"Peace through speech or peace through strength"?
The European Parliament's views on the EU's security role in the East

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"PEACE THROUGH SPEECH OR PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH"?
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S VIEWS ON THE EU'S SECURITY ROLE IN THE EAST

Abstract:

Despite its limited formal competences in foreign policy, the European Parliament is active in trying to present a specific vision for the EU's external action. Debates on the EU's role as a security provider in the Eastern neighbourhood are useful to analyse the security ambitions set forth by the Members of the EP. Using the qualitative grounded theory method, this paper demonstrates that the EP wants the EU to have a more active security role in the East, for external as well as internal reasons. A preliminary quantitative study of the MEPs' individual involvement in the debates also highlight the importance of national factors in understanding the EP's functioning, as well as the existence of a clear East-West divide on security matters relating to the EU's Eastern neighbourhood.

Résumé:

Malgré ses compétences formelles limitées en politique étrangère, le Parlement européen tente activement de presenter une vision particulière de l'action extérieure de l'UE. Dès lors, les débats parlementaires sur le role sécuritaire que l'UE doit jouer dans le voisinage oriental sont des ressources utiles pour analyse les ambitions sécuritaires mises en avant par les eurodéputés. Utilisant une approche qualitative, cet article démontre que le Parlement européen veut que l'UE soit plus active dans la sécurité à l'Est, pour des raisons internes comme externes. Une étude quantitative préliminaire de la participation des eurodéputés dans les débats souligne également l'importance du facteur national dans le fonctionnement du PE, de même que cela illustre l'existence d'une division Est-Ouest nette au sujet des dossiers sécuritaires dans le voisinage oriental de l'UE.

Abbreviations

AFET	Foreign Affairs Committee at the EP
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy
ELDR	Group of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
EPP-DE	European People's Party–European Democrats
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission (in Moldova)
EUMM	EU Monitoring Mission (in Georgia)
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FSU	Former Soviet Union
Greens/EFA	The Greens–European Free Alliance
GTM	Grounded Theory Method
GUE/NGL	Gauche Unitaire Européenne/Nordic Green Left
IND/DEM	Independence/Democracy Group
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NI	Non-Inscrits
NIS	Newly Independent States
NK	Nagorno-Karabakh
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PSE	Party of European Socialists
RCV	Roll Call Votes
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
SEDE	Security and Defense Committee at the EP
UEN	Union for Europe of the Nations

Introduction

Since its inception, the European Parliament (EP) has seen its powers increase constantly. From 1957, when it was simply a consultative body of nationally appointed legislators to 2009 when the directly elected assembly become an equal co-legislator with the Council in most policy areas, every new treaty has increased the European Parliament's legislative power. But there remains one field where the EP has little formal competences: foreign policy. This area is still firmly the prerogative of the member states and the Council. This does not however mean that the MEPs are content to ignore all foreign matters in their parliamentary sessions. On the contrary, international issues are frequently debated in the plenary and non-legislative resolutions on these subjects abound. The EP's Foreign Affairs committee (AFET) is the most prestigious and sought after; and the budgetary competences that the EP possesses are frequently used to gain more leverage on the EU's CFSP and CSDP decisions. Foreign policy and security issues are thus regularly discussed in the EP plenary. This does not necessarily lead to policy changes inside the EU but, even though the EP is not a central actor in foreign policy, its opinions and views are important as they emanate from the EU's moral "conscience" (David et al., 2013: 263) and carry all of its normative weight.

With regard to the EU's foreign policy, one important issue is its capacity to solve or manage the many conflicts that exist on the Eastern periphery. The "frozen conflicts" of the Former Soviet Union are relics left over from the bipolar era, creating pockets of instability and "black holes" at the EU's borders. To tackle those issues, the EU has deployed a vast array of instruments and put in place different policies in Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Despite these efforts, these conflicts are no closer to a peaceful resolution than they were twenty years ago. This is due to numerous external factors over which the EU has no control (amongst which Russia) but it is assessed fairly harshly by the MEPs who call for a stronger EU action in the East.

This paper will analyse the perceptions by the different MEPs and the EP as whole, of the security role the EU should play in the frozen conflicts of the FSU. The research is in essence interdisciplinary and tries to build a bridge between parliamentary studies and international relations. Our parliamentary object is the European Parliament, its inner working and its deliberation, with regards to the international subject of the EU's security role towards the frozen conflicts of the FSU. Using a qualitative grounded theory method to systematically and inductively analyse the content of relevant plenary debates, we will investigate to what extent the EU should become a security actor in its own right, as argued by the MEPs. The EP debates constitute our main data, which will help us answer our research question on the EP's positions towards the EU's security role as well as secondary questions on the existence, or not, of an East-West divide in the EP.

Research question and methodology

Research question and object of analysis

The research question for this study is the following: "**what are the European Parliament's views on the EU's security role towards the frozen conflicts of the Eastern neighbourhood?**".

The frozen conflicts are understood to pose a series of challenges to the EU's role as a security actor in the East and it is this "security actorness" that is examined *through the lens* of the European Parliament. What is studied is thus not so much the conflicts in themselves as the way in which the MEPs take a stand in evaluating how European policy is conducted. Who speaks up in the debates? What is their assessment of the EU's role in this security issue? What are their recommendations or solutions? And, is the EP unified in this assessment or are there dividing lines and, if so, along which dimensions? In particular, do the newer member states of Central and Eastern Europe play a role with regards to the EU's Eastern policy or are they integrated in the functional structures of the European party groups? All these questions will be analysed in the parliamentary debates that comprise our empirical data. The timeframe for this study is 2004-2012. 2004 marks the start of the Wider Europe Initiative/European Neighbourhood Policy when the countries affected by the conflicts (Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) became an integral part of EU policies. The study ends in 2012 largely for technical reasons. Indeed, our analysis relies on the debate transcripts which are available on the European Parliament website[2]. It contains every document produced by the EP (debate transcripts, resolutions, votes, etc.) translated in all the official languages of the EU. Unfortunately, since 2012, the EP has ceased translating the verbatim records, which are only available in the original language in which they were made[3]. This technical limit forces us to stop our analysis in 2012 (see below for a justification of the case selections).

Two products of parliamentary sessions will constitute our empirical data: the plenary debates where MEPs can freely take a stand to express their position on the relevant subject; and the resolutions which are adopted after the debate when all the MEPs present can cast their vote for or against the proposed text. This double analysis gives us a clear view of the positions both on the level of the individual MEPs with the debate transcripts and on the common level of the EP as a whole with the resolutions which present the official view of the EP as adopted by the majority of its members. From 2004 to 2012, 46 debates were held (of which 36 led to a parliamentary resolution) on subjects pertaining to the frozen conflicts of the FSU or to the EU's political role in the Eastern neighbourhood. Looking at the general content of these debates, few of them are actually concerned with the issue of the frozen conflicts. Only 4 debates of the 46 explicitly cover these conflict issues[4]. Of the rest, 12 are debates on democracy and human rights issues, mainly in Azerbaijan, 12 concern domestic issues in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia or Azerbaijan (electoral politics mostly)[5], 5 are "strategic debates" on the general role that the EU should have towards the Black Sea and the South Caucasus, and the 12 remaining debates are on the European Neighbourhood Policy or the Eastern Partnership.

Parliamentary debates as a research object

Studies on the functioning and the role of the European Parliament abound in the literature. Research is concentrated on the institutional structure both inside and outside the EP, on the issue of European elections, on the question of the democratic legitimacy of the EP or, increasingly, on the voting record inside the EP (see Hix et al., 2003; Costa, 2013).

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[2] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/.
[3] Art. 181 and 182, EP Rules of Procedure
[4] "Moldova (Transnistria), Georgia (South Ossetia)": 25/10/2006; "Deterioration of the situation in Georgia": 07/05/08; "Situation in Georgia": 01/09/08; "Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh": 06/07/11.
[5] Two on Azerbaijan, four on Moldova and six on Georgia.

A large body of the literature is dedicated to how MEPs position themselves in roll-call voting. Mostly quantitative methods are used to identify the dimensions of politics inside the EP based on these RCV (see Attina, 1990; Borriello, 2012; Braghiroli, 2013; Cicchi, 2011; Hix, 2002; Hix & Noury, 2006; Hix et al., 2007; Hoyland, 2010; Rasmussen, 2008). After all, the EP is formally influential in the European institutional system only when it decides on matters which fall under co-decision, or the ordinary legislative procedure. Thus, a lot of research is dedicated to understanding how the EP votes on legislative issues, using RCV to estimate MEPs individual and party groups' preferences, as well as inter-party group cohesion. These studies reveal that the European political groups are a strong predictor of MEP behaviour and that the main dimension of politics in the EP is structured along a traditional left-right axis, leaving less place to national factors (Hix et al., 2007). However, quantitative RCV research, though useful to study part of the legislative process, is not enough to fully understand how and why MEPs take certain positions. Indeed, less attention is given to a qualitative analysis of the content of the parliamentary debates even though the contents of the MEPs' speeches and the way they vote don't always correspond but are rather complementary. As such, an analysis of the oral debates can give us a different insight on the opinions of parliamentarians than the aggregation of votes (see Lord, 2013; Karv, 2012; Proksch & Slapin, 2009; Proksch & Slapin, 2012). As Slapin and Proksch (2010) found, floor speeches serve as an important tool for MEPs towards other MEPs, their national parties and their European political group. Members can explain themselves publicly as well as create a positive record of their activity in the EP which helps their reelection objectives. And, contrary to RCV research, studies of parliamentary debate highlight the importance of national factors, much more present in plenary speeches than in votes. Hence the present study tries to contribute to the existing literature.

Analysing the MEPs' speeches is important not just to fill a hole in the literature but also because it helps us better understand how they function and justify themselves in the EP and to the outside world. Studying the debates is key to understanding the EP as a democratic institution. In a democracy, debates, deliberation and justification are essential features of the system of representation. "Democracy thrives through debate" (Proksch & Slapin, 2012: 520) and parliamentary debates are the most visible expression of a Parliament (de Galembert et al., 2014: 10). Voting is the product of parliamentary power but deliberation is what constitutes the heart of the parliamentary institution. In the EP, the oral deliberation is not so much an example of debating taken as a negotiation between political tendencies but rather a process of justification whereby the representatives of the people (the MEPs) explain their position to the public. This act of justification as a legitimation principle is at the heart of the EP's democratic trademark (Eriksen, 2000: 48-49; Landwehr, 2010: 113; Lord & Tamvaki, 2013: 28-29). Deliberation at the EP is thus important not because it is a tool of persuasion (it isn't) but because it can give us rich insight into how the MEPs position and justify themselves on any given topic.

Speeches give the MEPs an opportunity to state their case to the citizens, to explain themselves to their political group and to get their view on the record. This is even truer insofar as deliberation at the EP is particularly free. The EP's Rules of Procedures themselves stress that "the application of [these Rules] shall in no way detract from the liveliness of parliamentary debates nor undermine Members' freedom of speech" (art 9.3). Any MEP can ask to take the stand without needing to justify himself to his political group or national delegation (Costa, 2002: 99). Every debate starts with an MEP expressing his

group's position on the matter but all the following MEPs speak only for themselves[6]. To be sure, time in the plenary is a finite resource. Cox (2006: 142) calls this limit a "plenary bottleneck" which constrains the MPs action. As Slapin & Proksch (2010: 335) explain, "which MPs receive floor time will be both a function of supply (the amount of speaking time and who allocates it), as well as demand (which MPs actually want to speak)". Speaking time is given out to the MEPs who want it by the party groups' secretariats according to different criteria (experience on the subject, membership of a relevant committee) but political considerations seem not to matter in the plenary. Loyalty to the party group line or during voting is not an important factor in deciding who gets to speak in the plenary (Slapin, 2010: 343-344). This means that dissidents can come to the floor to express their own position on any issue, national or not. The overall picture of opinions in the EP will be very different if it is constructed based on RCV which emphasize group cohesion, or if it is based on the analysis of individual speeches which show specific preferences. In the deliberation process, MEPs act as autonomous units, there is no pressure (or incentive) by the political groups to follow a determined position as is the case when the time comes to vote[7]. Thus, we can expect MEP speeches to more accurately reflect their own position than RCV analysis.

