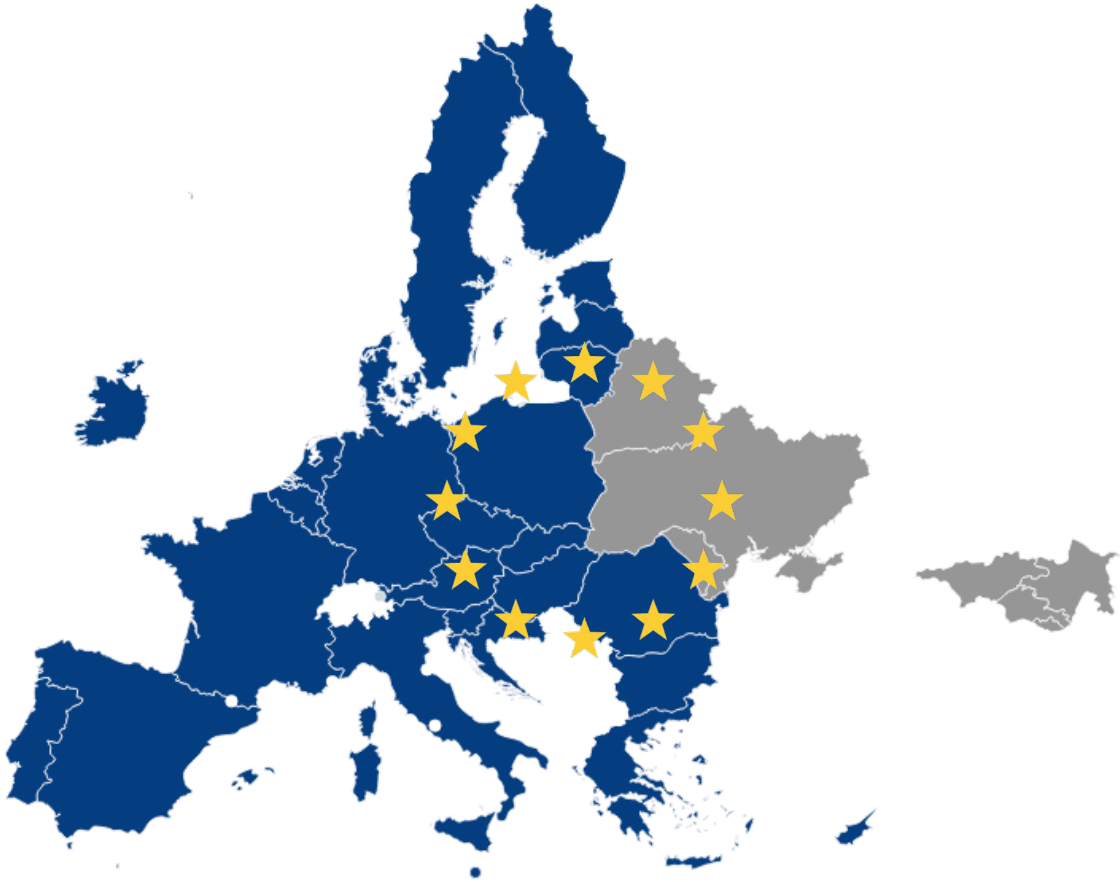
GOVERNING EUROPEAN SECURITY BEYOND 'EUROPE'?

The Eastern Partnership as an Instrument for Security Governance in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood



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Abstract

This thesis investigates how the Eastern Partnership (EaP), a framework for political and economic association, functions as a means for the EU to govern security in its Eastern neighborhood. Reflecting an interpretivist philosophical standpoint, it draws on securitization theory and qualitatively examines the discursive and context-dependent negotiation of the meanings of 'security' between 'securitizing actors' in charge of threat design and 'audiences' whose consent enables mobilizing measures to manage perceived threat. The EU's securitization of its neighborhood is multidimensional: it implies diverse threats towards diverse referents. The findings evidence a switch in EU security thinking, indicating a progression from a 'secure' to an 'under threat' sense of 'self'. They further document the emergence of two binary security logics from EU securitization. Both suggest EU security objectives towards the region to form part of a strategy of enhancing EU *ontological* security, dependent on the stability of 'self' vs. 'other' narratives.

