BALTIC JOURNAL OF LAW & POLITICS
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1 (2009)
ISSN 2029-0405

Cit.: *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 2:1 (2009): 135-165
DOI: 10.2478/v10076-009-0008-6

THE WEB OF THE EU'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: BETWEEN BILATERALISM AND MULTILATERALISM

Sima Rakutienė

Doctoral Candidate
Vytautas Magnus University Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy (Lithuania)

Contact information
Address: Gedimino str. 44, LT-44240 Kaunas, Lithuania
Phone: +370 37 206709
E-mail address: s.rakutiene@pmdf.vdu.lt

Received: June 30, 2009; reviews: 2; accepted: August 10, 2009.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the divergence in the EU's strategies towards neighbours. The goal is to connect different EU neighbourhood initiatives into one framework in making a correlation between national and supranational levels. The distinction between bilateralism/multilateralism and Russia inclusion/Russia exclusion is made within both levels. The division is between European Neighbourhood policy and Eastern Partnership (within bilateral framework) on the one hand, and Northern dimension initiative and Black Sea Synergy on the other. These different EU's strategies towards neighbours reflect contradictory EU development models. The argument is made that national preferences and interests precondition a variety of the EU's neighbourhood initiatives and create a web in EU's neighbourhood policy that is filled with many contradictions.

KEYWORDS

European Neighbourhood policy, regional/interregional cooperation, EU's foreign and security policy, Finland, Lithuania

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the divergence of the EU's strategies towards neighbours. The goal is to connect different EU neighbourhood initiatives into one framework in making correlation between national and supranational levels. The argument is made that national preferences and interests precondition a variety of the EU's neighbourhood initiatives and create a web in the EU's neighbourhood policy filled with many contradictions. The main objectives of this article are:

- To correlate different EU neighbourhood initiatives within one framework;
- To analyze the interlink between EU member states' activities (national strategies) and the EU's neighbourhood policy;
- To introduce the forms of emerging inter-regional cooperation between the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe.

The EU's neighbourhood policy has been already researched by many scholars and remains one of the most urgent issues in European political debates. Most often the European Neighbourhood policy has been analyzed by comparing it with the EU's enlargement strategy (Bonvincini, 2006; Tassinari, 2005; Casier, 2008; Hillion, 2008), with European economic area (Vahl, 2006; Sasse, 2007; Kasciunas, 2008). As well, the contradictions (Balfour, 2006; Danreuther, 2008) and paradoxes (Casier, 2008) have already been noted. Browing and Joenniemi (2003, 2008) examined the EU's geopolitical development models which I also utilize in this article. My idea is to combine the EU's different strategies towards neighbours into one framework in making the correlation between the national activities of member states and EU's official neighbourhood policies. Therefore, two levels—national and supranational—have been interlinked. The distinction between bilateralism/multilateralism and Russia inclusion/Russia exclusion is made within both levels. This distinction is not newly introduced but I use it within both levels in making the framework for their connection. The focus is on a comparison between the EU's different neighbourhood policies (also involving currently launched new initiatives, the Black Sea synergy and Eastern partnership). Within the national level, the regional 'activeness' of two small member states, Finland and Lithuania, was selected as they reflect different strategies of the EU. They illustrate the argument that even small states can impact or form EU's external policies. The Eastern Europe and Eastern neighbourhood is perceived not in a geographical sense but in a wider context including three South Caucasus countries, since they are involved in the European Neighbourhood policy and constructed as the Eastern

'neighbours' of the European Union. The main method of the research is documents and discourse analysis.

1. BILATERALISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The biggest enlargement in EU history, which occurred in 2004, has brought many challenges for this organization. Current variety and mixture of the EU's neighbourhood policies probably is the best way to demonstrate these challenges. Different preferences and interests of member states are evident within the EU decision making system and especially in constructing Common Foreign and Security policy towards new neighbours of the European Union. In 2003 the EU introduced the conception of 'Wider Europe' which was later developed into the new strategy for EU neighbours: the European Neighbourhood policy. As the European Commission emphasizes: "The Premise of the ENP is that the EU has a vital interest in seeing greater economic development, stability and better governance in its neighbours."[1] Phrases such as creating a "ring of friends[2]" around the EU and "no new borders creation" but rather diminishing the existent—these have already been quite widely analyzed. But as many researchers point out, the official rhetoric of the European Commission is quite distant from the reality of the relations between the EU and its neighbours. The European Union makes an attempt to implement "a very ambitious policy, much more so than those who drew it up may ever have thought."[3] The main ENP challenges are determined by different goals of the EU and neighbours on the one hand, and by different preferences of EU member states – on the other. Firstly, ENP (practically) excludes the perspective for membership while several Eastern neighbours (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) have such a goal. Furthermore, the elements of conditionality and differentiation are included in this policy. The other very important issue is security concerns and the gap between the official "opening of the borders" and the practice of "strengthening the borders of the EU". Secondly, the EU's biggest eastern neighbour, Russia, even if it was not officially constructed as a neighbour but rather as a strategic partner, and energy policy as a whole, are the essential factors for further development of ENP.

[1] European Commission, *Communication from the Commission, A strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, COM (2007) 774 final. Brussels, 05/12/2007: 2 // http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_774_en.pdf (accessed May 11 2009).
[2] European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Wider Europe: A new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM(2003) 104 FINAL, Brussels, 11/03/2003:4// http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf (accessed June 13, 2009).
[3] Gianni Bonvincini, "The European Neighbourhood Policy and Its Linkage with European Security"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).

Precisely positions of member states towards Russia and the differences between Russia inclusion and Russia exclusion strategies illustrate the current preferences of EU member states. This division of the strategies, e.g. the current 'no one voice from EU side' in relation with Russia and the veto right in the foreign policy decision making system, indicate the shortages of CFSP. All these main issues will be discussed in this article.

For a long time European enlargement policy was the most efficient tool in promoting security, stability, peace and social/economic prosperity in Europe. But as the European Union emphasizes this cannot be the policy forever. The newly introduced instrument – ENP (sometimes called the model of 'sharing everything but institutions[4]') – is the first attempt to change it. The reason for creating this new strategy was a need not just from inside (the growth of euro-scepticism, rejection of EU constitution, the need for deepening versus widening), but also from outside (mainly security and energy issues in the neighbourhood). On the other hand, several EU member states (Lithuania, Poland) call for further enlargement (towards Eastern Europe) and actively participate in the democratization processes in Eastern neighbourhood countries. Inevitably this strengthens the division and diffusion in EU policies towards the Eastern neighbourhood. Even though the EU currently refuses further widening towards Eastern Europe, it does not reject the elements of previously used enlargement policy, primarily conditionality policy. This also evokes the discussion about EU centrism and 'imperial power' model within EU's bilateralism. Fabrizio Tassinari points that "despite the term, 'partnership' assumes by definition the existence of, and interaction between, more than one party, it is mostly the EU that sets the terms and determines the conditions of the relation".[5] Therefore, conditionality elements are being implemented by the EU. Several techniques, which are included in European Neighbourhood policy, were used in pre-accession policy.[6] The role of European Commission, as making regular reports on neighbours' achievements, programmes' implementation, negotiating and determining the priorities for the Action plans, assistance[7], conditionality policy, is very similar as in enlargement policy[8]. The other element of enlargement strategy – differentiation – is also evident in European Neighbourhood policy. The Commission underlines that "negotiations with Ukraine and Marocco on an

[4] In 2002 President of the Commission Romano Prodi said famous phrase "Everything but institutions".
[5] Fabrizio Tassinari, "Security and Integration in the EU Neighbourhood. The Case for Regionalism", *CEPS Working Document* No. 226 (2005).
[6] Christophe Hillion, "The EU's Neighbourhood Policy Towards Eastern Europe"; in: Alan Dashwood and Marc Maresceau, eds., *Law and Practice of EU External Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[7] Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council, Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, No. 1628/2006, 24/10/2006 // http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/oj_l310_en.pdf (accessed June 12, 2009).
[8] European Commission, *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2007*, COM (2008) final 164, Brussels 03/04/2008: 2.