The EU's security role in the literature

Analysing the plenary debates and the adopted resolutions will help us understand how the EP views the EU's security role in the East. This "security actorness" as defined by the MEPs is already well studied in the literature. Whether the EU is a civilian power, a normative power or even a military power, everyone can agree that it is a unique polity, with a specific identity and a specific action (Manners, 2002; Manners, 2006; Smith, 2002; Telo, 2007; Zielonka, 2011). The EU's external objectives are outlined in its Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (European Security and Defence Policy since the Lisbon Treaty). Foreign competences mostly remain in the hands of the member states but common guidelines and positions can be taken at the level of the EU by the European Council, to be operationalised by the Council or the Commission (see de Wilde d'Estmael, 2011; Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014).

The European Parliament plays a very limited role in foreign policy. Its main prerogatives in this field are its budgetary powers and the right of assent it gives to international treaties between the EU and its partners. Its powers of budget are one of the only "hard powers" that the EP can use to gain a (relative) influence on the foreign policy-making process. This tool can be used by the EP to gain leverage on the Council which has led to interinstitutional tensions. Even then, just like the assent procedure, the budgetary process is a blunt tool. The EP can accept or reject a treaty or a budget proposal as a whole but it cannot weigh in on the specific content of international treaties or on the financing of individual CFSP or CSDP missions (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014: 85-88; Thym, 2006: 109-110; Wisniewski, 2013: 84). The EP is even more restricted in CFSP and (more so) in CDSP where it is limited to a consultative role. Following the TEU, the EU's High Representative is tasked with "regularly consult[ing] the European Parliament on the main aspects and the basic choices of the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy and inform[ing] it of how those policies evolve. [The HR/VP] shall ensure that the views of the

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[6] Interview with Krzysztof Lisek (EPP-POL), 30/04/2014; interview with a political advisor for S&D, 22/05/2014.
[7] Interview with Leonidas Donskis (ALDE-LIT), 06/11/2013; interview with Isabelle Durant (Greens/EFA-BEL), 03/03/2014.

European Parliament are duly taken into consideration" (art. 36). The text does not clarify whether this consultation should be done *ex ante* or *ex post*, with the EP favouring a consultation prior to the implementation of the Council's CSFP functions and the latter preferring to inform the EP only after the implementation of decisions. MEPs can thus debate about CFSP/CSDP missions after the fact but cannot really weigh in in the decision-making process (Barbé & Herranz Surrallés, 2008: 79-85).

This "parliamentary vacuum in CFSP" (Thym, 2006: 111) is a cause for concern for certain authors who regret the lack of democratic accountability afforded to the CFSP/CSDP by rejecting the Parliament from the policy-making process. Even though the EP has gradually increased its powers in all the spheres of the EU, foreign policy remains largely devoid of democratic caution due to an emphasis on efficiency rather than legitimacy. Many authors regret this situation and argue that if the EU wants to develop a security policy, it must decide what values and identities it intends to defend and that even the use of military power requires normative justification and democratic accountability (Bono, 2006; Lord, 2011: 1137-1139; Peters et al., 2008; Sjursen, 2011; Sjursen, 2011b). This debate highlights the importance of the EP in European foreign policy, even with a limited set of legislative competences. Indeed, the formal limits to its influence do not stop the EP from expressing its voice in various ways. By using its co-legislative powers in other spheres, it has managed to gain leverage on the establishment of the EEAS in 2010 (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014: 86; Wisniewski, 2013). It also contributes actively to the foreign policy debate through its own initiative reports, the numerous plenary debates on foreign policy matters and the work of the AFET committee. This Foreign Affairs committee is central to the EP's supervision on foreign matters and was strengthened in 2004 by the establishment of two sub-committees: DROI on Human Rights and SEDE on Security and Defence. SEDE was explicitly created to supervise the ESDP and to increase the Parliament's oversight on external security (Barbé & Herranz Surrallés, 2008: 77-78).

In the realm of security, the EU's objectives were outlined in the European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003) and developed in further political communications which state that "in its neighbourhood and beyond, the EU cannot […] confine itself to the economic and political spheres; it also needs to be able to guarantee stability, prevent conflicts and manage crises on its own doorstep." (Commission, 2004: 24). This broad strategic vision highlights the EU's ambition to be a true security provider for its neighbourhood rather than simply a security consumer. The distinction between security provider and security consumer is important as it helps understand the EP's role in security and will be useful in analysing our empirical data. Following Barbé & Kienzle (2007: 521), the difference in those terms depends on a balance between what the security actor gains and what it gives:

> *"In terms of interests and actions, a security provider has a stronger interest in the immediate security of a third party rather than in direct security gains for itself. Nevertheless, a security provider is also interested in its own security improvements. The prospect of own security gains – often rather indirect and in the long term – are even a significant incentive for security providers to act, which is why the action of a security provider easily lead to a win-win situation, where both the third party and the security provider gain in security. It is also possible to argue that a security provider is interested in absolute gains. Its own security interests, however, are only secondary.*

> *A security consumer, on the other hand, is primarily interested in its own security and is largely indifferent towards the security needs of third parties. A security consumer is, therefore, an international actor that acts only if its own security interests are affected. A special case of the security consumer would be an actor that does not act at all, even though the security interests of another actor are clearly at stake, and expects other actors to deal with the security issues in question. Such an actor can be called a passive security consumer. In general, security consumers create easily win-lose situations, in which the third party is usually on the losing side."*

The main distinction then is on the ambition of the security actor. According to the ESS, the EU clearly presents itself as a security provider in its neighbourhood. Regional security is seen first as a way to stabilize neighbouring countries and secondly as a way to guarantee the EU's own interests. This ambition is visible also in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) that was launched in 2004 to create a "ring of friends" around the EU through enhanced cooperation and a deeper relationship that stopped just short of integration. The ENP was clearly devised as an alternative to enlargement: to gain all the benefits of widening the European projects without the downside of accepting new members. The ENP was later decoupled in two distinct regional initiatives: the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM: 2007) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP: 2009) (Christou, 2010; Dannreuther, 2006). The ENP and later EaP, were from the start conceived to be indirect instruments to promote "stability, security and well-being" at the European periphery. The EU ambitions to be a security provider by ensuring the stability and prosperity of the Eastern neighbourhood and by exporting its normative power beyond its borders. This would ensure security for the EU and its partners in a clear win-win situation. However, this normative aspect of the EU as a security provider is combined with a security view that places the emphasis on the threat that the neighbourhood poses for its safety due to organised crime, violent conflicts, illegal immigration, etc. In this narrative, the EU is more of a security consumer which acts (by implementing the ENP and the EaP) only because its direct security is threatened. The ENP is launched to impose the European normative *acquis* on the neighbours in order to ensure the EU's security via the neighbour's stabilisation and prosperity. This paradox between the "normative duty" and the "security threat" of the neighbourhood is highlighted by Christou (2010: 415-419) and is sometimes shared by the Eastern partners themselves who resent being forced to model themselves according to the EU's project without receiving a clear incentive akin to enlargement (see also Wolczuk, 2010).

This tension between the EU as a security provider and as a security consumer in the East can also be illustrated by its action in the frozen conflicts of the FSU. Before 2002 and the prospects of the Eastern enlargement, the EU was virtually absent from the scene in Moldova, Georgia and even more in Azerbaijan (Follebouckt, 2012). After 2002, this started to change but the EU's approach to conflict resolution can still be characterized as a "policy limbo between action and non-action" (Delcour, 2010: 539). The EU's reluctance can first be explained by the volatility of the conflict regions, which make "safe" missions with "clear exit strategies and departure deadlines" difficult to implement (Popescu, 2009: 464). Secondly, the influence that Russia maintains on its periphery is also a factor inhibiting European ambitions. The Russian omnipresence in the Transnistrian and Georgian conflicts in particular makes many EU member states wary of launching any initiative that could irritate Russia and complicate EU-Russia relations. As Popescu (2011) qualifies it, the EU's policy in the frozen conflicts can be called a "stealth intervention". European action emphasizes low-

intensity, low-risk (thus low-yield) measures and is cautious of anything that might antagonise Russia. The EU is most successful in Moldova where it went from being a passive security consumer before 2002 to an emergent security provider since then, although this evolution could be overturned in case of stronger Russian pressure (Barbé & Kienzle: 534-536). In Georgia, the EU's initiative during the August War and the deployment of the EUMM confirm its ambitions to be a security provider but concrete results are still lacking so far (Freire & Simão, 2013). And in Nagorno-Karabakh, the EU cannot even be termed a security actor in its own right. These political and theoretical insights will now help us in analysing our EP debates in the light of this security distinction.

Analysis

Our analysis will be carried out in two main tracks: a preliminary quantitative analysis of the MEP interventions, followed by a systematic qualitative analysis of the contents of the debates. All the debates analysed in this study share the same structure. A representative of the Council and/or the Commission starts by presenting these institutions' position of the subject on the agenda. This is a chance to highlight the EU's actions and to explain the challenges posed by those conflict issues. After this introduction, a representative from each political group takes the stand to expose the group's common position. Once this is done, individual MEPs can take the stand during the rest of the time allotted (Corbett et al., 2011: 61-63). Speaking time for a debate is determined beforehand: a first fraction is divided equally among all the political groups, and then the rest is allocated among the groups in proportion to the total number of their members (EP Rules of Procedure, art. 149). This system ensures a just distribution to each political group while still enabling MEPs to express themselves outside the strictly partisan framework. Depending on the subject discussed, the number of MEPs to participate in the debate can vary greatly. In our corpus, the least active debate was the debate on the EU's policy towards the South Caucasus (26/02/2004), with only 12 MEPs contributing[8]; and the most active was the debate organised after the war in Georgia (01/09/2008), which saw 60 MEPs express their positions. This numerical difference can give us an idea of the importance bestowed upon certain subjects. The debates usually end with the submission of motions for resolutions by the political groups. These motions are then voted on in ulterior session in order to agree on a final resolution adopted by the majority of the EP. The final resolutions are usually the product of earlier negotiations between the political groups; the voting results and the adoption of the final resolution don't leave much room for surprise.

Who speaks? MEP interventions in the debate

Whereas the final resolutions can give us an interesting view of the (majority of the) EP's views on our conflict issues, identifying the speakers during the debate is important to understand who is more involved on the subject. Do the MEPs speak based on their personal preferences? Are some political groups more involved? Do some national delegations take a greater role in the proceedings?

This national issue is relevant seeing as most the research done on the working of the EP concludes – based on RCV analysis – that the MEPs' political preferences vary according to

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[8] Which is not surprising in itself since the 1999-2004 legislature was smaller than the subsequent ones with 626 MEPs to the 2004-2009 legislature's 785.

the classic left-right dimension. The MEPs main preoccupation is then to position themselves according to this left-right axis without concern, or with little concern, for national preferences (Hix et al., 2007: 161-181). In this case, political behaviour in the EP does not differ from other parliaments in ordinary democratic states. Even the 2004-2007 enlargement of the EU, which saw 10 new members join the club seems to have had little impact on the political spatiality of the EP. MEPs from new member states easily integrated existing political groups and loyally embraced the existing partisan positions (Hix & Noury, 2006; Hagemann, 2009). However, voting and RCV are only one aspect of EP politics. An important one but one which does not give us a complete picture of the functioning of the EP. Indeed, the political work of the MEPs is multifaceted, they must react on legislative as well as non-legislative subjects. And it is precisely in debates on non-legislative subjects that MEPs have the largest margin of manoeuvre. Non-legislative resolutions are mainly declaratory so anyone can take a personal position without necessarily having to follow party discipline as is the case on legislative subjects where the stakes are higher. Our debates on conflict issues where there is no major stake for the political groups are thus useful grounds to test MEP positions which do not always follow clear partisan dimensions.

Our corpus is limited in terms of size but it can still give us some indications on who participates and according to what dimensions. The following quantitative analysis shows the proportion of MEPs from the different political groups and national delegations who take part in the 15 debates organised during the 2004-2009 legislature[9]: three "conflict debates", one strategic debate on the South Caucasus and the Black Sea, one on the Eastern Partnership and ten on domestic issues. 147 different MEPs took part in those debates for a total of 311 interventions, some MEPs being active in multiple debates. Table 1 presents a breakdown of these numbers according to the MEPs' political affiliation.