The EaP is studied as an outcome of a parallel securitization process reflecting the lenses through which the acceding countries of the 2004 enlargement perceive threat. This parallel securitization process and that of the EU have progressively converged: the EaP as an instrument for security governance both reflects *and* facilitates securitization. The EU's security logics pursued through the EaP have implications for its relations with other actors. This challenges its security projection and governance in the neighborhood, emphasizing the negotiable meaning of 'security' across social contexts. The thesis concludes with a conceptual proposal to securitization theory which seeks to explain the above.

Word count: 251

List of Abbreviations

AA(s)	Association Agreement(s)
CEE	Central-and Eastern Europe(an)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CoE	Council of Europe
CORLEAP	Committee of the Regions through the Conference of Local & Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership
CS	Copenhagen School
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DCFTA(s)	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement(s)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENI	European Neighborhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Union Advisory Mission to Ukraine
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission to Georgia
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EURONEST	European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA(s)	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement(s)
TEU	Treaty on European Union

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1 Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic entity based on "continuous integration without a predetermined conclusion" (Rinnert, 2011). Aiming to ensure a "peaceful, united and prosperous Europe" following decades of war splitting the continent, the 1950 signing of the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community by six Western European countries sparked the process of European integration based on the principles of supranationalism. In 1958, the Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community enter into force, serving as frameworks for further political and economic integration. As such, the EC/EU was established to bring security through integrative processes "to lock (…) countries into a peaceful co-existence", fostering a security community in the process (Charillon, 2005).

Larsen (2000) notes that in the period before and during the Cold War, the EU "was considered an international economic and political actor, but not a security actor" neither by "its Member States or by outsiders". The new international situation following the end of the Cold War, however, placed the EU in a "de facto position of a security actor in the changing European security architecture" as a result of "its strong organization and the pull it exerted on potential members". Indeed, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many Central-and Eastern European (CEE) states turned toward democratic ruling. Resulting in the 2004 EU accession of eight of the former socialist states, this then marked the end of the political division between East and West as decided at the Yalta conference in 1945, in turn illustrating the role of enlargement policy as an "efficient mechanism to pacify interstate relations on the European continent" (Laporte, 2012).

The EU security community is a multi-speed community: it remains "stronger at its core and weaker as it spreads towards its margins". The EU's Eastward enlargements have resulted in its vicinity now stretching from the Balkans through the South Caucasus to the Russian Federation[1], encompassing an area of states which, to varying degrees, suffer from "deficits in security, development and democracy" (Pascariu & Rouet, 2019). While a series of these currently find themselves as candidates at various stages of the accession process and thus fall within the framework of enlargement policy, others have their relations with the EU governed through the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)

[1] Hereinafter Russia.

and its regional dimension, the Eastern Partnership (EaP). The EaP, launched in 2009, facilitates the projection of the EU's internal governance in its Eastern neighborhood through partnerships "based on mutual interest and benefits". It works towards security, stability and prosperity by promoting institutional reform, democratic values and the rule of law (European External Action Service (EEAS), 2020). In other words, the EaP political and security objectives are interlinked and mirror the EU's internal security arrangements.

In this context, Laporte (2012) argues the expansion of the EU security community to stem from its origin and self-perception as "driven by an ambition to create lasting peace". The EaP intends to bring to partners a "political message of EU solidarity, (…) tangible support for democratic (…) reform and the consolidation of statehood and territorial integrity" so as to serve the stability and security "of the EU, partners and indeed the entire continent" (European Commission, 2008a). Reflecting an internal and external security dimension alike, it is interesting to observe the persistence and, in some cases, intensification of insecurity in the neighborhood since the launch of the EaP: where all partner states are characterized by weak institutional structures that disrupt regional stability, five of six also suffer from territorial conflict. This results in "increased risk of negative spillover on the Union" and raises questions regarding the EU's capacity to effectively uphold and transpose its internal security beyond its borders (European Commission, 2003; Chochia & Popjanevski, 2016). With the above in mind, this thesis sets out to answer the following research question: how does the Eastern Partnership function as a means for the EU to govern security in its Eastern neighborhood? In doing so, it takes its point of departure in the idea that the EU's security interests as pursued and practiced through the EaP emerge from a process of 'securitization', conceptualized here as the process whereby the EU discursively constructs 'threat', identifies towards what and initiates policy responses to act accordingly (Snetkov, 2017). While the EU as an entity can be studied as the main 'securitizing actor' in charge of threat design and subsequent management, I keep in mind that EU external action depends to a large extent on the internal dynamics within its borders (Lucarelli, 2019).