"advanced status" and with Israel on an upgrading of relations demonstrate this differentiation."[9] Therefore the ENP and enlargement policies have many elements (bilateralism, conditionality, differentiation) in common. Within theoretical explanations these elements primarily hold the idea of EU centrism and "normative power". Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi underline that "ENP emphasizes bilateral relations with its neighbours and the centralization and homogenization of the EU's border policies, all of which is illustrative of an imperial bent within the EU."[10] Marius Vahl also agrees that the "bilateral approach accentuates the power asymmetries between the EU and its smaller and/or weaker neighbours and thus makes it easier from the EU to shape the relationship and to determine common and cooperative policies."[11] Lithuanian scientists Raimundas Lopata and Nortautas Statkus stress that the "new European neighbourhood project contributes to the EU's evolution towards the imperial model by softening the boundaries between the inside and the outside of the EU."[12] "Imperial model depicts EU governance in terms of a series of concentric circles."[13] Within the EU's official rhetoric of "creating the ring of friends" it is also evident that the "diminishing of the border" where "the ring of friends" reflects the circle furthest growing apart from the EU's core within EU's 'concentric circles' model.

Strong conditionality and EU centrism, but at the same not giving the membership perspective, is not an effective tool for the EU's relations with neighbours, because the "price is too high" for the Eastern neighbours who seek to engage more deeply with the EU (like Ukraine).[14] Also, there is a gap between the official rhetoric of the EU and its actions. European Union suggested for its neighbours integration into EU policies, but many scientists underline that security concerns are currently more important than integration. Firstly, the EU is concerned about free movement of people and uncontrolled immigration.[15] Secondly, there is the "Shengen paradox, which is intrinsic to the deepening of integration: more integration inside the EU makes a close involvement of third countries more difficult < as > …external borders are reinforced and obstacles are placed between the EU

[9] European Commission, *A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, *supra* note 1: 3.
[10] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, "The European Neighbourhood Policy and Why the Northern Dimension Matters"; in: Joan DeBardeleben, ed., *The Boundaries of EU enlargement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[11] Marius Vahl, "Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy: the European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).
[12] Raimundas Lopata and Nortautas Statkus, "Empires, the World Order and Small States," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 1-2 (2005): 16-51 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2005-15%2016/Pilnas.pdf (accessed on April 10 2009).
[13] Christopher S. Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, "Geostrategies of the European Neighbourhood Policy," *European Journal of International Relations* 14 (2008): 519-551.
[14] Laurynas Kasčiūnas, "Europos Sąjungos plėtros politikos kaita: "Trečiojo kelio" paieškos," *Politologija* 4/52 (2008): 4-31.
[15] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, *supra* note 10.

and third countries."[16] Thirdly, neighbours become a strategic buffer and effective border management policies become the primary goal for saving the EU "from threats emanating from other parts of the world, such as drugs from Afghanistan, WMD proliferation from Central Asia or terrorism from the Gulf region."[17] The role of borders and focus on good governance were also emphasized in European security strategy.[18] Therefore conditionality is primarily conditioned by security concerns and towards strengthening border management even though officially it calls for "neighbours integration into EU policies". The paradox here is that the EU's official statement of 'opening the borders' is backed by reality and strengthening borders. Browing and Joenniemi as well as other researchers describe it as an "integration-security dilemma"[19]. These scientists also emphasize that EU currently is practising 'buffering logic' towards neighbours which means "exclusion and threat rather than inclusion"[20]. Thus, the EU gives greater attention to the security threats posed by its "neighbours rather than identifying the potential for change and transformation."[21] This integration-security dilemma is also intensified by the Russian factor. It is very much in connection with the EU's pragmatic interests, primarily energy. The EU's growing dependence on energy resources coming from its neighbours is a frightening fact for many member states. Energy policy is involved in all neighbourhood initiatives and within bilateral Action plans it was stated that an article should be created on energy policy when signing Association agreements.[22] Still, consensus has not been made in this area and especially within EU-Russia relations.

The current EU policy can be described as pragmatism versus normative policy; opening versus strengthening the borders and Russia inclusion/exclusion strategies. All these implications are evident in the EU's foreign policy and decision making system within second pillar. The biggest problem of the CFSP is that all the member states see the EU primarily as an opportunity and instrument for reaching national foreign policy goals. It is natural that there are many disagreements between the block of 27 members. The right for veto in the second pillar opens

[16] Tom Casier, "The New Neighbours of the European Union: the Compelling Logic of Enlargement?"; in: Joan DeBardeleben, ed., *The Boundaries of EU Enlargement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19-33.
[17] Roland Dannreuther, "The European Security Strategy's Regional Objective: The Neighbourhood Policy"; in: Sven Biscop and Jan J. Anderson, eds., *The EU and the European Security Strategy* (Taylor&Francis, 2007).
[18] *European Security Strategy, A Secure Europe in a Better World*, Brussels, December 12, 2003: 7 // http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/r00004_en.htm (accessed December 10 2008).
[19] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, *supra* note 10.
[20] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, *supra* note 10.
[21] Roland Dannreuther, *supra* note 17: 77.
[22] European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Eastern Partnership*, COM/2008/0823 final, 3.4. // http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008DC0823:EN:NOT (accessed June 19, 2009).

possibilities for every member to reject the unwanted agreement or decision. The other very big opportunity for introducing and promoting national preferences and instruments is the Presidency. On the one hand, principles such as neutrality and impartiality are required to be fulfilled by the taking of the Presidency member state.[23] But also it is clear that practically every member state shapes the agenda according to national preferences. Presidency is very important for CFSP of the EU. As the case of Georgia showed the President of France, who held the Presidency during the armed conflict, had much bigger role than EU's high representative Havier Solana. On the other hand, France's role was determined by its reputation and good relations with Russia. However, the Presidency gives the opportunities for every member state. The right to put a veto is the other opportunity. Therefore, this decision making system within EU's CFSP pillar underscores problematic issues, such as that member states have different interests and a right to veto decisions. A similar situation is within EU's Neighbourhood policy decision making as it is also part of CFSP. Therefore, the more member states are engaged within processes in the Eastern neighbourhood, the more frequent this policy will exist on the presidential agenda and within the decision-making system. Such a practice is already being used within Northern Dimension and Euro-Mediterranean partnership and potentially new grouping of countries will emerge within Eastern partnership. The most stimulating Eastern Neighbourhood processes have not had the chance to hold the Presidency yet.