Political Group	Total MEPs		Total speeches		MEP Presence		MEP Interventions	
EPP	277	*35,29%*	16698	*32,01%*	46	*31,29%*	105	*33,76%*
PSE	218	*27,77%*	13212	*25,33%*	35	*23,81%*	78	*25,08%*
ALDE	106	*13,50%*	5049	*9,68%*	21	*14,29%*	39	*12,54%*
UEN	44	*5,61%*	4379	*8,40%*	17	*11,56%*	33	*10,61%*
Greens/EFA	42	*5,35%*	3372	*6,46%*	6	*4,08%*	18	*5,79%*
GUE/NGL	41	*5,22%*	3267	*6,26%*	12	*8,16%*	22	*7,07%*
NI	34	*4,33%*	3118	*5,98%*	5	*3,40%*	6	*1,93%*
IND/DEM	23	*2,93%*	3063	*5,87%*	5	*3,40%*	10	*3,22%*
Total	**785**	*100,00%*	**52158**	*100%*	**147**	*100%*	**311**	*100%*

Table 1. MEP distribution along political lines

The first column (Total MEPs) gives us the distribution of all the political groups in the EP as a whole, in absolute and relative numbers. The groups are sorted according to their

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[9] The limit to these debates was done to have a greater coherence of the findings. Our entire corpus covers three different legislatures which varied in size and composition. This variation makes it difficult to investigate MEP participation without skewing the numbers, so it was decided to restrict the quantitative analysis to one legislature only. This should give us some preliminary insight to see whether further sampling is warranted.

numerical importance in the plenary. The main political group, the EPP, has 277 MEPs while the smallest, IND/DEM, has only 23 MEPs which make up 2.9% of the plenary[10]. Following the EP's Rules of Procedures on the allocation of speaking time, the group's proportions in our corpus should follow the same trend. In order to get a more faithful view of the reality of plenary debates, the next column (Total speeches) gives us the total number of speeches given by each political group during the 2004-2009 legislature[11]. This helps us clarify the first column a bit as we see that plenary activity does not precisely match each group's size (and thus allocated speaking time). The EPP and PSE are the most active groups, followed by ALDE and UEN, consistent with their proportion in the EP, but ALDE is proportionally less active and UEN more active than their total seats would suggest. This is a slight deviation, but on the whole, the distribution of MEP plenary activity by group corresponds to the EP hierarchy. The following columns reflect this as well (MEP presence: the number of different MEPs from each group who take part in one or more of the debates; MEP interventions: the individual interventions of all the MEPs). 46 MEPs from the EPP (31.3% of the MEPs in our corpus) took the stand 105 times. This proportion is quite similar to the overall EPP presence and activity in the plenary. The same can be said of the Greens/EFA who, with 5.35% of the seats in the EP and 6.4% of overall activity, form 4% of the presence but 5.8% of the interventions in the corpus. The distribution of political groups in our corpus does not deviate much from the overall distribution of the EP. This should not surprise us given the allocation of speaking time according to the group's sizes. However, two groups stand out as being relatively more active than expected: the far-left GUE/NGL represent more than 8% of the MEPs identified in our corpus even though they comprise only 5% of the total number of MEPs. On the other side of the spectrum, the nationalist right UEN group is also more active than the overall numbers would suggest with only 5.6% of seats and 8.4% of the plenary activity but more than 11% of the interventions in our corpus. These numbers can be justified in two ways. The importance of the GUE/NGL presence is explained by their activeness in the 01/09/08 debate after the war in Georgia. 6 MEPs from the group (half of the GUE presence in our corpus) took the stand while being almost absent from the previous debates. This far-left presence will show up later in our analysis of the debate contents as strong support towards the Russian position. The other case, of the disproportionate UEN activity, could be indicative of an importance afforded to the national factor in EP debates. The UEN group is composed of nationalist groups and their relative intense activity could imply a larger role for national issues in the EP debates.

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[10] For a summary of the political groups' history and orientations, see Corbett et al., 2011 : 78-125 ; Hix, 2011 : 137-158.

[11] These numbers were obtained on the VoteWatch website (http://www.votewatch.eu/). VoteWatch is an independent organisation which provides access to votes and other activities of the EP and the Council by using these institutions' own attendance, voting and activity data. The website compiles all of the MEPs' voting records as well as motions, questions, reports, opinions or "speeches in the plenary". It is this last category – sortable by individual MEP, political group or member state – that was used for this table. However, the numbers were slightly amended. Indeed, the speech records do not differentiate when a MEP acts as president during the plenary sessions, skewing the overall proportion. Care was taken then to remove all of the speech units given by a MEP in his/her function as president of the session, reducing the total number by more than 8000 speeches. This time-consuming method, though meticulous, is however not foolproof and these numbers should not be used as anything more than a baseline or frame of reference. Another difficulty in using these numbers is that the EP (and thus the VoteWatch data) does not differentiate between oral and written interventions in the debates. Some MEPs have taken the habit of writing an immense amount of vote explanations, which are counted as normal speeches, in order to present a positive (but artificially inflated) record of their activity. This is problematic as these written explanations do not require much time or effort, a simple email sent by the MEP or an assistant is sufficient to get on the record, and in the VoteWatch database. This practice makes it harder to compare the MEPs' oral interventions in absolute terms.

Country	Total MEPs		Total speeches		MEP Presence		MEP Interventions	
Austria	18	2,29%	2291	4,39%	3	2,04%	9	2,89%
Belgium	24	3,06%	1503	2,88%	3	2,04%	3	0,96%
Bulgaria	18	2,29%	359	0,69%	5	3,40%	7	2,25%
Cyprus	6	0,76%	633	1,21%	2	1,36%	6	1,93%
Czech Republic	24	3,06%	1010	1,94%	6	4,08%	10	3,22%
Denmark	14	1,78%	579	1,11%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Estonia	6	0,76%	507	0,97%	5	3,40%	19	6,11%
Finland	14	1,78%	894	1,71%	6	4,08%	9	2,89%
France	78	9,94%	3848	7,38%	10	6,80%	20	6,43%
Germany	99	12,61%	4352	8,34%	7	4,76%	14	4,50%
Greece	24	3,06%	1692	3,24%	4	2,72%	7	2,25%
Hungary	24	3,06%	1381	2,65%	6	4,08%	9	2,89%
Ireland	13	1,66%	2144	4,11%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Italy	78	9,94%	2665	5,11%	8	5,44%	12	3,86%
Latvia	9	1,15%	260	0,50%	3	2,04%	6	1,93%
Lithuania	13	1,66%	862	1,65%	5	3,40%	14	4,50%
Luxembourg	6	0,76%	442	0,85%	1	0,68%	4	1,29%
Malta	5	0,64%	303	0,58%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Netherlands	27	3,44%	2040	3,91%	5	3,40%	20	6,43%
Poland	54	6,88%	4710	9,03%	32	21,77%	66	21,22%
Portugal	24	3,06%	3853	7,39%	2	1,36%	3	0,96%
Romania	35	4,46%	1258	2,41%	14	9,52%	31	9,97%
Slovakia	14	1,78%	1043	2,00%	2	1,36%	6	1,93%
Slovenia	7	0,89%	273	0,52%	1	0,68%	2	0,64%
Spain	54	6,88%	2073	3,97%	5	3,40%	6	1,93%
Sweden	19	2,42%	3998	7,67%	2	1,36%	3	0,96%
United Kingdom	78	9,94%	7185	13,78%	10	6,80%	25	8,04%
Total	**785**	**100%**	**52158**	**100%**	**147**	**100%**	**311**	**100%**

Table 2. MEP distribution along national lines

This table is presented with the same structure as the previous one, highlighting national distribution instead. If national factors play a marginal role in the EP, the numbers should follow the trend seen with the political groups, where major national delegations should be active in accordance with their size and smaller countries being almost absent from the corpus. However, the numbers presented here provided some interesting deviation from the suggested norm. National activity is not proportional in the EP. In general, major countries

like Germany, France or Italy, are much less active in the plenary than would seem normal while smaller countries like Austria, Ireland, Portugal or Sweden seem relatively much more present in the plenary. This highlights the necessary precautions in using the "Total speeches" numbers, as the non-discrimination between oral and written interventions is an important factor in explaining these discrepancies[12]. The data presented here is only used as a comparative baseline, not as an absolute reference. The most active country in our corpus is Poland whose MEPs make up more than of a fifth of the interventions of our corpus. Polish MEPs are relatively more active in general (9% of speeches) but are clearly preeminent on the conflict issues in the Eastern neighbourhood. Another active country is Estonia. The Estonian MEPs make up only 0.76% of the EP and less than one percent of speeches but almost all of the Estonian MEPs took the stand in our corpus, comprising 6% of the total number of MEP interventions. In the same region, Latvian and Lithuanian MEPs to a degree are also overrepresented in our corpus. Two other countries are also more active: Romania and the Netherlands. The Dutch presence owes mostly to the activity of Jan-Marinus Wiersma (PSE) who participated in most of the debates analysed here. His personal experience certainly plays a part: in the 2004-2009 legislature, he was a member of the AFET and SEDE committees and of the parliamentary delegation with Moldova. Previously, he had also been a member of the delegation for relations with Russia and with Ukraine (EP website). This specialisation in foreign and security issues in the East would explain his preference in taking a position during the debates analysed in our corpus. This "individual preference" factor can be helpful to illustrate other MEP's involvement in the debates. Indeed, political experience is a good guide to knowing which MEPs will participate in a given debate and will be given the floor. During the crisis in Georgia, members of the parliamentary delegation with the South Caucasus countries were involved in presenting their position[13], though their expertise does not mean necessarily that they are the ones to present their group's common position.

Next to committee experience, personal history is also a factor to take into account. Tunne Kelam (EPP-EST) and Vytautas Landsbergis (EPP-LIT) were both instrumental in re-establishing their countries' independence at the beginning of the 1990s and are both active in our entire corpus. Their activity in the EP plenary is a tribute to their interest in EU foreign policy towards the East and Russia in particular, as well as to the role of the EP as a democratising force[14]. In this, they follow their state's policy. Estonia especially has a principled policy towards Russia, insisting that EU-Russia relations should reflect values and not just interests (Ehin, 2012: 223). The positions taken during the EP debates mirror these national preferences, as Tunne Kelam's intervention during the 1st September debate on the war in Georgia illustrates[15].

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[12] These numbers can be nuanced by analysing each individual MEP's activity. In Portugal, 4 MEPs (of 24) make up more than 2/3 of the Portuguese delegation activity. Of these 4 very active MEPs, one is a VP of the Parliament and thus his record is amended in the table, but the other three have an overwhelming majority of written explanations of votes in their record. The situation is similar in Sweden where two MEPs of the IND/DEM group (out of 19 Swedish MEPs) account for more than a third of Swedish activity in the plenary by multiplying written explanations. A more accurate way of comparing these numbers would be to remove all written explanations of votes but, short of manually checking each MEP's record, there doesn't seem to be an efficient way of doing this.

[13] For instance Marie-Anne Isler Béguin (Greens/EFA-FRA) and Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE-ITA) in the debate of 07/05/08.

[14] Interview with Tunne Kelam (EPP-EST), 08/04/2014.