Pisarska (2008) notes that "with each wave of enlargement, the EU acquires not only new Member States, but also new dimensions in its external relations". I therefore take into account the implications of the 2004 enlargement and the accession of a series of states with "particular national interests" and different "experiences and knowledge" in dealing with the Eastern neighbors for the securitization process above. Entailing a reflection on Member States pushing "for national foreign policy goals to

be adopted as EU goals", this adds to an understanding of how the geopolitical interests of the CEE countries served as catalysts for the development of a comprehensive 'Eastern' policy, impacting the contents and meanings of EU security governance in the region (Wong, 2017).

1.1 Topic Delimitation

1.1.1 Which Eastern Neighborhood?

The scope of this thesis is defined by its research question: to examine the role of the EaP as an instrument for EU security governance in the Eastern neighborhood. The EaP is managed within the frameworks of the ENP, the latter constituting a more comprehensive foreign relations instrument also encompassing the EU's Southern neighbors. This thesis inevitably draws on the ENP, but does so only with respect to its Eastern dimension. Therefore, EU engagement in the Southern Mediterranean region, even upon mention of the ENP, is not taken into consideration.

When using the expressions 'Eastern neighborhood' and 'Eastern neighbors', I understand the six partner states –Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova[2] and Ukraine – whose relations with the EU are governed within the EaP framework (EEAS, 2019a). For this reason, while countries such as those on the Western Balkan peninsula may, from a geographical perspective, be regarded as part of the EU's Eastern neighborhood, EU engagement in this region is not treated. This is justified by the fact that all Western Balkan countries, with the exception of Croatia which joined the EU in 2013, currently find themselves at various stages of the accession process: these are candidates or potential candidates and thus do not fall within the scope of the ENP, the EaP nor this thesis (EU, 2019).

Similarly, this thesis does not directly analyze the EU's relations with Russia. Russia's geographical location and direct borders with Finland, the Baltic States and Poland does indeed make it an EU neighboring country. However, as a result of the 2004 Russian dismissal of participation in the ENP in favor of a "more equal, more strategic partnership", EU-Russia relations are governed by a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (DeBardeleben, 2011). In the light of this, and because my understanding of what constitutes the EU's Eastern neighborhood is based on policy more so than geographical definition, I do not consider Russia an Eastern neighbor.

[2] Hereinafter Moldova.