The other issue is that European Union, as "quasi-supranational body" has fewer possibilities to pursue active policy than sovereign states and therefore less actively reacts to events like Orange and Rose revolutions.[24] On the other hand, EU's values and rules can be a uniting element for common Union action. But there are many tensions between "the treaty-based requirement for consistency and a more policy-based pragmatism…<>…as well as the gap between rhetoric and action and differential treatment of partners."[25] Between those reasons which predominate different member states' pragmatism is Russia. This country was invited to participate in ENP, but decided not to be involved.[26] "Part of the reason for the emphasis on bilateralism in the ENP actually stems from concerns about the potential influence of Russia in the eastern neighbourhood, and desires to limit

[23] Ole Elgstrom, "The Honest Broker? The Council Presidency as a Mediator"; in: Ole Elgstrom, ed., *European Union Council Presidencies: a Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).
[24] Roland Dannreuther, *supra* note 17: 71.
[25] Rosa Balfour, "Principles of Democracy and Human Rights: a Review of the European Union's Strategies towards its Neighbours"; in: Sonia Lucarelli, Sonia and Ian Manners, eds., *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
[26] Pertti Joenniemi, "Concluding Remarks: the Big Picture and the Small": 136; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for international studies, 2006).

this."[27] Consequentially Russia has a very negative attitude towards the ENP and the influence of EU's conditionality instruments towards western CIS area. Naturally many member states are in the situation where the choice either to promote democratization in the Eastern Neighbourhood or good relations with Russia based on pragmatism basically in connection with energy policy, has to be made. This divergence between the attitudes towards Russia conditions the inability of the EU to speak with "one voice in order to send clear and unambiguous messages to Russia <and which> undermined the credibility of the EU's position."[28] The divergence even increases when we go further analyzing the other kind of EU strategy towards neighbours, that is, multilateralism based on regional initiatives. In 2007 a new regional policy – the Black Sea Synergy, which is based on Russia-inclusion strategy and regionalism—was launched. Furthermore, just recently (in 2009 May) the Eastern Partnership was approved, which also involves the elements of multilateralism even though it excludes Russia. These two initiatives provide the argument that the EU is returning to previously promoted multilateralism which can be explained in another theoretical model quite contradictory to the one analyzed in this chapter.

2. EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD OF 'OLYMPIC RINGS'?

Two new EU's initiatives – Black Sea Synergy and Eastern partnership – have the goal to create regionalism in the neighbourhood area and bring various regional actors in the cooperation framework. A strategy for regionalism seems most suited to the Union's interests because instruments of good governance is being used within regional and sub-regional cooperation, also "creates more security on the Union's borders".[29] Promotion of regional cooperation and regional integration policies is tied in with EU's self development. Therefore the European Union promotes the development for regional cooperation in validating the example of success and experience of European Community. The same rhetoric was also used in pre-enlargement strategy towards Central and Eastern Europe. At that time European Commission highlighted the importance of regional cooperation as a tool stimulating candidate countries integration into the EU.[30] But as the example of three Baltic States' efforts to strengthen regional cooperation showed it is very hard to develop regional integration. While the Baltic States felt pressure to promote

[27] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, *supra* note 10.
[28] Peter Van Elsuwege, "The Four Common Spaces: New Impetus to the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership?"; in: Alan Dashwood and Marc Maresceau, eds., *Law and Practice of EU External Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[29] Gianni Bonvincini, *supra* note 3.
[30] Milica Uvalic, "Regional Cooperation and the Enlargement of the European Union: Lessons Learned?" *International Political Science Review* Vol. 23, No. 3 (2002): 319-333.

regional cooperation not just from the EU's side[31] but also from Nordic states, it became less important when strong conditionality had entered. Estonia felt in danger that "the Baltic integration convoy would only proceed at the pace of their slowest ship of the state."[32] Therefore, this experience is a good example of how conditionality and regional integration forms the contradiction. According to Milica Uvalic, regional cooperation initiatives are criticized because of weak effectiveness for regional stabilization and growth, and vulnerable implementation, which are far away from the ambitions and official rhetoric.[33] Even though there were very few successful regional cooperation cases (Nordic integration, European Community and the Northern Dimension sometimes is named as such) the European Union does not refuse the further development of regional cooperation and multilateral framework. "In a communication on the 'choice of multilateralism', the European Commission cautioned that 'an active commitment to an effective multilateralism means more than rhetorical professions of faith'."[34]

The EU's recently launched neighbourhood regional initiatives, especially the Black Sea Synergy, officially give quite optimistic and ambitious promises for regionalism and multilateralism building in the region. In the Commission's official rhetoric primarily there is a focus on confidence, peace, security building between the neighbours and the EU. EU's intention to build security in neighbourhood is defined as one of the two core European Union's strategic priorities, "along with the ambition of contributing to an international order based on effective multilateralism".[35] Therefore, currently multilateralism and regional cooperation instruments are being promoted in Eastern neighbourhood space but mostly within EU's official discourse.

These EU's currently existing multilateral regional initiatives in neighbourhood (sometimes named as three dimensions: Northern, Eastern and Southern) theoretically create the EU's Neighbourhood of 'Olympic rings'. According to Makarychev,

> The perspectives of 'dimensionalism' in Europe are directly related to EU enlargement, since the increasingly diversified political space spells further differentiation. The more compex the EU is becoming intrinsically, the more space will be needed for regional groupings inside it, with each increasingly likely to seek more autonomy in making contact with non-EU members. This

[31] Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, *Baltijos šalys ir Europos Sąjunga* (Vilnius: Arlila, 2001).
[32] Graeme P. Herd, "The Baltic States and EU Enlargement"; in: Karen Henderson, ed., *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union* (London and Philadelphia: UCL Press, 1999; Taylor & Francis, 2005).
[33] Milica Uvalic, *supra* note 30: 324.
[34] Richard Gowan, "The European Security Strategy's Global Objective: Effective Multilateralism": 42; in: Sven Biscop and Jan J. Anderson, eds., *The EU and the European Security Strategy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).
[35] Roland Dannreuther, *supra* note 17: 62.

> potentially emerging structure of European political space can be metaphorically depicted as promoting an "Olympic rings' vision of Europe. This can be conceptually contrasted with more traditional 'concentric rings' model.[36]

Therefore, in this vision Europe is constructed by 'Olympic rings' when each ring defines region forming common space. Creation of common regional space is also evident in the EU's official discourse, as for example the goals to create common Euro-Mediterranean economic space[37], also the same economic area within Eastern Partnership[38]. This model of "Olympic rings" is entirely in contrast to the EU's imperial model, analyzed in the first section of this article, as it creates different model of the EU and its relations with neighbours. Each region/'ring' involves both: EU member states and neighbours candidates (Turkey is included in both initiatives: Black Sea synergy and Euro-Med partnership) and non-candidate (Russia also is included in two initiatives: Northern Dimension and Black Sea Synergy). Countries' belonging to both regions interlink them. Northern dimension, Black Sea synergy and Euro- Mediterranean partnership are multilateral regional sea basin initiatives. The Eastern partnership groups the countries of the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and includes both bilateralism and multilateralism approaches. The European Commission underlines that multilateral initiatives, in Eastern neighbourhood area, should take the lessons and experience of the Northern Dimension. Several elements of the practice of the Northern dimension and especially the bottom-up regionalism, the involvement of various regional actors, and civil society are strongly promoted. As this paper focus on an analysis of the Eastern neighbourhood the comparison does not include the practices of Euro-Mediterranean partnership which in structural formation has many similarities with NDI.