[15] "(…) Russia has placed itself in the category of unstable, unpredictable states. It can no longer be seen as a reliable partner, and clearly does not share our common values. By invading Georgia it has challenged the

Participation in our corpus debates thus seems to indicate a greater involvement by some new member states. Table 3 highlights the East-West divide between older and newer member states:

	Total MEPs		Total speeches		MEP Presence		MEP Interventions	
West	581	*74,01%*	40495	*77,64%*	68	*46,26%*	141	*45,34%*
East[16]	204	*25,99%*	11663	*22,36%*	79	*53,74%*	170	*54,66%*
Total	785	*100,00%*	52158	*100%*	147	*100%*	311	*100%*

Table 3. MEP distribution along the East-West categorisation

These numbers present a clear picture of Eastern involvement in our corpus debates. MEPs from the Central and Eastern European member states make up only 26% of the EP and are generally less active than their Western counterparts, but account for more than 54% of the interventions in our debates. Newer MEPs from these states evidently feel more interested in the conflict issues of the Eastern neighbourhood than their Western and Southern colleagues. MEPs from the Baltic States and Poland in particular seem interested in the EU's action in the Eastern neighbourhood and in relations with Russia. This is consistent with their history and geography as well as with the policy of their states. Since its entry into the EU, Poland has had high ambitions to be a driver of the EU's policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood, seen as the "number one priority" for the Polish contribution to the EU's external policies (Promorska, 2011: 175; Killingsworth, 2013: 368; Klatt & Stepniewski, 2012: 103-111). Indeed, Poland is an active promoter of the EU's Eastern dimension and was indispensable in the development of the Eastern Partnership after the Georgia war, hoping to make it a stepping stone before welcoming new members inside the EU club. Warsaw is also a proponent of a strong ESDP to achieve the EU's security vision towards the East and this is visible in its MEPs activity during the debates[17]. The "national factor" thus seems to be relevant in understanding which MEPs take a stand and why. A larger corpus and additional sampling would be useful to broaden and deepen this analysis in order to measure more accurately the salience of this national factor.

The EP's security views: qualitative analysis

a. Methodology

Choice of cases

This section will employ the grounded theory method (GTM) as the best way to gain a complete and precise answer to the research question. The term GTM refers both to the

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fundamentals of the international security system, trying to replace it with the model of 'might is right'. (…) If nothing concrete is done, Russia will not only never release Georgia from its hold, but will also follow the same pattern elsewhere. The first priority of the democratic community is to set firm limits. Today, we have to answer the same moral challenge. If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

[16] Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

[17] "I greet the measures and the text by the Council with moderate optimism and satisfaction. It contains all the main elements of condemnation and action, including the more generous offer in terms of Community assistance and a potential ESDP mission. But I would say to the presidency that it is just an hors d'oeuvre or an entrée. We are waiting for the main course which will be peace and stability in the region, and the European Union's long-term strategy in this region of the Caucasus." (Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, EPP-POL, 01/09/08).

result of a research process (theory construction) and to the method that was used to build this theory.

This qualitative method is very rich and very precise but also very time-consuming and demanding. The systematic process of coding that accompanies the GTM is useful to get an in-depth look at certain cases but fails the reality test when confronted with a large corpus. It was thus not possible to analyse all the 46 debates held from 2004-2012 using this methodology. Instead, it was decided to restrict the corpus in order to achieve a systematic and comprehensive examination of a few select cases. Ergo, it was decided to limit the study of the debates to just 9 cases: the four debates organised explicitly around the conflict issues of the Eastern neighbourhood[18] as well as all of the strategic debates[19]. The four "conflict debates" provide us with a good view of what the MEPs and the EP actually say about those issues in a crisis situation. In effect, each of the debates was organised at a particularly tense time for the region (see below for the context). The MEPs are confronted with a very real challenge in trying to understand the conflict issues as well as express their position on what the EU's role should be to manage these crises. Analysing these four debates individually and comparing them one to the other then provides us with a better understanding of how the EP deals with the frozen conflict issues and offers a first answer to our initial research question. The "strategic debates" are different. As they were organised outside of any crisis situation, they can help demonstrate the MEPs' outlook on the EU's long-term role in the East. The analysis of these strategic debates is thus interesting in comparison to the "conflict debates" to better understand how the EP understands the EU's security role in the East.

The Grounded theory method

This qualitative approach was conceptualised by Glaser & Strauss (1967), as a "general method of comparative analysis" (p.1) which would let useful categories "emerge" from the data, without being subjected to preconceived theoretical notions which could "contaminate" our understanding of the studied phenomenon (p.49). This approach is resolutely inductive, starting with a systematic analysis of the data in order to allow the discovery, or "emergence", of a theory based solely on the initial data (see Charmaz, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Following Urquhart's typology (2013: 16-18), four key characteristics of the GTM can be identified. First, its main purpose is to *build a theory*. Coding the data just to describe it, even exhaustively makes no sense, the objective is always to gain a theoretical insight of the data and to ultimately link our empirical study of a specific case with the relevant literature on the subject. The theoretical literature is thus very important but only in an ulterior phase, to broaden our data-driven theoretical notions. This characteristic implies a second one: that the researchers have *no preconceived theoretical ideas* prior to analysing the data. Theoretical sensitivity is important to make sense of the empirical data but it should not direct our initial analysis. The third characteristic of the GTM is that it relies on *constant comparison*. Through all the coding phases, every slice of data is compared to all the other data gathered and the categories constructed. The data is constantly compared to data in

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[18] "Moldova (Transnistria), Georgia (South Ossetia)": 25/10/2006; "Deterioration of the situation in Georgia": 07/05/08; "Situation in Georgia": 01/09/08; "Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh": 06/07/11.
[19] "EU policy towards South Caucasus *(sic)*": 26/02/2004; "A more effective EU policy for the South Caucasus - A Black Sea Regional Policy Approach": 16/01/2008; "The need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus": 20/05/2010; "An EU Strategy for the Black Sea": 20/01/2011; "Black Sea strategy": 17/04/2012.

other categories to see if it belongs there, if it belongs in a new category or if it signals a specific relation between the data. Finally, the fourth component is the idea of "'slices of data' […] selected by a process of *theoretical sampling* where researchers decide, on analytical grounds, where to sample from next" (Urquhart, 2013: 16). Different kinds of data give us different insights on the development of categories which in turn leads to the sampling of more or different cases to further develop our theoretical understanding of the phenomenon.

Another implicit but central characteristic can be added: that the GTM relies on an inductive process of analysis. Contrary to the hypothetico-deductive approach where hypotheses are devised prior to the collection of data, in the GTM, it is the data itself that is the starting point for any scientific interrogation. This process can even be called abductive as the foundation is an empirical phenomenon which leads to the constructing of a "general statement which explains the observed phenomenon" (Kelle, 2005). This will then lead to new concepts or rules. Thus, the data serves to build a theory which is tested on the original data and on new data identified through theoretical sampling. The GTM is a very precise, very systematic, and very rich method to burrow into qualitative data and let it speak. Its inductive nature does not however mean that it forbids having any prior questions about the data being studied but it helps to structure the analysis along a more open route, while being guided by our initial questioning and research question.

Coding procedures

Even though grounded theory was founded and developed by sociologists, its value for all the fields of social science is significant[20]. It has already been applied to the study of the European Parliament (see Karv, 2012) but is not frequently used in Political Science (see Pearson & Galvin, 2007 or Becker, 2012). Our research will thus adapt the GTM to the study of the EP with an aim to link the findings with broader theoretical insights.

In order to do this, a specific coding procedure was devised after an initial inquiry in the data. Our case studies (debates and resolutions) have been coded in four different coding stages using the NVivo qualitative research software. These coding patterns are meant to help us make substantive and theoretical codes freely emerge from the data while keeping our research questions at the centre of the inquiry. The coding procedures are drawn for Saldaña's *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2013).

The first phase of coding is the *attribute coding* (p.69-72). Every MEP involved in the debate is identified according to his name, his political group and his nationality. This way, all of the speeches given in the plenary can be traced back to a specific MEP and can be grouped or compared according to political or national criteria. This enables us to answer the question "*WHO says what?*" in plenary as well as to have a longitudinal view of the question, in order to see if there is an evolution in the positions taken by the political groups over the years. The second type of coding applied to the data is the *descriptive coding* phase (p.87-91). In this phase, every MEP intervention is coded according to its subject or theme with a descriptive or *in vivo* (verbatim) code to summarize its content. In most cases, the MEP interventions, though short, relate to multiple subjects. In that case, each different subject is coded, even if it is only a sentence long. This descriptive coding enables us to have a clear overview of the themes being put forward by the MEPs and helps us to answer the question

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[20] For instance, Cathy Urquhart who wrote her *Practical guide to Grounded Theory* (2013) is a professor in Information and Communication Technology.

"*who says WHAT*?". Both these coding phases (attribute and descriptive) concern substantive codes and are exhaustive: each and every speech act is systematically coded according to its author and subject. The next phases of coding are not as encompassing, as the codes are generated only to identify certain specific processes. Some interventions, which do not exhibit the requisite patterns, are thus not categorized in the subsequent coding.

The next coding phases follow an "open coding" approach faithful to the GTM to lead to the emergence of diverse concepts which will help in building a theory. In order not to get bogged down in the mundane, particular attention will be given to some specific concepts (values, conflicts and causation), appropriately coded to make them stand out. *Values coding* is "the application of codes onto qualitative data to reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or world-view" (p. 110-115). This leads us to inquire about the subjective value systems that the MEPs present in the plenary and to see whether certain values are put forward in the parliamentary debates and resolutions. *Versus coding* "identify in binary terms the individuals, groups, […] concepts, etc., in direct conflict with each other" (p.115-119). As a political scene, the EP is bound to experience verbal conflicts. How are these conflicts presented and what issues are at stake? *Causation coding* (p.163-175) is used to locate causal beliefs and causal relations in the MEP speeches. This aims to show how to MEPs understand the causes of the instability regarding the frozen conflicts. Finally, the last stage is the *evaluation coding* phase (p.119-123). Any unit of speech (as well as any text of the resolutions) that contains a set of recommendations for or an appraisal of the EU's action is coded. Here, the questions kept in mind are "*what should the EU do*?", "*what should be done*?" and "*what isn't done enough*?". This enables us to analyse how the MEPs position themselves (individually in the plenary and collectively in the resolutions) compared to the EU's role. These four coding phases are carried out one after the other in order to respect a systematic and comprehensive process. The codes generated are then grouped in broader categories which serve as the foundation for our empirical and theoretical analysis of the subject as presented in this paper.

b. Thematic analysis

The nine debates of our corpus will now be analysed after having undergone several extensive coding phases. Over a thousand unique codes were generated during these phases, and were then grouped into new, more abstract categories. This enabled us to have complete and detailed outlook of the question of frozen conflicts in the EP. We will now present the 4 main issues emanating from this analysis: the Eastern neighbourhood viewed as a necessary zone for EU involvement; the values emphasized by the MEPs; the central role of Russia as a partner or as a foe; and the case for EU action.

The East as Europe's horizon

This question of the Eastern neighbourhood as an important region for the EU is present throughout out corpus but in varying degrees. The first debate, on the EU's strategy towards the South Caucasus, is explicitly preoccupied with this question but it also resurfaces implicitly or explicitly in the subsequent conflict debates. Most MEPs taking the stand agree that the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions are of strategic nature for the EU, prompting calls for an increased involvement in the East:

Ursula Stenzel (EPP-GER), 26/02/04:

"(…) the South Caucasus is a region in crisis on Europe's doorstep, and, ever since the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict broke out, the European Union has had a strategic rather than merely humanitarian interest in keeping it economically and politically stable. One of the consequences of the enlargement of the European Union is that these hotspots are closer to us, and the prospect of a neighbourhood policy based on the present partnership and cooperation agreement should help to stabilise this region."

The importance of the region is suggested along three main ideas: the European identity of the zone[21], its role as a transit region for energy supply to Europe[22] and the democratic challenges it must overcome with EU help[23]. The importance of the region will increase as the EU gets more involved, with the "Wider Europe Initiative", then the ENP and finally the Eastern Partnership, all measures called on by the MEPs. Energy concerns in particular grow in importance in the debates, especially after the August war and the Ukrainian gas crisis of 2009. The South Caucasus and the Black Sea are repeatedly presented as essential transit regions for European energy security and, as such, require more investment and more involvement by the EU[24]. The August war in particular was a catalyst which strengthened the MEPs ambitions towards the East, calling on the EU to support Georgia and Ukraine against Russia[25].

This "Russian threat" (see below) to the smaller Eastern neighbours seems an important reason to justify the EU's necessary involvement in Georgia, Ukraine or Moldova. On the other hand, Armenia and Azerbaijan are less presented as a part of Europe and their problems seem farther away. The South Caucasus remains a strategic region[26] throughout the time period analysed but to a different degree. Contrarily to Georgia or Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan are not presented as victims needing EU support but are both shown to be responsible for the tensions in the region. Many MEPs also choose a side, accusing Armenia[27] or Azerbaijan[28] to be the main culprit. Finding a clear victim then appears to be an

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[21] "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are undoubtedly European states, they are undoubtedly European nations" (Krzysztof Lisek, EPP-POL, 20/05/10); "I am convinced the EU has to demonstrate increased engagement in the South Caucasus. After all, all the states in that region are already members of the Council of Europe and, as such, are part of Europe" (Tunne Kelam, EPP-EST, 16/01/08).