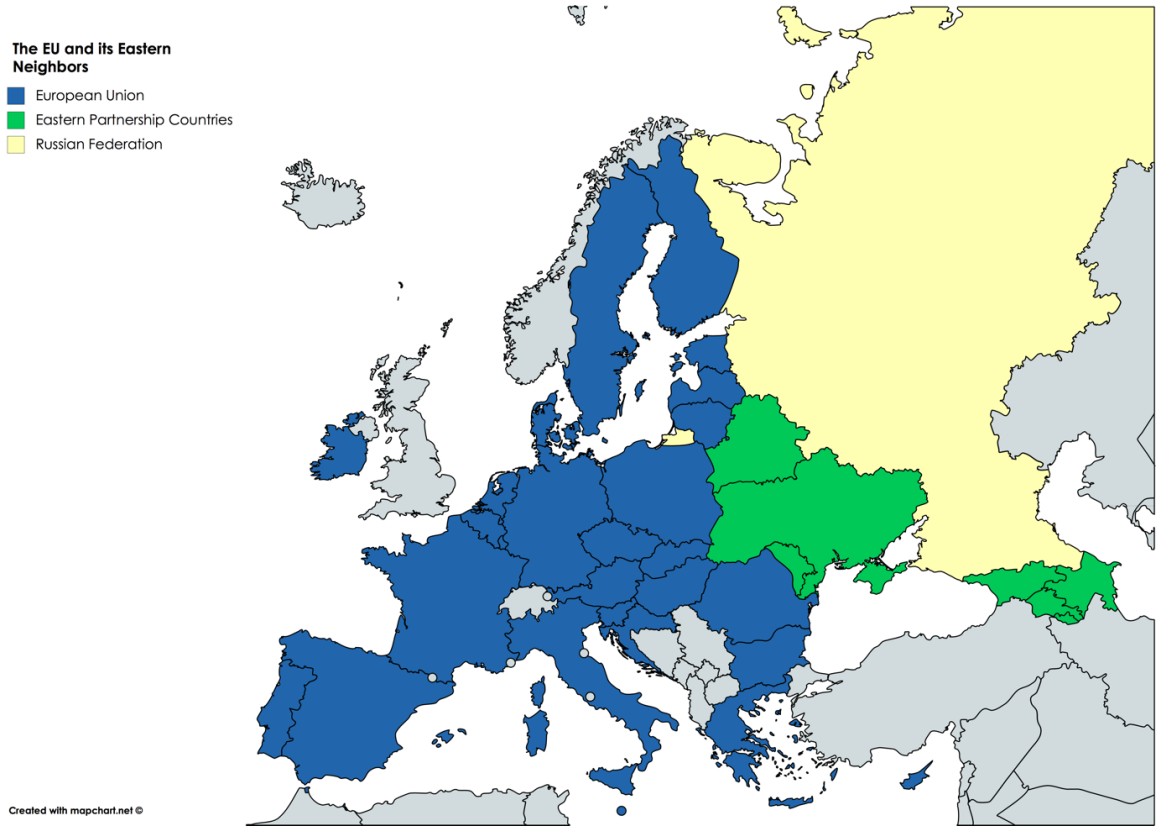

Image 1. Map of Europe indicating the geographical location of the EaP countries relative to the EU and Russia. Source: own creation using www.mapchart.net

It is worth noting that Russia's choice to pursue bilateral relations served as a rejection of not just *Russian* integration with the EU: subsequent EU engagement in the post-Soviet space, considered here within the frameworks of the EaP, also raised a series of critical questions in Moscow (Zagorski, 2010). This has contributed to the development of an increasingly assertive Russian foreign policy towards the region, impacting not only domestic security conditions in partner states, but also the EU's capacity to shape these conditions (Gretskyi et al. 2014). The events taking place in Ukraine since 2014 illustrate in practice the implications of Russia for the rules-based European security order and its principles as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act (Averre, 2016). As such, the dynamics revolving around the security circumstances in the neighborhood and the EU's potential to exercise security governance cannot be fully uncovered without taking into account Russian presence in the region. Its interactions with and policy towards the EaP countries and the EU alike is considered in a broader, albeit crucial, geopolitical context. This, in turn, is done from the perspective of Russia as an *external* actor on unequal footing with the EU's Eastern neighbors as defined above.

1.1.2 Framing 'Security' and Associated Governance

Security governance designates "a heuristic device geared to defining and analyzing the mechanisms and modalities of security provision in fields characterized by complexity, risk and uncertainty". Its purpose is to "guard against a multiplicity of threats", which in turn emerge when actors articulate particular logics of security (Sperling & Webber, 2018). As emphasized by Brooks (2010), the concept of 'security' is "multidimensional in nature and diverse in practice". It cannot be considered singular in definition. Therefore, consideration must be given to 1) what I understand by security and 2) how it can be applied to the EaP framework.

The EU security community has progressively evolved through the collective resolution of interstate conflicts with an emphasis on state-and institution-building endeavors: this has been the case since the early Communities, founded on the shared belief that "the contribution which an organized (…) Europe can make to civilization" is "indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations" (Kirchner & Sperling, 2018; Treaty of Paris, 1951). The above points towards a particular *ontological* security, understood here as the security of the 'self'. Achieved "by routinizing relationships" and practices to which actors and groups "attach a sense of self and purpose", it enables an understanding of how EU perceptions of 'uncertainty' shape political priorities, directions and indeed European security (Mitzen, 2006; Kinnval et al., 2018). I take my point of departure in the EU's approach to security as precised in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) and the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS). This is applied with respect to the scope within which security is framed in the documents outlining the EaP.