The Northern dimension initiative was not the first regional neighbourhood policy created by the EU but it gained greater notoriety because of its relevant success (primarily Finnish success). It should be noted that this initiative was successful because of the situation in the Baltic Sea region and the EU's contemporary relations towards the countries in the region. The Northern dimension initiative was the part of the EU's enlargement strategy. The Baltic States saw this policy primarily as an instrument for the final goal, which was the membership in the EU. This was the main reason that conditioned the success of the Northern Dimension. Of course, there are no doubts that Russian inclusion

[36] Andrey S. Makarychev, "Where the North Meets the East: Europe's 'Dimensionalism' and Poland's 'Marginality Strategy'," *Cooperation and Conflict* 39 (2004): 301-302.
[37] European Commission, *Barcelona process: Union for Mediterranean*, COM (2008) 319 Final, Brussels 20/05/2008: 3.
[38] Speech of Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in Poland parliament, 28/11/2008 // http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/08/672 (accessed January 10, 2009).

strategy within this initiative gave the added value to all regional countries. For example, Lithuania successfully solved the border problems with Kaliningrad oblast, by starting cooperation processes, and suggesting common initiatives (Nida) with Russia which were included into the Action plans of Northern Dimension Initiative[39]. Still these activities were primarily conditioned by Lithuania's effort to enter the EU, while the transportation problem from Russia to Kaliningrad was one of Lithuania's biggest problems for reaching its membership goal. The Northern Dimension initiative was another tool that helped to solve it. Therefore, Northern dimension was part of EU's enlargement strategy and officially at the 1999 Helsinki Summit it was stated as such: "NDI became the regional aspect of this strategy by bridging the Nordic and the Baltic countries, and by directing activities towards Russia."[40] Russia inclusion, decentralization, equal partnership an 'opening of borders' are the ones of the most used concepts by Nordic scientists. According to Browing and Joenniemi, "… the Northern dimension is concerned with building regional networks, decentralized patterns of governance and fuzzy border-lands, and more generally creating overlapping political spaces."[41] In this regional political space Russia and other regional actors equally form and implement common regional projects and this is contrary to EU policy which is dictating European standards.[42] Such a dictate of EU is particularly evident in conditionality policy which is used within bilateral framework towards neighbours.

The building of regions and common regional interests potentially promotes the formation of regional coalitions within the EU. Nicolla Cattelani points out that Nordic and Baltic EU members have regular meetings and potentially can form the coalition in order to promote their national and regional goals in the EU.[43] But in practice they vote quite differently[44] and have different visions primarily towards relations with Russia and other EU's eastern neighbours. Regionalism and the regions of Europe fit very well with the Nordic position towards the EU as Nordic citizens are between those of the most eurosceptical nations in the EU. Europe of regions, the model of Europe as 'Olympic rings' where the central power diminishes

[39] Gražina Miniotaitė, "Tapatybės paieškos šiuolaikinėje Lietuvos užsienio politikoje: tarp Šiaurės ir Rytų dimensijų," *Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga* 2004 (2005): 91 // http://vddb.library.lt/fedora/get/LT-eLABa-0001:J.02~2003~ISSN_1648-8016/DS.013.0.01.ESSPG (accessed May 3, 2009).
[40] Uffe Jakobsen, "Preface"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).
[41] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, "The European Union's Two Dimensions: the Eastern and the Northern," *Security Dialogue* 34 (2003): 467.
[42] Christopher Browing and Pertti Joenniemi, *supra* note 13: 525.
[43] Nicola Catellani, "The EU and the Baltic Sea Area"; in: Nicola Casarini and Constanza Musu, eds., *European Foreign Policy in an Evolving International System* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[44] Fabrizio Tassinari, "Mare Europaeum: Baltic Sea region security and cooperation from Post-Wall to post-enlargement Europe," Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen (2004): 228 // http://www.publications.fabriziotassinari.net/downloads/Chapter_Seven.pdf (accessed April 18, 2009).

and regional centers are becoming important,[45] is the suited model for the Nordic states' EU's visions.

However, even if this initiative was most important for Nordic countries, the Northern Dimension was successful in creating links between various levels of regional actors within the Baltic Sea area. Involvement of civil society, creating links between academics, researchers, youth, cities union and etc. is seen as an important model for regional development. Such a kind of regionalism is also being promoted by the European Commission in the Eastern neighbourhood. As it was noticed by the Commission the new regional sea basin initiative – Black Sea synergy – has very similar practices to the ones used in the Baltic Sea region. European Commission points that Black Sea Synergy was launched "in response to calls for the establishment of a regional cooperation framework in the East, and it is complementary initiative to "the EU's mainly bilateral policies in the region: the ENP, the Strategic Partnership with the Russian Federation and the accession negotiations with Turkey."[46] The author and the advocate of the Black Sea Synergy is Nordic scientist Fabrizio Tassinari. The other new initiative – Eastern Partnership – as was noted above, involves both bilateralism and multilateralism and it could be called inter-regional initiative (involves countries from Eastern Europe and South Caucasus but excludes Russia). There are much more similarities between the Northern dimension and Black Sea synergy primarily because they are sea basin initiatives and have a strong focus on environmental, maritime policy. However, the multilateral framework of Eastern partnership also involves the practices of the NDI. And the first attempt is to focus on inclusion of various regional actors into the regional/sub-regional common activities. "The Eastern partnership will engage a wide range of actors, involving government ministries and agencies, parliaments, civil society, international organizations (such as the OSCE, Council of Europe and OECD), international financial institutions, the private sector, economic and social partners in the framework of the multilateral platforms."[47] Thus, similarly to NDI, there are strivings to create multilateral dialogue involving governmental and non-state actors. Networks creation processes are also being developed. Eastern partnership civil society forum[48] was created. Some practices of NDI governance will be used like regular meetings between various levels: heads, ministers, senior officials and work groups meetings. The role of the Commission is important as she

[45] Andrew S.Makarychev, *supra* note 36.
[46] European Commission, *A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, *supra* note 1: 4.
[47] Council of the European Union, *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit*, 7 May, 2009. 8435/09 (Presse78): 10 // http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf (accessed May 5, 2009).
[48] *Eastern Partnership – Civil Society Forum* // http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/index_en.htm (accessed June 20, 2009).

will "prepare the meeting agendas in close cooperation with the EU Presidency and partners and will chair the meetings".[49] The other similarity is that activities are organized within sector specific platforms, which are also very similar, mainly involving democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies; Energy security; and contacts between people. Realistic core objectives within each platform are being developed, which "will be updated periodically".[50]

These governance practices are also being activated within Black Sea Synergy. This initiative has already developed the networks between various sectors of civil society organizations. These networks and exchanges/ meetings are coordinated by newly launched Black Sea forum.[51] European Commission underlined that Black Sea Synergy has attracted considerable NGO interest and adopted a position paper on "Greening the Black Sea Synergy" on 7 February in 2008 in Odessa.[52] Likewise Baltic Sea region created the regional links between municipalities, NGOs and business,[53] similar results EU will seek in Black sea area. European Commission emphasizes that Black Sea Synergy promotes the creation of contacts between towns, universities, NGO, cultural and other representatives within the region[54]. But it should be underlined that in the Baltic sea region all these regional linkages was successfully created not just because NDI accelerated and promoted these processes but they were determined and run together with Europeanization/ integration into EU processes.

