wing parties. The perceived involvement of the EU, as represented by the European Parliament, into Russia’s internal affairs, that is, in the two Chechen wars, was one of the main drivers behind anti-EU discourse. The Yugoslav wars, especially the Kosovo War, continued this trend. In 2002–2004, the issue of the Baltic States accession to the EU set the tone, with most deputies focusing on the issues of the Kaliningrad Region and the Russian speakers in Latvia and Estonia. Finally, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the perceived EU involvement in what the deputies presented as a Russian sphere of influence, institutionalized by the CIS, contributed the convergence between the discourses of the then minority conservative and rightwing deputies and the new ruling party.

Since the 1990s, there have also been visions of alternative integration projects in Europe and beyond, which would center on Russia rather than the EU or NATO. Many of those who supported such projects openly admitted that they would be akin to a revival of the Soviet Union. It was not the CIS but the Union State of Russia and Belarus that became the core of such plans and even went beyond the former Soviet boundaries with the support of Yugoslavia’s accession to the Russia-led union. In 2002–2004, however, Zhirinovskii of the LDPR suggested an alternative approach of taking over European institutions, the Council of Europe in the first place, through the use of rightwing populist parties.

While initially the debates in the Duma seemed marginal for Russia’s foreign policy, controlled by Presidents Boris El’tsin and Putin and the Governments that preferred cooperation to conflict with Europe, the anti-EU discourse eventually spread to other bodies of power. Furthermore, the alternative projects of (re)integration in the post-Soviet space, such as the Eurasian Economic Community (2000) and the

⁹⁴ Gosudarstvennaia Duma, 13.

⁹⁵ Gosudarstvennaia Duma, *Stenogramma Zasedanii, Tom 9 (136), 2004 God, Oseniia Sessii, 22 Oktiabria - 19 Noiabria*, 394.

Collective Security Treaty Organization (2002), were developed since the early 2000s as alternatives to the EU and NATO. Finally, Russia's wars in the post-Soviet space, namely the Russo–Georgian War (2008) and the Russo–Ukrainian War (since 2014) have been presented as part of a larger conflict between Russia and the West, with the EU being part of the latter.⁹⁶ Last but not least, Russia has presented itself as an international conservative power, connecting European rightwing populist forces, as anticipated by Zhirinovskii.⁹⁷

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EVROPSKA UNIJA V RAZPRAVAH V RUSKI DRŽAVNI DUMI, 1994–2004

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava razprave o Evropski uniji (EU) v spodnjem domu ruskega parlamenta (državni dumi) v obdobju 1994–2004. Čeprav je bila EU občasno predstavljena pozitivno, je bilo na splošno mogoče slišati veliko kritik EU in “Evropske skupnosti”. Razprave so spremljale glasno izražene skrbi tistih frakcij, ki so bile v opoziciji proti predsedniku in vladi, vendar so imele močno oporo v parlamentu, kot so konservativna Komunistična partija Ruske federacije (KPRF), desna populistična Liberalna demokratska stranka Rusije (LDSR) ter desna stranka *Rodina* (“domovina”) in njene predhodnice. Te skrbi so se nanašale na Čečenijo, Jugoslavijo, Ukrajino in baltske države kot dozdevne prostore merjenja moči med Rusijo in EU. Projekti (ponovne) izgradnje ruske (sovjetske) imperialne tvorbe na podlagi Skupnosti neodvisnih držav (SND) ali Zvezne države (Rusije in Belorusije) so bili predstavljeni kot alternativa zahodnoevropskemu združevanju v okviru EU in Organizacije Severnoatlantske pogodbe (NATO). Retorika v dumi, ki je bila usmerjena proti EU in jo je spremljalo obsojanje zveze NATO, je bila diskurzivna podlaga za končno spremembo politike predsednika in vlade. Člani *Združene Rusije*, vladne stranke brez jasne ideologije, ki je leta 2003 dobila ustavno večino, so leta 2004 prevzeli elemente konservativne in desničarske retorike formalne opozicije. To se je zgodilo v kontekstu širitve EU, ko so v parlamentu razpravljali o vprašanih dostopnosti Kaliningrajske regije in pravicah rusko govorečih v Latviji in Estoniji. Pozneje istega leta je začetek oranžne revolucije v Ukrajini dodatno spodbudil protievropski diskurz Dume, ki je v ruski politiki kmalu prevladal.