[22] "This region will determine the future energy security of Europe. The key words include diversification, interconnectivity and security of supply" (Othmar Karas, EPP-GER, 17/04/12).

[23] "What the Commissioner said about EU aid to support the forthcoming elections in Georgia is a step by the European Union that should characterise European policy in the Caucasus: defence of Georgia, admiration for the building of democracy, no consent to the breakdown of this country's territorial integrity." (Józef Pinior, PSE-POL, 07/05/08).

[24] "There are several very important dimensions to our economic cooperation, one of them being energy cooperation and security, especially in the context of valuable projects supported by the European Commission – such as the Nabucco Pipeline project. The Caspian Sea and the Black Sea regions are vital for European energy security and the EU strategy for the South Caucasus rightly recognises those elements" (Iuliu Winkler, EPP-ROM, 20/05/10).

[25] "The credibility of the European Union, the stability of the whole region, and the protection of our closest neighbours and even Member States of the Union depend on this. I also call on you, Mr President-in-Office of the Council, to ensure that relations with Ukraine are also very quickly resumed." (Joseph Daul, on behalf of EPP-FRA, 01/09/08).

[26] "Mr President, about one year ago, our Parliament adopted its resolution on the need for an EU strategy towards the South Caucasus with an overwhelming majority. The resolution outlined the strategic importance of this neighbouring region for the EU and the danger the unresolved conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh poses not only to the parties in the conflict but to the entire region and the EU as a whole." (Evgeni Kirilov, S&D-BUL, 06/07/11).

[27] "The Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh genocide was one of the gravest, forgotten genocides of the 90s. It is important that the attention of the European Union, otherwise so sensitive to human rights, not be selective, and, when looking at a series of national tragedies, it should not use double standards. As a Hungarian MEP, I would

important justification for EU support and involvement to the region. This factor of fragility is even more relevant when democratic values are also highlighted.

Championing democracy and sovereignty

Despite the EP's self-professed role as democratic guardian (Karv, 2012: 14) and protector of human rights (Lucarelli & Manners, 2006), values are not overly present in the MEPs speeches. The humanitarian aspects of the conflicts especially are marginalised in favour of exclusively political concerns. However, throughout the corpus, two abstract values are implicitly or explicitly underlined: democracy and sovereignty. Democracy is clearly an important concept for the MEPs – though not necessarily numerically. Calls for support to Georgia during and after the 2008 crisis are often reinforced by the mention of Georgia's democratic credentials in contrast to Russia's authoritarianism:

József Szájer (PSE-POL), 07/05/08:

> *"(…) the European Parliament has involved itself on numerous occasions in the issue of building democracy in Georgia. We have been admiring onlookers at the way the Georgian people have striven to build a liberal democracy, a strong civil society and free elections. The European Parliament is still standing firmly on the side of democracy in Georgia today, guarding the territorial integrity of the Georgian State."*

Some MEPs are less enthusiastic about Georgia's democratic label, accusing it instead of aggressiveness or lack of restraint during the crisis[29]. In general though, MEPs call upon the EU to involve itself and support Georgia, Moldova[30] and Ukraine, fragile democratic victims in the face of Russian undemocratic aggression. However, the framing of these democratic credentials differ between the conflict debates and the strategic debates. In the "conflict debates", the priority during a time of crisis is to support the "victims" of Russian aggression or imperialism. The EU must act to help and defend them. In the strategic debates, on the other hand – which reflect on the EU's long term policies and ambitions – European support is not unconditional. The South Caucasus countries and Moldova are themselves responsible for fostering democracy and human rights. EU involvement is important but it is not a one way street, the partner countries must also do their share[31]. Democracy is seen here as a necessary condition for conflict resolution[32], in a long-term perspective while the

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like to reassure the Azeri people that we are following their situation with brotherly love and hope and, at the same time, we call on everybody to exercise self-restraint where Azerbaijan is concerned." (Csanád Szegedi, NI-HUN, 06/07/11).

[28] "(…) for many years, we have watched Azerbaijan, which has been condemned internationally on numerous occasions, especially in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe, apply a terrible arms policy. We have watched the Azerbaijan Government spend its huge mineral wealth on arms, instead of fighting for growth and prosperity for the Azeri people." (Eleni Theocharous, EPP-CYP, 06/07/11).

[29] "The Georgian President, Mikheil Saakashvili, whom the opposition accuses of vote-rigging on a massive scale and widespread corruption, came to office by stirring up extreme Georgian nationalism and promising to force South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which are kindly disposed towards Russia, to become Georgian" (Esko Seppänen, GUE/NGL-FIN, 01/09/08.

[30] Praised for its inclusiveness rather than democracy: "The social system in the Republic of Moldova is open both politically and socially, and characterised by co-existence and tolerance" (Elisabeth Schroedter, Greens/EFA-GER, 25/10/06).

[31] "The region's many challenges, however, call for more effective action on the part of the Union and, furthermore, require the countries of South Caucasus to show more responsibility and commitment to this partnership." (Samuli Pohjamo, ALDE-FIN, 16/01/08).

[32] "In other words, it is vital to create gradually, step by step, a solid canvas of human, cultural, economic and political relationships between the nations and the states of the Southern Caucasus and the Black Sea area. If

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conflict debates emphasize the need for the EU to have an immediate action as a conflict manager.

Another value frequently underscored during the debates is sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is not surprising in itself as the debates analysed are organised around conflict issues in which Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan lost parts of their territory to separatist disputes. Two international principles clash in this instance: territorial integrity vs self-determination. This clash is recognized by the MEPs with a clear preference for the former, more stable principle[33]. Support for the peoples' right to self-determination is limited to a few MEPs only[34]. As a whole, the EP is in favour of democracy and stability, emphasizing political values over humanitarian concerns. This emerging analysis could be usefully tested by broadening the debate sample, as many debates are organised explicitly over human rights issues. In our current corpus, stability takes the forefront because the questions at stake are pressing political conflicts. This emphasis could be different in another set of debates.

Russia a partner or a foe

The debates in our corpus are not about Russia. Nonetheless, Russia appears constantly and is a central issue raised by the MEPs. This appears consistent with its role in the frozen conflicts, but this centrality overshadows all other concerns or responsibilities. The conflicts are not viewed as internal issues for Moldova or Georgia but as instruments of Russian policy. For the EP, the causes of these conflicts are not the desire for independence of the Abkhazian, Ossetian or Transnistrian people or other local developments but the ambitions of Russia to maintain its influence on the Black Sea and South Caucasus regions. Every crisis episode is viewed in the light of this Russian accountability. The EP's position is markedly different from the way in which the Council and the Commission present the situation on the ground. In their introduction to the debates, representatives of the Council and the Commission acknowledge Russia's central role in the region but are very cautious not to point the finger, preferring a more consensual diplomatic language to present the facts and emphasizing the positive aspects of the EU-Russia partnership:

> "(…) Relations between the European Union and Russia have a valuable feature: these days we are able to discuss everything round the table, including the difficult areas and the commitments made by Russia. The next excellent opportunity for such discussions is in November, when the Permanent Partnership Council meeting of EU and Russian Foreign Ministers is held, and after that at the end of November at the EU-Russia Summit."[35]

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this succeeds, I am convinced that even in that geographical area the lingering conflicts will be gradually sorted out and finally resolved, and an area of stability, democracy and prosperity will be created" (Libor Rouček, PSE-CZE, 16/01/08).

[33] "Relations in the Black Sea region should be based on 'mutual respect, territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and the prohibition of the use of force or threat of the use of force'" (Nickolay Mladenov, EPP-BUL, 16/01/08).

[34] "Finally, there is one point on which, as a supporter of Catalan independence, I want to distance myself from this report. It is the question of separatism. There will be no peace in the world, in my view, unless we respect the wishes of peoples. The right of peoples to self-determination is fundamental. The international community has a duty to allow the democratic exercise of that right in the South Caucasus as in Western Sahara. This applies to the Adzharians, the Abkhazians, the Ossetians and to the Azeris of Nagorno-Karabakh." (Miquel Mayol i Raynal, Greens/EFA-SPA, 26/02/04).

[35] Paula Lehtomäki, Council, 25/10/06.

The contrast with the MEPs overly critical positions is important and confirms the EP's specific identity within the EU system. Even then, the MEPs' negative perceptions of Russia are not unanimous (see below) and are not static but experience a significant deterioration between 2004 and the end of the war in Georgia. In 2004, during the debate on the EU's policy towards the South Caucasus, the few mentions of Russia exhibit a prudent view of Russia's role[36]. As the time passes and as the crises worsen, MEPs become increasingly more critical of Russia's actions, presenting them as responsible for the instability and urging the EU to punish Moscow[37]. Russia is thus the main culprit in the conflicts and subsequent war even if Georgia's responsibility as a trigger to the August war is not denied. But it is on Russia that the blame rests. Many MEPs castigate Moscow for its imperialist policies[38], evoking historical Soviet precedents[39] and denouncing its ambitions to establish spheres of influence in the Eastern neighbourhood[40]. This criticism cuts across political lines with national opinions seeming to play a part (see below). Russia's culpability also serves to warn the EU to put a new face to its partnership with Moscow. The war in Georgia especially, is presented as a watershed moment in EU-Russia relations[41]. Many MEPs call for a re-evaluation of the partnership, suggesting suspending the ongoing negotiations on a new PCA or freezing visa liberalisation with Russia. Partnership in itself is impossible in the light of what is termed a "conflict of values"[42] between Russia and the EU.

Criticism of Russia thus saturates the MEPs interventions. However, the degree of this criticism seems to vary along partisan lines, following a left-right divide. The far-left members of the GUE/NGL group are very present during the 1st September debate and share a common position: Russia's "counterstroke" was unfortunate but the responsibility for the conflict lies solely at the feet of Georgia and the USA, in a position consistent with communist

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[36] "If stability is to be achieved, then it is essential that Russia is involved. President Putin – having the day before yesterday dissolved a government that has always maintained considerable ambiguity towards the countries of the former Soviet Union, and in particular, towards the South Caucasus – will also have to indicate some direction for the Caucasus. The meeting between the European Union and Russia, which will take place next March, could be an opportunity for this to happen." (Demetrio Volcic, PSE-ITA, 26/02/04).

[37] "None of this, however – and let me make this very clear, as Martin Schulz has done on many occasions – none of this justifies the Russian intervention which, after all, has been ongoing for years. It is the expression of imperialist behaviour and we have repeatedly seen Russia exploiting the existing minority conflicts accordingly. We have witnessed repeated threats and boycotts which we absolutely cannot accept. I do not wish to deny that mistakes have been made by the West and by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, but in its relations with its neighbours, Russia has repeatedly sought to exploit internal conflicts for its own ends." (Hannes Swoboda, on behalf of the PSE-AUT, 01/09/08).

[38] "What we see today is post-imperialist near-abroad policies in action: policies which the Russian Government was committed to abandoning 12 years ago when it became a member of the Council of Europe." (Tunne Kelam, EPP-EST, 07/05/08).

[39] "The events in Georgia paradoxically took place in the month of August, just like in the former Czechoslovakia 40 years ago, when my country too was invaded and occupied for many a long year by the Soviet Army. (…) we must not forget that Russia has shown by its actions that it has not put its past behind it. Just as in 1968, it has not hesitated to send in tanks to achieve its political goals. Once again military force is destabilising countries which are trying to free themselves from Russian influence. Today it is Georgia, tomorrow it could be Ukraine." (Zita Pleštinská, EPP-SLK, 01/09/08).

[40] "I am convinced that Georgia's European aspirations were half of the reason for Russia's attack. The other half was the desire to control the routes through Georgia used to transport raw materials for energy. It is our political and moral duty to support the people of Georgia and to make Russia understand that the time when it could act at will in its self-proclaimed sphere of influence has gone forever." (Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, UEN-POL, 01/09/08).