The other issue is that in the Black Sea region can be seen the similar scenario of EU involvement in the region to the one in the Baltic Sea area. Firstly, the European Commission emphasized that there is no need to create new institutions but the activities should involve the existing organizations. The same rhetoric was used by the Commission when Finland promoted the Northern Dimension initiative. Thus, "the EU is not seeking to establish new bodies or organizations, but rather to support existing entities and encourage their further development."[55] The European Commission reported that

[49] European Commission, *Eastern Partnership*, *supra* note 22: 4.1.
[50] Council of the European Union, *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern partnership Summit*, *supra* note 47: 9.
[51] The Black Sea Forum // http://www.blackseaforum.org/seminar_10_11july2007.html (accessed April 6, 2009).
[52] European Commission, *Report on the First Year of Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy*, COM (2008) 391 final. Brussels, 19.6.2008 // http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/blacksea/doc/com08_391_en.pdf (accessed April 6, 2009).
[53] Fabrizio Tassinari, "Introduction"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).
[54] European Commission, Black Sea Synergy- a new regional initiative, COM (2007) 160 final, Brussels, 11/04/2007: 8.
[55] Marius Vahl, *supra* note 11: 66.

> The recent period has seen the rapid development of relations between the European Union and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic cooperation (BSEC). From 2007 the Commission obtained observer status in the BSEC. Commission representatives attended all high level BSEC meetings and contributed to the activities of BSEC Working Groups.[56]

Potentially this organization could have the similar role in the Black Sea synergy as the Council of Baltic Sea states in the Northern dimension. European Commission in report officially stated that: "The successful experience of the Northern dimension provides a useful example of how this could work."[57] The other important issue is that Russia participates in Black Sea synergy and this 'Russia inclusion' strategy is the other similarity with the Northern Dimension. Today is hard to say whether Black sea synergy will give any added value or new upheaval for the EU's relations with Russia. Furthermore, the entire Black sea region has many problems to solve, primarily 'frozen conflicts', also relations between the states in the region (Turkey-Armenia; Georgia-Russia and etc.), and the goals of these states are entirely different. In the Baltic Sea region the situation was completely contrary, since the Baltic States and Poland had the same goals: membership in the EU and NATO.

The European Commission emphasizes that creation of links between Civil Society Organizations improves "their capacity for advocacy and promote confidence building in areas of protracted conflict".[58] The European Commission expects that these processes will help to solve the problems and brings different states and non-state actors in the region for common dialogue. Several projects have already linked civil society organizations in 'frozen conflicts' areas.[59] Still the situation remains unchanged. All these efforts to promote the local, sub-regional, regional and inter-regional cooperation within involvement of civil society organizations is related with the building of 'bottom-up' regionalism and it is in contrast to bilateral state-centrism. This could be evaluated as a very positive process, because it stimulates the emergence of various regional actors but it is interesting that this bottom-up regionalism is being promoted from outside the Commission or from other states. Therefore, regional initiatives even though within official discourse could be explained as creating theoretical model of "neighbourhood of Olympic rings" but in practice currently they primarily are

[56] European Commission, *Report on the First Year of Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy*, *supra* note 52.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document on Eastern partnership*, SEC (2008) 2974/3: 2 // http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/sec08_2974_en.pdf (accessed April 6, 2009).
[59] Thijs Rommens and Robin Thiers, "Strengthening the ENP through Regional Civil Society Cooperation," *CEU Political Science Journal* 1 (2009): 26-47.

problem solving initiatives. Moreover, the involvement of energy policy and focus on it also enters quite pragmatic aspects of EU relations with neighbours.

Multilateralism within regional initiatives and revived intentions to create regionalism 'set off the new light' and generated more evident diversity in the EU's neighbourhood policy. On the one hand, the European Neighbourhood policy (also bilateral framework of Eastern Partnership) is composed of bilateralism, conditionality, differentiation and Russia exclusion. On the other hand, the regional initiatives involve multilateralism, regionalism and Russia inclusion. Moreover, the theoretical model of EU's centrism or 'imperial power" (bilateralism and conditionality) is opposite to the other model - European Neighbourhood of "Olympic rings" (creation of regions and regionalism) – as they create different visions of the EU and its relations with neighbours. The other very important and interesting processes are the emergence of regional and inter-regional cooperation. Here the distinction at the same interlink can be made between supranational level (as Commission has an evident role either in regional cooperation or in relation with neighbours on bilateral framework) and national level. Within the latter level the processes of inter-regional cooperation are even more evident and also promote their national strategies. Furthermore, the Commission also facilitates member states involvement into developing official EU's policies. "The Black Sea member states would remain the EU's main interlocutors, whether in a bilateral framework or during discussions at the regional level, the EC's contribution will continue to be provided through the established sectoral programmes managed by the Commission."[60] Therefore, national action for the promotion of regional cooperation is as important as the EU's role, just as it was within Baltic Sea region.

3. NATIONAL ACTIVENESS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE

The success for building regionalism/regionalization in Baltic Sea area was built upon the example of the Nordic countries' efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. Nordic states suggested and developed several projects and initiatives, which have been linking Nordic and Baltic States together with Russia, in order to spread Nordic values.[61] The model of Nordic regional integration was promoted by these countries towards the Baltic States (within '5+3' initiative)[62] even before official EU's regional policy – Northern Dimension. Furthermore, NDI was also created and developed by Nordic actors. Therefore, the most important reasons for

[60] European Commission, *Black Sea Synergy – a New Regional Initiative*, *supra* note 54.
[61] Uffe Jakobsen, *supra* note 40: 8.
[62] 5+3 model means multilateral cooperation between five Nordic States and three Baltic States which was introduced in early 1990s. Regular multilateral meetings were held between these countries within Nordic Council and Baltic Assembly.

successful Baltic Sea regional integration were the national activeness in the region (mainly Nordic states).

My argument is that the most important factor for the successful creation of regionalism in the Baltic Sea area was primarily conditioned by the active roles of Nordic states and by their efforts to develop Russia inclusion strategy. The above mentioned initiatives created links with Russia. The Council of the Baltic Sea States (common Danish-Germany initiative) was established in order to develop relations between Russia and Baltic states within institutional framework.[63] But as has already been mentioned, all these multilateral frameworks and initiatives were primarily seen by the three Baltic States as instruments for the acceleration of their membership in the EU. In this context the EU's factor was very important while the promotion for regional cooperation and regionalism creation was based on Nordic intentions and activities. Finland successfully used all these circumstances and the changing situation in the region for country's positioning in the EU and the region. Competition between Nordic states in suggesting regional initiative also accelerated regionalism in the Baltic Sea area; however, the accordance and consensus for the regional activities and efforts to strengthen created initiatives involved both elements competition and common action.

