Moving Beyond Crisis Management in Relations with Russia?

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Presented at a workshop on “The EU and Canada in the Face of Changing US Global Policy”
March 25, 2019, Carleton University
Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

- Focus: To what extent has the EU altered its policy approach in response to the Ukraine crisis?
- Context: Crisis response as an facilitator of EU policy change (Falkner, 2016; Laffan, 2016; Clime, 2018; Foster, 2019; Zaun, 2018; Niemann and Speyer, 2018; D’Erman and Verdun, 2018)

Draws on material from Jean Monnet Multilateral group policy report

- EU–Russia Relations: Developing a Transnational Perspective, 2013–2016 (with Carleton University, St. Petersburg State University and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this presentation are the independent views of the presentor and are not those of the European Union.
Possible responses to crisis
(drawing on Allison, 1969;

1) Reliance on standard operating procedures
   ◦ Technical adjustments
   ◦ Denial of basic inadequacy of policy

2) **Sustained crisis response**
   ◦ Acknowledges problems with current approach
   ◦ No agreement on alternate approach
   ◦ May reflect lack of consensus

3) **Incremental adaptation**
   ◦ Acknowledgement of problems with policy
   ◦ But goals and underlying strategy not retained

4) **Paradigmatic adaptation**
   ◦ Acknowledges failure of past approaches
   ◦ Goals and assumption challenged
   ◦ May lead to broader paradigm shift
EU Russia policy response: Five Guiding Principles

– ‘Demand full implementation of Minsk agreements’
– ‘Reinforce ties with Eastern partners and Central Asia countries’
– ‘Strengthen the EU resilience to Russian threats’
– ‘Engage selectively… where there is a clear EU interest’
– Support Russian civil society youth

(YouTube video summary, 2018

October 2016
(unanimous, Council of the EU)

Federica Mogherini
Other indicators

- European Council: Sanctions most frequent focus, also Syria
- Many policy dialogues frozen (including summits, Energy Dialogue,)
- But meetings of Lavrov and Mogherini
- Member states: bilateral contacts (varying)
- Some contacts maintained
  - Research cooperation (e.g., EU–Russia Joint Science and TechNology Cooperation Committee
  - Civil society forum
  - Ad hoc energy meetings
  - Cross–border cooperation with Russia
Nature of EU Policy Change

- **Incremental adaptation**, but primarily *sustained crisis response*
- **Crisis response**: sanctions, Minsk, strengthen resilience, freeze on many relations
- **Incremental adaptation**:
  - Omits reference to shared values
  - Backing away from strategic partnership
  - ‘common interests’ (rather ‘clear EU interest’)
- **No paradigm change**:
  - Maintains Eastern policy (Eastern Partnership)
  - Does not acknowledge legitimate Russian interests in the neighbourhood
  - Minimizes threat discourse, while countering specific threats (e.g., misinformation, election meddling)
  - Reliance on NATO
- **No strategic direction**
US Response

- Ambiguity and confusion, but so far no ‘great power bargain’ to sacrifice Ukraine
- Sanctions
- High level contacts intermittent
- Some agreements still in effect
- Highly politicized issue
- US withdraws or suspends agreements (INF Treaty, Iran deal, Paris Climate Agreement)
- Sustained crisis response, potential paradigmatic change
US and EU with Russia: Differing contexts

- Distance
- Low trade
- Security dominated
- History (superpowers)
- Objectives global

- Proximity
- High trade
- Energy dominated
- History (mixed)
- Objectives regional
Comparing responses

- Sanctions maintained (expanded)
- Mixed messaging
- Politicized
- Strong rhetoric
- Inconsistent contacts

- Sanctions maintained (expanded)
- EU consistent; MS mixed
- Less politicized
- Measured rhetoric
- Lower level/selected pragmatic contacts
- Non-political contacts supported (CBC, science, education)
Canadian approach

- Sanctions, Ukraine support
- Largely a freeze in relations
- Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), 2017
- NATO as response forum (Latvian deployment)
- Lack of strategy; following Allies on sanctions
- Still, Arctic common interests (direct neighbour)
- No leadership exerted relating to Russian response
Argument: Align Canada more closely with EU

Considerations:
- Ukraine and interests of EE countries
- Long term perspective and risks of escalation

Methods:
- Small steps, pragmatic engagement
- Trust-building (reenable dialogue)
- Ad hoc formats (e.g., Normandy format, EU–Russian energy discussion, Arctic, other shared issues)
- Embed in multilateral context (OSCE, WTO, Arctic Council, Paris Agreement, Iran Deal, Council of Europe)
- Direct bilateral dialogue
- But maintain firm stance on Ukraine
Objectives and principles

- Reduce escalating militarization (security dilemma)
- Principles of selective reengagement
  - Secure sovereign choice for Ukraine and other countries inbetween
  - But move away from ‘either–or’ options (double concentric circles)
  - Keep Russia in and strengthen multilateral fora
  - Reengage on collective security in Europe (OSCE)
  - People–to–people contacts
  - Aim for long term ‘Lisbon to Vladivostok’ economic area