[41] "Today's response from the European Council to these challenges is very clear: we are at a crossroads in our relations with Russia. We have to be serious, Mr President, because we cannot continue in this way. The prestige and credibility of the European Union are at stake. The EU cannot simply sign the cheque for these great modern dramas." (José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, on behalf of EPP-SPA, 01/09/08).

[42] "This conflict is not between Georgians or Ossetians, this conflict did not begin on 8 August, it is not only Russia and Georgia's conflict, it is a conflict of values and it involves us all." (Katrin Saks, PSE-EST, 01/09/08).

anti-imperialism and anti-americanism (March, 2011:156-157)[43]. The GUE/NGL's relatively uncritical view of Russia is reflected also in their opposition to the resolution that was voted by the EP after the debate (see below). Also on the left side of the political spectrum but farther from the margins, the members of the PSE are cautious to keep a balanced stance in the conflict, denouncing the disproportionality of Russia's response but emphasizing Georgia's initial responsibility. EU-Russia relations need to be firm but fair[44], in a spirit of dialogue and "reciprocity"[45]. Speeches from the left emphasize the EU-Russia strategic partnership over all else, encouraging Russia to play a positive role rather than punishing it for its policies[46]. On the right, the tone is much harsher, with the nationalist UEN members' being particularly vocal in their denunciation of Russian actions[47] and support to Georgia, already well before the 2008 war[48]. This political divide is also evident in the subsequent debates with the socialist group emphasizing Russia's role as a strategic partner, not to be criticised[49], while MEPs from the right continue to highlight Russian responsibilities in the regional instability[50]. Partisan politics can be a factor in evaluating MEPs positions towards but national factors play a role as well, with socialist MEPs from hostile countries advocating a firmer stand[51] and nationalist MEPs from strategic partners in favour of open dialogue[52].

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[43] "(…) political irresponsibility will cost dear, and that is true for everyone. It is certainly true for the Georgian President who, since his election in 2004, has constantly pandered to the spirit of revenge in relation to the breakaway territories. He has constantly pushed his luck in terms of his allegiance to the Bush administration and his policy of confrontation in the region. (…) Finally, the West as a whole would do well to assess the unprecedented damage already caused by the American attitude of adventurism and the European attitude of follow-my-leader in this part of the continent" (Francis Wurtz, on behalf of GUE/NGL-FRA, 01/09/08).

[44] "I therefore believe that any escalation must be prevented. My Group and I are in favour of clear, albeit firm, relations with Russia, particularly in terms of energy issues, human rights and international law. However, we are against any return to the Cold War." (Véronique de Keyser, PSE-BEL, 01/08/09).

[45] "Wisdom dictates that we redo a number of calculations, since they were wrong, and that we sit down at the negotiating table with Russia on a basis of reciprocity and … (President cuts off the speaker)" (Giuletto Chiesa, PSE-ITA, 01/09/08).

[46] "What is interesting in this case [of the NK conflict] of course is that we should encourage Russia to play a positive role. I believe that it is in the long-term interests of Russia to contribute to the settlement of this conflict, although there are probably forces who think that it is the other way round, namely, that it is in our short-term interest to keep both countries in this conflict. I believe that it is possible and this is actually what the active role of the European Union within the strategic partnership means." (Evgeni Kirilov, S&D-BUL, 06/07/11).

[47] "Madam President, under the banner of the fight against terror, Russia has now murdered over half of the Chechen people. At present Russia is exerting an influence on the infringement of human rights in Belarus, and this influence is quite clear. What is happening in Georgia is just another threat. We simply cannot regard these matters as Russia's internal affairs; we cannot let military action by Russia once again cause dependence and warfare in countries that until recently were subordinate to Russia. Russia is unable to respect other people's freedom." (Ewa Tomaszewska-POL, 07/05/08).

[48] "The hysterical tirades directed by the Moscow media against Georgians living in Russia mean that they do not feel safe on the territory of the Russian Federation. I call on the European Union, and on this House, to show unequivocal support for an independent, self-governing Georgia, which has every right to feel safe in a united Europe." (Michał Tomasz Kamiński, on behalf of UEN-POL, 25/10/06).

[49] "We must also acknowledge that the region is part of our common neighbourhood with Russia, and we have to try to find ways of promoting common policies in that common neighbourhood. The security issues for sure, and perhaps some issues related to energy, could be dealt with in a trilateral format. This would perhaps help us to promote solutions for the local, so-called 'frozen' conflicts. In this respect, we have to accept that those conflicts are only parts of a coherent, broader and more complex problem with a bigger, global relevance. Therefore, a package deal should perhaps be considered" (Adrian Severin, S&D-ROM, 20/05/10).

[50] "In addition and in violation of 2007 agreements, the EUMM is still not allowed to enter the separatist entities under Russian control. Such a situation is both intolerable and humiliating. We can continue cooperation with the Russian authorities only on condition that they fully honour their own commitments." (Tunne Kelam, EPP-EST, 20/05/10).

[51] "Primarily, the motivation is related, on the one hand, to the inherent complexities of the area and, on the other, to the care the EU is demonstrating not to upset important countries in the region, particularly Russia. Probably, the EU considers that the instrument of Eastern Partnership is already a sufficient annoyance to Russia – our main strategic partner in the east of the continent – to add to that a well defined strategy to deal with the area. Even the Black Sea Synergy was not conceived to be an efficient instrument, the proof of it being its minuscule 'success'" (Ioan Mircea Paşcu, S&D-ROM, 17/04/12).

This national dimension could be usefully investigated with additional sampling as well as an analysis of the MEP's RCV (see below) to understand to what extent MEPs' national preferences are relevant in plenary debates.

An EU responsibility to act

While Russia constitutes a central issue in the debates analysed, the main subject remains the EU and its action in the region. All the MEPs have their opinion of the EU's policies and formulate a whole set of recommendations intended to make European policy better, stronger and more visible.

Evaluation

On the EU's actions in the Eastern neighbourhood, there is a clear distinction between the presentation by the Council or the Commission and the evaluation made by the MEPs. Unsurprisingly, Council and Commission reports at the start of each debate accurately reflect the EU's actions on the ground from 2004 to 2012. In 2004, EU ambitions towards the South Caucasus are fairly limited, preferring to act as a "support actor" for the OSCE and the UN already present in the region and highlighting the positive actions already undertaken[53]. New projects are welcomed but budgetary constraints are reminded to justify a more discrete EU posture[54]. This view of the situation evolves with the EU's actions. In 2006, the Council praises the importance of European achievements in Moldova (EUBAM, EUSR, ENP,…)[55] but is more cautious towards Georgia. The central role is given to Russia and the Council representative is prudent not to raise Georgian hopes with an overambitious policy[56]. This positive but circumspect view of a support role for the EU is also notable in Catherine Ashton's speech at the start of the NK debate in 2011[57]. Regarding the roots of the conflicts,

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[52] "(…) those – such as Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi – who kept open a channel of dialogue with Moscow also did the right thing, so as to explain Europe's way of thinking and to warn of the risk of re-entering a climate of Cold War, not just from a political point of view, not just from an economic and political point of view, but also and above all from a historical point of view, in that as time passes there is the prospect that Europe can of course include Russia or can exclude it once and for all. It is therefore very important to open up and maintain a dialogue. Europe, the peoples of Europe, do not want a Cold War because Cold War reminds us of death, persecution… (President cuts off the speaker)" (Mario Borghezio, UEN-ITA, 01/09/08).

[53] "The very welcome appointment of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus in 2003 was an important step for the EU. The Commission is pleased to be fully associated with his work and we value his close cooperation." (Chris Patten, Commission, 26/02/04).

[54] "The European Commission takes note of the call for a stability pact for the region. When the issue was first raised a couple of years ago there did not seem to be that much support for the idea, and I am not yet wholly convinced that the time is yet ripe to return to it. It certainly has budgetary consequences which we would want to look at in some detail." (Chris Patten, Commission, 26/02/04).

[55] "The activities of the EUBAM are an example of how the Union can best lend real support to the conflict resolution process in Transnistria and bringing the control of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border closer to European standards in general.(…) The EU's chances of making an effective contribution to the process are bolstered by the Union's Special Representative, who participates in resolving the Transnistrian conflict in accordance with agreed EU policy objectives and in close coordination with the OSCE. (…)The European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan between the EU and Moldova is the instrument that will enable the Union to lend purposeful, long-term support to Moldova. Ultimately, Moldova's development towards a politically and economically stable state may be the key to resolving the Transnistrian conflict. (Paula Lehtomäki, Council, 25/10/06).

[56] "The EU is at present discussing internally the question of strengthening its role, but Georgia may have unrealistic expectations of the Union. The EU is encouraging the Georgian leaders to show restraint. (…) Russia has an important part to play in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Support from Russia is needed in order to achieve results in the peace processes. (…) The EU has on many occasions sent strong messages to the leaders of the two countries, most recently to President Putin at Lahti, on the importance of normalising relations, and it has also offered its services to help reopen their dialogue." (Paula Lehtomäki, Council, 25/10/06).

[57] "So we are ready and committed to stepping up our efforts in support of the work of the Minsk Group co-chairs. (…) Let me be very clear, however. Whatever happens in these final negotiations will matter greatly to us and we will play a role in the way we shape our policy towards the two countries concerned. (…) I also believe we need to

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the Council, Commission and EP mostly agree that moderation and restraint is needed from all the parties (including Russia) but while the Council and Commission paint a positive picture of the EU's involvement, the MEPs have a more negative assessment of European action. Throughout the debates, the EP calls for more EU. The MEPs want a more ambitious policy towards the Black Sea and Caucasus Region; they criticize the lack of real action on the ground. A binary choice is offered, of EU action against EU inaction, of being a player against being merely a payer[58]. The EU's credibility is at stake and its responsibility is engaged to act now, to do more or to risk being left to the side by the events or the other powers of the region. It has a responsibility also to protect the region from Russia's ambitions. The EU has a specific role to play, as a specific kind of actor, supporting democracy and security for the region before itself, and helping these countries fight off nationalism to bring back stability for themselves[59]

This pessimistic assessment of the EU's lack of ambitions and insufficient action is altered after the war in Georgia during which the Council had a decisive influence on brokering a ceasefire agreement between Moscow and Tbilisi. This marked a change for the EU which involved itself directly in the role of a conflict manager rather than leaving the prerogative to the UN or the USA. During the 1 September debate, the MEPs were quick to recognize this feat and to praise it as a symbol of EU unity and EU strength[60]. The MEPs are thus not critical just for the sake of asserting their institution against the Council and the Commission; they support an increased EU involvement in the Eastern neighbourhood, calling for the EU to act as a security manager in its own right and acknowledging EU efforts when they are made. More is always possible though – and almost always desirable – and the MEPs have many recommendations to make to the other EU institutions but also to all the other actors involved in the region.