As happened with the Baltic case, the competition between member states in suggesting the initiatives and actively engaging can be seen in the Eastern Neighbourhood as well. First Poland eventually succeeded with Eastern Partnership (it has been promoted "Eastern Dimension from 2003"[64], but just in 2009 became EU's official policy even though did not include membership perspective which was promoted by Poland), Romania (together with Norway) initiated Black Sea forum,[65] and Lithuania mainly focuses on building strategic partnerships but also suggested the multilateral initiative '3+3'[66]. It can be said that it has been a kind of accordance and consensus between Poland and Lithuania (common action in Ukraine in 2004 solving the crisis; trilateral Parliamentary Assembly between Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine and etc.) but far from the Nordic case. Furthermore, currently Poland "practically excluded Lithuania" from the Eastern partnership and instead invited Sweden to become the common hosts of the initiative. Also, there is

[63] Nicola Catellani, *supra* note 43.
[64] Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, *The Eastern Dimension of the European Union, The Polish view*, Speech, February 20, 2003 // http://www.msz.gov.pl/20,lutego,2003r.,-,The,Eastern,Dimension,of,the,European,Union.,The,Polish,View.,Speech,by,Wlodzimierz,Cimoszewicz,,Polish,Minister,of,Foreign,Affairs,,at,the,Conference,The,EU,Enlargement,and,Neighbourhood,Policy,,Warsaw,,20,February,2003,1305.html (accessed May 15, 2009).
[65] The Black Sea Forum // http://www.blackseaforum.org/seminar_june2007.html (accessed March 20, 2009).
[66] Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania, "Black Sea Vision," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 15+16 (2005): 7-11 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2005-15%2016/Adamkus.pdf (accessed March 12, 2009).

evidence that several Nordic states are also engaging in the Eastern neighbourhood. High level political representatives of the Nordic states participated in international conference "Synergies between Northern Europe and Black sea cooperation" and discussed the cooperation between two regions.[67] All these processes strengthen inter-regional cooperation within multilateral and bilateral frameworks.

A short analysis of regional activeness between two small states, Finland and Lithuania, will be undertaken. One could suggest that better analysis could be made between Finland and Poland, since they are the creators of initiatives, which became EU's official policies: Northern dimension and Eastern Partnership. Also, Poland's role in Eastern Europe is bigger and more evident than Lithuania's. But my selection was based on the fact that both Finland and Lithuania are small states. They have approximately the same amount of votes in the Union, therefore theoretically they have the same possibilities to act within the EU and the region. The other reason for this selection is based on different kind of strategies of these two countries. Finland promotes multilateralism and Russian inclusion strategy for the regional cooperation (accordance with the EU's multilateral/regionalism framework towards neighbours) while Lithuania's activeness is based on building strategic partnerships, that is, bilateralism and mainly state-centrism, Russia exclusion strategy. The other very important difference is the attitudes towards eastern neighbours. Lithuania promotes conditionality and membership perspectives for Eastern neighbours (basically Ukraine). Therefore Lithuania's case is more similar to the EU's bilateralism and conditionality strategy towards the neighbours even if the EU does not include membership perspective. Thus, the analysis goes beyond the differences between regional strategies (Finland' in Baltic sea region, Lithuania's in the Eastern Europe), how the membership in EU was used in order to promote these strategies (presidency, veto right), what impact small states can have for EU's neighbourhood policy?

4. SMALL STATES' IMPACT ON THE EU'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

Choice for active regional roles by both countries was made after joining the EU. In 1995 Finland became a member of the EU and the changes both in Finland's neighbourhood (demise of the Soviet Union) and the participation in the EU were reasons for rethinking Finland's foreign policy. According to Nyunr Tin, the best way for small states successful foreign policy implementation is orientation on regional

[67] The Black Sea Forum, *International Conference "Synergies between Northern Europe and Black Sea Cooperation,"* April 27, 2007, Bucharest // http://www.blackseaforum.org/Docs/2007.04.27_Report.pdf (accessed March 16, 2009).

integration, multilateralism building and good relationship with neighbours.[68] This suggestion was taken by Finland. The creation of the Northern dimension became the cornerstone of Finland's new foreign policy strategy. Firstly, Finland needed to activate its role in the region, to strengthen mediator activities and actively participate in European processes. "The risk of being left without any distinct role to play in Europe's North led the Finnish government to give substance to a concept-the Northern Dimension-that could re-launch its own interests and position within the regional setting."[69] Therefore this new multilateral Finnish strategy enabled 'upswing' in Finland's foreign policy and promoted national concerns. Secondly, for Finland there were still very important relations with Russia. The Northern Dimension included both elements: active participation within the EU and Russia inclusion strategy. The Northern Dimension became Finland's real instrument for developing a regional role. The Finns understood the Northern Dimension as a tool of how national interests could be promoted within the EU in making "a convergence between national and EU foreign policy interests."[70] Even though Northern Dimension promoted regionalism, primarily it fulfilled Finland's national interests. Many researchers have doubts about the practical results and effectiveness of the Northern dimension. But there are no doubts that Finland succeeded in promoting this strategy and because of this policy became famous, created country's image and identity as mediator and active EU member state. Small member state became the initiator of official EU's external policy (towards EU's neighbours).

Lithuania has also taken on a similar role as a kind of mediator. Lithuania in 2004, after becoming a member of EU and NATO, also made the choice for new foreign policy agenda, since its previous goals have been achieved. Lithuania, like Finland, decided to activate its role in the region and set a very ambitious goal: to become the leader of the region, which has not really been mentioned. "This is because the region does not in fact exist…<>…it is, rather, a social construct still to be implemented by Lithuania's foreign and security policy."[71] In 2004 the Acting President of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas, the President Valdas Adamkus and foreign minister Antanas Valionis, mentioned the main concepts for new Lithuania's strategy as being 'the bridge' and 'regional center', 'linking the regions' (Baltic region and the Eastern Europe) within active and qualitative participation in the EU and NATO and using the geographical Lithuania's location – " … living at a

[68] U Nyunr Tin, "Building of All-Round Development in the Region: Cooperation and Integration", *South Asian Survey* 13/2 (2006): 303-312.
[69] Nicola Catellani, *supra* note 43: 190.
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] Grazina Miniotaite, "Lithuania's Evolving Security and Defence Policy: 'not only Consumer, but also Contributor'," in: Clive Archer, ed., *New Security Issues in Northern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

crossroads of regions and civilizations opens up most probably the first opportunity in history to bridge the East and the West and make Lithuania a centre of gravity in a geographically and culturally diverse region."[72] Thus, in Lithuanian politicians' visions Lithuania's role was seen as centre-link between several geographical regions: Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. Linking the regions is also seen in Finnish strategy. Northern dimension created the link between Arctic region and Baltic region (umbrella concept) and it was in Finland's interests[73] most importantly because of the Russian presence in both regions.

Therefore the concept of 'bridge' is being used by both countries (also by Poland) and it has a much more practical meaning in the Finnish case than in Lithuania's. Finland's 'bridge' connects mainly the EU and Russia, while Lithuania's bridge – the EU and Eastern neighbours. Therefore, as in the Finnish case, Lithuania also began the processes of self-positioning in the European processes, it was expected that this strategy will create positive identity and determine new activities in the region. The argument was that "… without active foreign policy, Lithuania, which is just a tiny spot on the world map, might remain unnoticed even while deciding issues of vital importance to its future."[74] The main question is what possibilities and abilities Lithuania has for the implementation of this new foreign policy agenda. Firstly, Lithuania's experience was emphasized within transformation processes and the intentions to share it with Eastern neighbours, as well as to spread European values towards Eastern Europe.[75] As Grazina Miniotaite concludes, Lithuania's intentions to democratize Eastern neighbours and to spread European values is the national form of 'European normative power' which could be explained by constructivism theory.[76] The historical reasons were also raised in promoting this foreign policy trend. Commonality between Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine within Rzeczpospolita (Lithuania's-Poland's Union), as well as common trials of entering Russian empire and Soviet Union were emphasized.[77] Lithuania's Grand Duchy in the Middle Ages overtook territory from the Baltic Sea to the Black sea and this historical narrative fit very well with South Caucasus promotion in the EU (primarily

[72] Artūras Paulauskas, Acting President of Lithuania, "Lithuania's New Foreign Policy," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 13+14 (2004): 7-16 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2004-13%2014/Paulauskas.pdf (accessed March 13, 2009); Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania, "Lithuania as a Centre of Regional Cooperation," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 13+14 (2004): 17-20 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2004-13%2014/Adamkus.pdf (accessed on March 13 2009); see also Antanas Valionis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, "Lithuania, a Meeting Place of Europe," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 13+14 (2004): 21-27 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2004-13%2014/Valionis.pdf (accessed March 13, 2009).
[73] Nicola Catellani, *supra* note 43.
[74] Artūras Paulauskas, *supra* note 72.
[75] Valdas Adamkus, *supra* note 72.
[76] Gražina Miniotaitė, "Europos Normatyvinė galia ir Lietuvos užsienio politika," *Politologija* 43 (2006): 3-19.
[77] Anatoliy Kruglashov, "Regional Cooperation of Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Lithuania: New Dimensions and Opportunities," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 21 (2008): 182-191 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-21/Krugrashov_ENG.pdf (accessed June 10, 2009).

Georgia). Lithuania became an actual 'bridge' between Georgia and the EU and can be described as the biggest advocate of this country. The other view is attached with the United States. Lithuania understands the U.S.A. as the most important strategic partner and the relationship is based on security cooperation. South Caucasus and Eastern Europe became very important for the United States. In the USA's agenda the stabilization of Black sea region is one of the goals.[78] Relations between Lithuania and the United States can best be described by the phrase 'two Presidents from Chicago,"[79] which was said by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus. Even though it was said after the election of Obama, while Valdas Adamkus had developed good relations with the previous US president, George W. Bush, it is still a good illustration of Lithuania's officially stated solidarity with the United States. The relative success of Lithuania's Eastern policy and the recognition of Lithuania's role in Eastern neighbourhood was also reasoned by the bilateral friendship between Valdas Adamkus and several other Presidents (USA, Ukraine, Georgia, Poland) actively participating in the processes in the Eastern Europe. Building strategic partnerships with Poland, USA and Ukraine was in line with Lithuania's security strengthening and Russia "containment strategy"[80]. Even if in official statements of the President the pragmatic relationship with Russia was underlined, in practice a Russia exclusion strategy was developed, constructing Russia mainly as a negative, aggressive neighbour of Lithuania. Bilateralism and state-centrism based on the President's friendship brought relative success and recognition to Lithuania. "Lithuanian attempts to make the EU and NATO pursue 'open door' policy, including with regard to eastern neighbours, was not merely a statement."[81] Valdas Adamkus was very active in promoting this possibility for Ukraine and Georgia.

Even if officially Lithuania indicated some intention to create a multilateral framework in the Eastern Neighbourhood, still primarily the 'strategic partnerships' were developed. In 2006 Lithuania together with Georgia suggested multilateral initiative '3+3', which means three Baltic states cooperates with three South Caucasus countries in order to promote democratization in the latter. But it can hardly be said that it became practical multilateral framework. The initiative neither got the recognition and attention nor created strong links between the six

[78] Jonas Daniliauskas, *Europos Kaimynystes politika: Lietuvos galimybės, Europos Sąjungos plėtra ir Rytų politika 2003-2004* (Vilnius: Europos integracijos studijų centras, 2005).
[79] "Pasaulyje dabar yra du Prezidentai iš Čikagos" // http://www.lrytas.lt/videonews/?id=12324636741231732028&sk=1 (accessed June 02, 2009).
[80] Lithuanian Conservators Party, *Russia Containment Strategy*, 09 05 2007 // http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:yoE8Gr7LuRwJ:www.tsajunga.lt/uploads/files/dir20/dir1/13_0.php+Kubilius+Rusijos+sulaikymo+strategija&cd=1&hl=lt&ct=clnk&gl=lt.
[81] Evaldas Nekrašas, "Lithuanian Foreign Policy: Concepts, Achievements and Predicaments," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 13/14 (2004): 28-35 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2004-13%2014/Nekrasas.pdf (accessed May 03, 2009).

countries. The actual cooperation was mostly developed between Lithuania and Georgia (frequent meetings, Lithuania's role in helping the resolve the conflict situations, Lithuania was first to be in Georgia during conflict with Russia) mostly on the Presidential or ministerial levels and primarily consisted of state-centric cooperation. The strategic partnership with Poland was evaluated as the cornerstone for successful Lithuania's Eastern policy. Also it should be said that Poland was the first to suggest the Eastern Dimension and became the most important factor in Eastern Europe. State-centric multilateral cooperation frameworks like trilateral Parliamentary Assembly (Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine), trilateral battalion (LitPolUkrbat) were also proposed and developed by Poland. According to Lithuanian scientist Evaldas Nekrasas, the invitation of Valdas Adamkus and Aleksandre Kwasniewski for resolution of the Ukrainian crisis in 2004 by Leonid Kuchma was naturally consequential.[82] Thus, Lithuania's intentions for multilateral cooperation promotion were not developed, because of a failure to create a practical multilateral framework which could bring success such as in Finland's case. Those multilateral frameworks which were successful were primarily hosted by Poland. Therefore, Lithuania mostly developed bilateral, state-centric partnerships (assistance within ENP action plans for Ukraine[83] and Georgia and etc.).

The effort to promote cooperation within civil society mostly was seen within Belarus, as it was not possible to develop active state-centrism because Belarus has a 'strategic partnership' with Russia. Russia is the main factor which shapes both countries' (Finland and Lithuania) foreign and security policy agendas. Finland creates mediation policy with Russia and an inclusion strategy. Therefore, Finland succeeded by developing a 'multilateralization' of relations with Russia.[84]

Finland also was successful in building coalitions with other Nordic members for the promotion of NDI and intentionally used the Presidency. Consensus and coalition of Nordic member states aided in the successful promotion of Northern Dimension. All three Nordic countries (hold presidencies in 1999, 2001, 2000) included the Northern Dimension in their Presidencies agendas[85]. Therefore this Finnish success of diplomacy in making the coalitions conditioned successful recognition and launch of NDI. EU membership possibilities rationally used by Finland became the example of how national problems and interests can be involved in an EU level project.[86]

[82] *Ibid*.
[83] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Lithuania // http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1192074174 (accessed May 20, 2009).
[84] Nicola Catellani, *supra* note 43.
[85] Marius Vahl, *supra* note 11: 52
[86] *Ibid.*: 52-53.