Recommendations

The EU's responsibility to act is framed in two ways: it should involve itself to increase stability and guarantee a better future for the region[61], this is the price for peace. But it should also make an effort to diminish tensions in order to avoid having to care for new refugees

take significant responsibilities in the implementation of a settlement, once we reach this stage, in close cooperation with our international partners. (…) We believe that we have a role to play in supporting the co-chairs of the Minsk Group to realise that ambition." (Catherine Ashton, HR/VP, 06/07/11).
[58] "This conflict is a challenge for the EU's common European foreign and security policy. It will offer the EU the opportunity to act in line with its ambitions, underpinning the Lisbon Treaty's CFSP provisions – to be not only a payer in conflict situations, but also a player." (Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, on behalf of EPP-POL, 07/05/08).
[59] ""(…) This is a very important subject. Given the prevalent political situation in the region, it is crucial for the EU to play a more active political role. (…) In order to enable security, stability and peace to be maintained in the future, the EU therefore needs to have a greater presence in the region than we have at the moment. It is very important that the citizens of these countries have better prospects of joining the EU and it is crucial for the EU to understand the importance of stability in the Caucasus." (Anna Ibrisagic, on behalf of EPP-SWE, 20/05/10).
[60] "I should like to voice my most heartfelt thanks to the French Presidency for its rapid intervention to end the war and for bringing about a European Council decision today which is an expression of unity. Unity is the most important signal that we can send out." (Elmar Brok, EPP-GER, 01/09/08); "Mr President, we are witnessing the collapse of the 'end of history' paradigm, but this should also mark the end of the era of wishful thinking, replacing peace through speech with peace through strength and solidarity." (Tunne Kelam, EPP-EST, 01/09/08).
[61] "The appointment of the EU Special Representative is certainly a step forward, but it is far from enough. The Union must invest, really give itself the necessary resources and give real resources to these fragile states, so that the secessionist tensions that are causing difficulties in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adzharia, for example, will die down, allowing a lasting peace to be established, based on appropriate statutes. That is the only way these populations of the South Caucasus will ever have a future, and we all know that. The development and transition of these small post-soviet countries must be considered not in the light of their present precariousness but in that of the Union's means and the potential of local resources." (Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Greens/EFA-FRA, 26/02/04).

coming from the East[62]. This is the cost of inaction. EU action should respect this normative duty but it should also be a rational calculation of self-interest. And in order to guarantee the prosperity, security and stability for the region and for itself, the EU should do "more" according to the MEPs. However, this "more" is rarely defined. Many recommendations are made to the EU but they are mostly vague and general. The EU should show its commitment to the region, should exert pressure on all parties in the conflicts[63], should be firm (especially regarding Russia[64]), should play a greater role[65]. A few concrete suggestions are made (changes to the peacekeeping format, conflict mediation, deployment of an ESDP mission), but most of the EP is united in calling for more EU without further precision. This relative vagueness could be explained in two different ways. First, most of the debates are a prelude to the vote of an EP resolution which, in some cases, details additional and more precise suggestions for EU action (see below). The MEPs having prepared and read the proposed resolution, there is no point in repeating it word for word in the plenary, but general expressions of support for EU involvement can be warranted. Another explanation might be that four of the five debates analysed are organised in a specific context of crisis. In 2006, the situation is very tense in Moldova and Georgia after the separatist referendums, in 2008, Georgia is on the brink of war and in 2011, Nagorno-Karabakh appears close to becoming unfrozen. In this tense and immediate context, the priority is to defuse the tensions and to show a European commitment to finding a solution. Strategic debates carry a different tone. The context here is a bit different as the war is now over and more time is left to think of the aftermath of the conflict. This is reflected in many of the MEPs' speeches which call for a clearer strategic outlook from the EU, especially in supporting the Eastern neighbours and in securing European energy supplies. The normative duty/self-interest component of EU involvement in the East is clearly apparent here as well. The MEPs don't only call on the EU for action but also appeal to all the other parties involved to contribute to deescalate the situation[66], respect their engagement[67] and support a peaceful resolution of the conflicts[68]. The EP is a taken to be a public stage on which the MEPs express their positions to the

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[62] "If you combine ethnic conflicts, mass poverty, corruption and a lack of democracy, you get an explosive mixture, to which you can add the still-unresolved conflict centred on Nagorno Karabakh, the consequence of which for Azerbaijan was the loss of 20% of its territory, along with great floods of refugees, and which from 1992 to 1999 alone, cost the European Union something like EUR 180 million." (Ursula Stenzel, EPP-GER, 26/02/04).

[63] "To avoid further suffering, the EU cannot linger any longer and let other actors in the region, such as Russia, shade the process according to their strategic influence. We have to continue to pressurise and support both countries in a balanced way so that they will adopt the basic principles and we must help these two nations with European aspirations build peace through reconciliation." (László Tőkés, EPP-HUN, 06/07/11).

[64] "Russia will take no action without pressure from us. We should not be afraid of exerting pressure. And our relations with Russia should be a two-way street that is mutually beneficial for both sides. We may need Russian energy, but Russia needs favours from us too, not to mention our European market." (Marianne Mikko, PSE-EST, 25/10/06).

[65] "Last but not least, Lady Ashton, the European Union, as many of my fellow Members have said, needs to play a greater role in the region. I obviously welcome the appointment of the special envoy for the South Caucasus as a differentiated approach is required in relation to the whole region, individual countries and the conflict." (Andrey Kovatchev, EPP-BUL, 06/07/11).

[66] "This trend must be stopped through clear, specific commitments from both sides, as well as through putting an end to the aggressive rhetoric and to the setting of new conditions by both sides, which prevent a consensus being reached on signing a peace agreement. It is also unacceptable for the region's leaders to use the smouldering conflict to reinforce their internal legitimacy." (Csanád Szegedi, NI-HUN, 06/07/11).

[67] "(…) we have received several alarming signals from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in recent months, despite the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I would call on Yerevan and Baku to refrain from any activities in the conflict zone that might provoke a violent response from the other party." (Kristian Vigenin, on behalf of S&D-BUL, 06/07/11).

[68] "Firstly, we should call on Russia and Georgia to show restraint, to continue to pursue peaceful solutions to the conflict and to allow for EU mediation. (…) Lastly, we should call on the international community to join EU efforts aimed at stabilising the situation and resolving the conflict in the region." (Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, on behalf of EPP-POL, 07/05/08).

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entire world. This is also reflected in the adopted resolutions which are specifically addressed to the EU institutions but also to outside actors (UN, OSCE, Russia, Georgia, Moldova,…). It is interesting to note how the MEPs themselves understand their role. They are not only the EU's legislators and moral conscience (David et al., 2013: 263) but they wish to represent a legitimate international authority with far-reaching views and influence.

c. A common vision? The EP resolutions

The resolutions adopted in the plenary are an important instrument for the EP to make its opinions known to the other EU institutions and to the wider public. They contain many of the subjects explored during the debates but present them in a more consensual language. Some of the resolutions are actually common resolutions, proposed by several political groups after backstage negotiation[69]. This ensures their easy adoption by the MEPs but produces slightly watered down texts more likely to be agreed upon by the different groups. The resolutions that were adopted following the debates of our corpus reflect the themes analysed above but present them in a more nuanced way.

In the resolutions, the frozen conflicts of the FSU as such are completely overlooked by the EP. They hamper democratic efforts and impede the EU's involvement in the region but they are secondary issues. The conflicts are viewed largely as the symptom of a larger problem (instability, poverty, Russian ambitions). More important than the separatist issues are the modernisation efforts of Moldova and Georgia (which should be supported)[70] and Russia's policies which play a great role in the persistent instability. Georgia and Moldova appear as victims, to be aided by the EU rather than actors in their own right. Their democratic credentials seem to absolve them of any responsibility in the situation. Against them, Russia undergoes a slight evolution, going from a potential partner is stabilising the region in 2004[71], to being a complicating factor in the peaceful resolution, to being responsible for the insecurity of the region after the 2008 war[72]. The August war is a turning-point in the EU-Russia relation, with the EP urging a review of the partnership with Moscow[73]. On the other

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[69] The resolutions adopted after the debates in 2008 are both common resolutions tabled by the EPP, PSE, ALDE, Greens/EFA and UEN.

[70] "Expresses its strong and continuing support for the efforts of the Moldovan people to establish a fully functioning democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which are essential for ensuring the progress of reforms;" (EP resolution on Moldova (Transnistria), 25/10/06); "(…) whereas the European Union remains committed to further developing and deepening its relations with Georgia and supports the necessary political and economic reforms, measures to establish solid and efficient democratic institutions and an effective and independent judiciary and further efforts to combat corruption, thereby creating a peaceful and prosperous Georgia that can contribute to stability in the region and the rest of Europe;" (EP resolution on the Deterioration of the situation in Georgia, 05/06/08).

[71] "(…) whereas in all the three areas of conflict, Russia can make a decisive contribution to attempts to reach a peaceful and lasting settlement; whereas, in particular, without a political end to the war in Chechnya, it will not be possible to bring about stabilisation in the Caucasus," (EP resolution on EU policy towards the South Caucasus, 26/02/04).

[72] "(…) whereas the distribution of Russian passports to citizens in South Ossetia and support for the separatist movement, together with increased military activity by separatists against villages with Georgian populations, have increased the tensions in South Ossetia, combined with large-scale Russian military manoeuvres close to the border with Georgia during July 2008; (…) Calls on Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and the inviolability of its internationally recognised borders, and therefore strongly condemns the recognition by the Russian Federation of the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as contrary to international law; (…) Condemns the unacceptable and disproportionate military action by Russia and its deep incursion into Georgia, which violates international law; underlines that there is no legitimate reason for Russia to invade Georgia, to occupy parts of it and to threaten to override the government of a democratic country; (EP resolution on the Situation in Georgia, 03/09/08).

[73] "Calls on the Council and the Commission to review their policy towards Russia should Russia not fulfil its commitments under the ceasefire agreement; supports in consequence the decision of the European Council to

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hand, Georgia, despite launching the attack that started the war (a fact acknowledged by the EP), is not condemned for its action. This critical view of Russia is a divisive point inside the EP. The 3 September resolution was adopted by 80% of the EP but the president of the PSE group nuanced the socialist's decision to vote in favour:

> *"Mr President, my group had a vigorous debate about this compromise resolution yesterday. On some essential points, it deviates from the text that we as the Socialist Group in the European Parliament originally contributed. By this I do not mean in any way to call the negotiations into question or to minimise negotiators' success in achieving a compromise resolution with the other groups, but there is one element that we cannot get through, but which plays a key role in our resolution.*
>
> *Even though this element, which I will name in a minute, is no longer included in the text, our group has decided to vote in favour of the compromise resolution because we believe that it is important that the European Parliament sends a unified signal. However, I want to make it clear here that we would very much have liked to see President Saakashvili's aggressive attitude restrained and also, at the start of the conflict, a firm hold put on a totally inappropriate …*
>
> *(Protests from the right and applause from the left)*
>
> *We would have liked to have seen what happened at the start included in this resolution, if only to make it plain that the very people who are protesting so loudly here now are the same people who want to intensify the conflicts rather than reduce them.*
>
> *(Applause from the left and protests from the right)"*[74]

This socialist position is indicative of a political cleavage inside the EP, with the left being rather more pro-Russian than the right[75], as well as of the importance for the EP to present a unified front in its resolutions in order to have more influence on the other EU institutions. The GUE/NGL group, already noted for their support of Russia, was the only group to unanimously reject the text, while another interesting deviation from the EP's unanimity can be seen in the behaviour of the Greek delegation. Of the 22 Greek MEPs present at the time, covering the entire political spectrum[76], none of them voted in favour. The 10 Greek MEPs from the EPP abstained while all the others voted against. This is in keeping with the traditional pro-Russian stance of Greek policy and is an apt example of the existence of the national factor in EP politics. The study of additional votes and resolutions would be interesting to confirm this idea (see also Braghiroli, 2013).

The EP resolutions also reiterate the MEPs wish for "more EU". The strategic nature of the Black Sea and Caucasus region and the challenges it poses for the EU are present

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postpone the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement negotiations until the withdrawal of the Russian troops to their positions prior to 7 August 2008;" (EP resolution on the Situation in Georgia, 03/09/08).

[74] Martin Schulz, on behalf of the PSE-GER, 03/09/08.

[75] Another example of this is the vote on amendment 25/2 on the 20/01/2011 resolution on "An EU Strategy for the Black Sea". The vote was held on a controversial sentence: "expresses particular concern at the extension of the port agreement for Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea and its possible impact on stability in the region". This sentence was ultimately voted in by a majority formed by the EPP, the Greens/EFA and the ECR but was massively rejected by the S&D and the GUE-NGL.

[76] 1 from IND/DEM, 3 from GUE/NGL, 8 from PSE, 10 from EPP.

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throughout the resolutions[77]. As was stated in the thematic analysis of the debates, the geostrategic location of the region makes EU involvement indispensable. The region is a part of Europe and a greater EU commitment is necessary on three grounds. First, support is needed to encourage the burgeoning democratic countries achieve European standards[78]. Democratic values are overwhelmingly present in the resolutions, as a justification for EU action and as requirement for national and regional stability. Second, the Black Sea and Caucasus region is important for its proximity to the EU and as a bridge between "Europe and Central Asia"[79]. It is also highly valuable as an energy supply or transit route[80]. Finally, the region is an important test-case for the EU's capacities as a conflict manager, first in support of other organisations, and later as a security actor in its own right[81]. All these challenges require that the EU bolster its internal capacities in order to increase its international role. EU unity must prevail[82] and the European project must intensify: outwardly, the EU should further develop the ENP to bring its neighbours politically and economically closer; inwardly, the EU should strengthen the ESDP[83]. Adopted resolutions are thus a good illustration of the EP's will to see "more" EU in the Eastern neighbourhood, even if this increased involvement is not necessarily more precisely defined than during the plenary debates.

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[77] "(…) whereas the South Caucasus bridges Europe with Central Asia and will in the future be a neighbouring region of the enlarged EU; whereas the countries of this region are favourably disposed to mutually beneficial partnerships with the EU," (EP resolution on EU policy towards the South Caucasus, 26/02/04); "Stresses the need to safeguard stability in the South Caucasus region and calls on the Armenian and Azerbaijani Governments to contribute to achieving this aim, while respecting all their international commitments;"(EP resolution on the Situation in Georgia, 03/09/08).

[78] "(…) whereas the presidential elections which took place on 4 January 2004 in Georgia, constituted, according to international observers, an improvement on previous votes and showed that the country's new leadership is committed to democracy, (…) whereas the recent events proved once more the fragility of Georgian institutions and the urgency of a plan for the consolidation of democracy and the beginning of a process of reconciliation between all the parties of the Georgian society," (EP resolution on EU policy towards the South Caucasus, 26/02/04); "Expresses its strong and continuing support for the efforts of the Moldovan people to establish a fully functioning democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which are essential for ensuring the progress of reforms;" (EP resolution on Moldova (Transnistria), 25/10/06).

[79] EP resolution on EU policy towards the South Caucasus, 26/02/04.

[80] "(…) whereas in the coming decade the region will become increasingly important for energy supply to the EU, which is the world's largest importer of oil and gas," (EP resolution on EU policy towards the South Caucasus, 26/02/04); "Recalls that energy security is a common preoccupation; urges the EU, therefore, to give more robust support to the energy projects in the region in accordance with European standards, including projects promoting energy efficiency and the development of alternative energy sources, to step up its cooperation on energy issues and to work firmly towards realisation of the southern energy corridor, including completion of the Nabucco pipeline as soon as possible;" (EP resolution on the need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus, 20/05/08).

[81] "(…) Calls for a robust contribution by the EU to the planned international mechanism for the resolution of the conflict and therefore welcomes the decision of the European Council to deploy an ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) monitoring mission to complement the UN and OSCE missions and to ask for a UN or OSCE mandate for an ESDP peace mission;" (EP resolution on the Situation in Georgia, 03/09/08).

[82] "(…) whereas the EU must maintain full political unity in response to the crisis in Georgia and must speak with one voice, in particular in its relations with Russia; whereas the process towards a peaceful and stable solution to the conflicts in Georgia and in the Caucasus will demand a comprehensive revision of the ENP and a new engagement with the whole region, in cooperation with all European and international organisations, notably the OSCE," (EP resolution on the Situation in Georgia, 03/09/08).

[83] "(…) Calls on the Council to consider bolstering the international presence in the conflict zone by sending an European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) border mission, drawing on the positive experience of the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) at the Transnistrian section of the border between Moldova and Ukraine, while suggesting that the Member States could take a more active role in UNOMIG; calls on the UN to boost the mandate and the resources of UNOMIG;" (EP resolution on the Deterioration of the situation in Georgia, 05/06/08).

Conclusion: what security role for the EU?

> *"The European Union must actively participate in the resolution of [the Georgian] conflict and I congratulate the French Presidency on its proactive attitude.*
>
> *My Group invites the Commission, the Council and all the Member States to demonstrate both their unity and also their resolve with regard to our Russian neighbour. (…) it seems obvious that the role of the European Union could be much greater in the management of this crisis if the European Security and Defence Policy were reinforced.*
>
> *(…) Ladies and gentlemen, this is a crucial moment and the European Union must not fail to take advantage of this opportunity to show that it is firm and determined with regard to the Russian Federation, however great and powerful the latter may be. The credibility of the European Union, the stability of the whole region, and the protection of our closest neighbours and even Member States of the Union depend on this. (…) Please stand firm."*[84]

The European Parliament may be a marginal player in EU foreign policy but it is a vocal one. It makes a full use of its legitimacy as self-proclaimed democratic conscience of the EU to weigh in on all matters relating to the Union and its neighbourhood. This paper set out to understand what kind of vision the EP had for the EU to become a security player in its Eastern neighbourhood, regarding the frozen conflicts of the FSU.

Our analysis showed that the EU's involvement as a whole is deemed insufficient by the MEPs. They persistently call for more EU, for more ambition, and for more action in the Eastern neighbourhood. The EU's track record is viewed in a much more negative light by the EP than by the Council and Commission which take care to stress the European achievements on the ground. For the MEPs, this is not enough. It is only when EU action is really significant that the EP is more satisfied, as was the case about the Council's mediation in the August war. But generally, the EP urges more. The EU must involve itself in the region to deploy its specific model and to assert its specific international role. It must intervene in the name of its values, of peace, of stability but also of its security and energy interests. In that sense, we can return to Barbé & Kienzle's security provider/security consumer ideal-type. The EU, as advocated by the EP, must be a security provider for the East. Its main concerns are the neighbourhood's stability and adherence to European values; the frozen conflicts or Russian ambitions are a threat not to European security as such but rather to the smaller, weaker countries of the Black Sea and South Caucasus. EU effective action would lead to a win-win situation where regional stability would prevail, securing the EU's borders and energy supply. The normative duty/security threat narrative evoked by Christou (2010) is also apparent in some MEP's interventions but the main concern is the EU's normative and security duty towards the East. The EP thus wants the EU to be a more ambitious, more active and more involved security provider than it already is, in line with its constant calls for a stronger EU in the world.

The centrality of Russia in the debate reflects the importance of the EU-Russia partnership for the EU's ambitions in the East (see Freire, 2013: 467). MEPs may disagree on how to judge Russia, and criticisms may increase as the situation on the ground evolves, but the EP is unified in considering it as a key to the region. Russia's omnipresence also seems

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[84] Joseph Daul, on behalf of EPP-FRA, 01/09/08.

important in justifying the importance of more intense EU involvement in the frozen conflicts. Solving the conflicts is not an end in itself, but it appears that the issue is for the EU to assert itself as an equal actor to Russia in the neighbourhood. Facing up to Russia serves as an important step in the EU becoming a full security actor. This is visible in the distinction made between the EU's action in the conflicts of Moldova and Georgia, on the one hand, and of Armenia and Azerbaijan on the other. Moldova and Georgia are frequently presented as fragile democracies to be supported against the threat of an aggressive Russia. The EU must then act to protect these "victims" and stand up to the Russian bully. By contract, in Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EP is hesitant to pick a side. Both of the parties share the responsibility for the tensions and this conflict is impossible to frame in a "victim vs bully" or "David vs Goliath" way. The EU's action called upon by the MEPs is thus less defined, less ambitious and less urgent than in Georgia or Moldova. Of course, geographic proximity and the European aspirations of Chisinau and Tbilisi certainly help explain this difference, but it would seem credible that the relative Russian absence in Nagorno-Karabakh also accounts for a lesser EU involvement.

Russia is also a powerful factor for division inside the EP. The left-right divide is visible in the political group's varied stance towards Moscow. The far-left is keen to support Russia as a way to oppose American foreign policy[85] while the socialists adopt a softer approach towards what they constantly repeat is the EU's "strategic partner". On the right, the EPP is more critical of Russia, while the conservatives of the UEN or the ECR are vocal in their condemnation of Russian "imperialism"[86]. This cleavage is very visible in the deliberation even though a national dimension is also present, in the debates as well as in the choice of speakers. As our quantitative analysis has shown, MEPs from CEE are much more active in debates on the EU's Eastern policy. This illustrative of the specific identity that these "newer" MEPs still retain, contrary to the view given by RCV studies which indicate that the 2004 and 2007 enlargement did not decrease the political groups' cohesion, on the contrary (Cooman, 2009; Hokovsky, 2012). CEE MEPs are thus loyal to the party line when voting starts, but it in the deliberation, national factors continue to play a central role. Our analysis also showed that MEPs from the Baltic States, Romania and especially Poland play a decisive role during the debates, constantly intervening to take a stand on the matters of the EU's role in the East. This may seem self-evident but it has important implications in that it shows that foreign policy on the Eastern neighbourhood (at least when it is debated in the EP) is squarely in the hands of MEPs from CEE. This gives it a particular form with these countries being traditionally more critical of Russia and desirous of an increased EU investment towards the Eastern Partnership.

Thus, our research on the EP deliberation challenges classical studies of the EP which stress – based solely on RCV analysis – that the main political dimension is the left-right axis and that national factors are marginal in the EP. The national dimension is in fact very

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[85] "Finally, the West as a whole would do well to assess the unprecedented damage already caused by the American attitude of adventurism and the European attitude of follow-my-leader in this part of the continent. The limitless expansion strategy of NATO, the bombing of Serbia, the recognition of the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo, the support for the installation of the anti-missile defence shield on European soil, not to mention the extreme glorification of the region's leaders who should, perhaps, be more cautious when making anti-Russian and pro-Western statements, all these choices are evidence of a short-sighted policy worthy of the current White House, but not worthy of a European security policy." (Francis Wurtz, on behalf of GUE/NGL-FRA, 01/09/08).
[86] "Our experience in the Baltic States has shown us that the cause of many problems is Russia's neo-imperialist foreign policy and its wish to regain influence in the territories it has lost." (Inese Vaidere, UEN-LAT, 16/01/08).

important in the debates and our findings are consistent with previous work by Slapin and Proksch (2010) which show that position taking in the EP is also based largely on national interests. RCV studies are not sufficient to comprehensively understand how the MEPs take a stand and qualitative analysis of the deliberation is a useful complement to existing research. In this, the methodology of grounded theory that was used in this paper is valuable to systematically analyse all that is said in the parliamentary chamber and to get the most out of the data. GTM, though more commonly used in Sociology or Anthropology is still rare in Political Science even though it would prove a useful addition to the field's toolbox.

Finally, if the EP is divided on how to react to Russia, when the time comes to produce a resolution, the ranks gather together. MEPs are quick to emphasize the EP's unity faced with other institutions. The debates analysed don't solely have an international dimension, they are also very illustrative of an inter-institutional process. When voting time starts, the priority is to "send out a clear message"[87] to the Council and the Commission as well as to the Eastern partners. The MEPs know they have more chance of making their voice heard if they present a united front so the priority is to have clear voting majorities. Foreign policy at the EP thus has both an external and an internal objective. The aim is to influence the EU's outer environment by proposing a specific policy model but, to do that, the EP must first meet its internal objective of having a say in the decision-making process by displaying its credibility as a unified actor in the inter-institutional structure. Debating the enhancement of the EU's security role in the East is as much an aim of the EP as it is an end in itself – to legitimise the EP in the EU's foreign policy process.

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[87] Alexandra Dobolyi, PSE-HUN, 16/01/08.

Corpus

Plenary debates (CRE):

- EU policy towards South Caucusus (sic), 26/02/2004
- Moldova (Transnistria), Georgia (South Ossetia), 25/10/2006
- A more effective EU policy for the South Caucasus - A Black Sea Regional Policy Approach, 16/01/2008
- Deterioration of the situation in Georgia, 07/05/2008
- Situation in Georgia, 01/09/2008
- Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, 06/07/2011
- The need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus, 20/05/2010
- An EU Strategy for the Black Sea, 20/01/2011
- Black Sea strategy, 17/04/2012

Texts adopted (TA):

- European Parliament resolution with a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on EU policy towards the South Caucasus (P5_TA(2004)0122)
- European Parliament resolution on Moldova (Transnistria)(P6_TA(2006)0455)
- European Parliament resolution on the situation in South Ossetia (P6_TA(2006)0456)
- European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2008 on a Black Sea Regional Policy Approach (P6_TA(2008)0017)
- European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2008 on a more effective EU policy for the South Caucasus: from promises to actions (P6_TA(2008)0016)
- European Parliament resolution of 5 June 2008 on the situation in Georgia (P6_TA(2008)0253)
- European Parliament resolution of 3 September 2008 on the situation in Georgia (P6_TA(2008)0396)
- European Parliament resolution of 20 May 2010 on the need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus (P7_TA(2010)0193)
- European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2011 on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea (P7_TA(2011)0025)

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