Lithuania also actively used the opportunities afforded by the EU. Although it had not yet held the Presidency, several times it used veto right – put a veto on EU-Russia new agreement. At first it was the consensus between Lithuania and Poland but the last veto was made by Lithuania alone. Thus Lithuania failed to build the coalition in order to promote its position. The last veto Lithuania related with Russia's position towards Georgia and accused Russia of evading the agreement with Georgia. However, during the negotiation between EU members towards new agreement with Russia, Lithuania was accused of promoting its national bilateral interests[87] in relations with Russia (energy renewal; compensation for soviet victim deportations). Therefore, Lithuania's active role in Eastern neighbourhood accelerated the exacerbation of relations with Russia. As Bailes (2006) noted: "Apart from the different degrees of integration … the most obvious difference between Nordics and Baltics has been the greater readiness of the latter to stir up change and actively weaken Russian influence in other post-Soviet states like Georgia and Ukraine."[88] These different attitudes towards Russia determine a weak Nordic-Baltic coalition in foreign policy area. Finland is between those EU members whose policy towards Russia is very pragmatic. While Baltic states hoped "that the EU – with all its instruments and 'power' – would be helpful in dealing with Russia, as Russia, in the Baltic experience, prefers to deal with major powers"[89], but the most EU member states primarily stress on pragmatic dialogue with Russia. Anyhow, Lithuania's membership in NATO and the EU is the main precondition for Lithuania's active Eastern policy: Russia exclusion strategy, 'anti-Russia' coalition building in Eastern Europe. EU membership of this small Baltic state has substantially enhanced Lithuania's opportunities and capabilities to seek its goals in relation to its Eastern neighbours.[90]

Finland does not have any role in the Eastern neighbourhood. "This country typically avoids positions or activities that may irritate Russia or which might be considered detrimental to relations with the big Eastern neighbour."[91] Therefore in Finnish foreign policy agenda pragmatism, national interests and good relationship with Russia are the essentials. While Lithuania was in line with the position "that

[87] Žygimantas Pavilionis, "Lithuanian Position Regarding the EU Mandate on Negotiations with Russia: Seeking a New Quality of EU-Russia Relations," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 21 (2008): 174-181 // http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-21/Pavilionis_ENG.pdf (accessed May 03, 2009).
[88] Alyson J. K. Bailes, "Thoughts on Civilisation, Security, Integration and Reform"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).
[89] Elzbieta Tromer, "Russia's Role in the Baltic Approaches to National Security and the European Security and Defence Policy"; in: Fabrizio Tasssinari, Pertti Joenniemi, and Uffe Jacobsen, eds., *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe* (Copenhagen: DIIS-Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006).
[90] Grzegorz Gromadzki, Raimunds Lopata, and Kristi Raik, "Friends or Family? Finnish, Lithuanian and Polish Perspectives on the EU's Policy towards Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova," *FIIA Report* 12/2005 (The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2005): 25.
[91] *Ibid.*: 23

Russia's role in the region cannot be ignored", but it should not be tolerated Russia's offensive actions in its 'Near Abroad'.[92] Thus, Lithuania actively encourages normative aspect in EU-Russia dialogue. However, current changes of the leadership in the countries (Poland, USA, Lithuania) most engaged in the processes in the Eastern Europe give the potential promise for the change of the policy towards Russia. Lithuania's newly elected President Dalia Grybauskaite criticized Lithuania's foreign policy and speaks up for Russia inclusion strategy. Dalia Grybauskaite calls for more balance between East and West in Lithuania's foreign policy.[93] If the policy will not be changed drastically the friendship could be made first with Nordic countries in coordinating common activities towards Eastern Europe, since the Nordic states made the first steps for participation in the processes in Eastern neighbourhood of the EU. More real 'interlink between the regions', which was officially stated in 2004 by Lithuanian politicians, could be created.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyzed two different EU strategies towards neighbours by examining the EU's neighbourhood initiatives. The correlation was made within division between bilateralism/multilateralism and Russia inclusion/Russia exclusion strategies. On the one hand, European Neighbourhood policy and also the bilateral framework of Eastern Partnership are composed of bilateralism, conditionality, differentiation and Russia exclusion. On the other hand, regional initiatives (Northern dimension and Black Sea synergy) involve multilateralism, regionalism and Russia inclusion. The multilateral framework of Eastern partnership is similar to the ones used in other regional initiatives towards neighbours. Therefore multilateralism and revived intensions to create regionalism generated more evident diversity in the EU's neighbourhood policy. Moreover, the EU's strategies towards neighbours reflect different theoretical models of the European Union's development: "imperial power" or "concentric circles" (within bilateralism/conditionality policy) and "European neighbourhood of Olympic rings" or Europe of regions (within multilateralism/regional initiatives). These models contradict each other, because they create different visions of the EU's development and its relations with neighbours. Therefore the EU's current neighbourhood policy could be described as the web where different preferences

[92] Valdas Adamkus, *supra* note 66.
[93] Lukas Miknevičius, "D. Grybauskaitė su žemėmis maišė Lietuvos užsienio politiką" // http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=960:-dgrybauskait-su-emmis-mai-lietuvos-usienio-politik&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95 (accessed May 15, 2009).

and strategies are used and connected as thematic areas are similar in all EU's initiatives towards neighbours, just as different forms for cooperation are being used or mixed as in Eastern Partnership. Also, the gap between EU's official rhetoric and practice ("opening of the borders" is undermined by strengthening them) was pointed out. Even though EU's neighbourhood initiatives have ambitious future plans, currently they can be described as primarily problem solving initiatives. Paradoxically postmodern approaches within official discourse of 'diminishing the borders' practically are backed by modern/positivistic problem solving and centrism of state preferences.

The existent divergence within EU's neighbourhood policy is preconditioned by different attitudes and interests of member states as they can shape and impact EU's foreign policy either within Presidency period or using veto and other rights/membership possibilities. This conclusion provides the argument that national level and state-centrism .especially national strategies and abilities to use possibilities, is still the most important factor. Therefore, in this paper two levels for the analysis within the same framework have been chosen and interlinked: the EU's official neighbourhood initiatives and national strategies for regional activeness in the EU's neighbourhood space. As the small analysis of strategies of Finland and Lithuania showed, even small states can impact and form EU's external policies. The example of these two countries also reflects different attitudes and interests towards EU's neighbourhood. Finland strategy is in accordance with the EU's multilateral cooperation framework, regionalism creation and Russia inclusion strategy. Lithuania's regional activeness is mainly based on 'building the strategic partnerships' in the Eastern neighbourhood, state-centrism and Russia exclusion strategy. Finland can be described as an example of EU's pragmatism while Lithuania represents values and 'normative power' promotion.

The other important issue is the emergence of inter-regional cooperation between Baltic Sea region and the Eastern Europe. Firstly, the European Commission officially promotes the experiences and practices of the Northern dimension towards the Eastern neighbourhood. Several similarities between NDI and Black Sea synergy has been noticed as similar to the Commission's involvement into regional processes, thematic/sectoral cooperation, and the promotion of bottom-up regionalism. Furthermore, several Nordic states started to participate in the processes in the Eastern Neighbourhood. Poland and Lithuania are two members states that engage the most with their Eastern neighbours. One of the problems is that there is no actual accordance or coalition between member states stimulating democratization in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. The coalition of Nordic member states in promoting NDI has already experienced success and is

a good example. Similar practice should be used within Eastern Partnership. The more member states are engaging within Eastern neighbours the more frequent issues of Eastern neighbourhood will be existent within Presidency agenda and decision making system. One of the biggest obstacles for coalition building and coordinating activities between Nordic and Baltic States is the different attitudes towards Russia inclusion/Russia exclusion.

Therefore the analysis of levels introduced in this paper shows the correlation between national activities and the EU's official policies and decision making system. It is important how these strategies correlate with each other, especially at the supranational and national levels. The Commission has an important impact both within a bilateral framework in creating and implementing Action plans, and in a multilateral framework in forming the agendas for multilateral meetings or involvement in regional cooperation organizations' activities. Within the national level additional EU activities and strategies are being implemented towards the same regions. Therefore the growing number of EU initiatives and activities towards Eastern neighbourhood promises the EU's greater involvement. Nevertheless, the question of financing was not touched in this paper. This vantage point could give a more practical evaluation. Furthermore, for a more complete picture of this context, the influence of Russia and USA should be kept in mind, not just straightforwardly with respect to neighbours, but also the influence of these countries on the national policies of the member states in question.

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