The meaning and contents of security vary across contexts and is subject to divergence in interests: this results in differences to the "study and analysis of security problems" as well as to differences in solutions and remedies prescribed (Manunta, 1999). Zelikow (2006) notes that "all (…) security strategies start with a mental image of the world". The ESS and the EUGS clarify the EU's collective security goals, including towards its neighborhood. They imply the decisions and actions which the EU deem imperative "to protect its domestic core values from external threats" (Leffler, 1990). Security as studied in this thesis therefore is grounded in the assumption that its emphasis and practice in and through the EaP reflects the EU's intersubjective understanding of 'security' vis-à-vis its Eastern neighborhood, including the degree of seriousness with which it is treated and "the levels of investment [the EU] is prepared to put into it" (Lindley-French, 2004).

The EaP officially is a framework for association, *not* a security policy. It does, however, encompass four priority areas – stronger **economy**, stronger **governance**, stronger **connectivity** and stronger **society** – of which the 'governance' dimension relates to the strengthening of institutions, good governance and stability. The EaP aims to enhance "the resilience of (…) partner states in the face of external threats and pressures": it reflects a security dimension and insinuates the perceptions that guide EU security thinking with regard to its neighbors (EEAS, 2016c; Barbé et. al, 2009). The choice to study EU security governance within the scope of this dimension is justified by the EU's strong reliance on institution-building activities for stability and security (European Commission, 2015). Economic development, connectivity and civil society do not constitute main points of analysis, but rather aspects referred to if relevant for illustrative purposes.

1.1.2.1 Which Means to What End?

Having clarified the way this thesis approaches the EaP as a framework for security governance, it is relevant to define the *type* of security in question. First, a distinction is made between 'hard' and 'soft' security *measures*. Second, a distinction is made between hard and soft security *issues*. Distinguishing hard and soft security measures is easy: while the former is typically reserved for conventional military and defense capabilities, the latter entails a different set of tools and is subject to civilian and diplomatic engagement (Legrand, 2016). In an EaP context, thus, one may consider the promotion of 'good governance' a soft security measure.

Lindley-French (2004) notes that "the dividing lines between hard and soft, civil and military security are dissolving": issues which may otherwise be labelled soft in that combatting them does not require "the use of force (…) to prevent the escalation of violence" may pose threats as real as military conflict (Fatić, 2002). Because different threats target different structures through different mechanisms, the traditional hard/soft dichotomy becomes difficult to apply. This research is motivated by the triangular relation between persisting insecurity in the EaP region, particularly with reference to territorial conflict, the EU's seemingly inability to respond, and the EaP as a policy. I consider territorial conflict a hard security issue. This hard security issue exists alongside, has evolved with and in some cases, has further resulted in a series of other security issues, some of which fall in the soft category.

The EU's security objectives towards its neighborhood are two-fold and aim for peaceful conflict resolution through the cooperative transfer of EU values to strengthen the structures that enable partners to address destabilizing impacts of conflict. The EaP therefore becomes a 'soft' security instrument to a 'hard' security end. However, the means for making "partner states more resilient against the threats they experience" made available by the EaP range from security dialogue, cooperation on security sector reform, border protection, crisis management to counter terrorism and energy-and cyber security (European Commission, 2015). With the point of departure in regional conflict, I assess EU security *governance* through the EaP in terms of how the EU as an *actor* combines a wide array of instruments to address diverse, but interlinked, security issues in its neighborhood for which "military solutions are not wholly appropriate" (Lanoszka, 2016).

It should be noted that in response to an increasingly turbulent regional security environment, the EU has initiated a series of Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Foreign and Defense Policy (CFSP/CSDP) activities parallel to or beyond the scope of the EaP. The extent to which the CFSP/CSDP and the EaP interact is accounted for where relevant.

1.1.2.2 A Question of *European* Security Governance

To this end, it should be mentioned that while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) plays a key role in European security, NATO engagement in the neighborhood is beyond the scope of this thesis. There are several reasons for this. First, this thesis has the EU at centre of analysis: although twenty-one of NATO's twenty-nine members are EU countries, NATO is an *international* security community, not a *European* security community. Second, EU-NATO cooperation is governed within the frameworks of the CFSP/CSDP, surpassing the extent to which the CFSP/CSDP are included in this thesis. Third, unlike the EU, NATO relies predominantly on traditional military response: its security provision is distinct from that of the EU (Duke & Gebhard, 2017). Fourth, the EU's Eastern neighbors are not NATO members: NATO does not serve as a security guarantee in the countries dealt with in this thesis. For these reasons, NATO, its security and defense mechanisms here comprised, is not considered an independent variable.

1.2 Thesis Outline

Chapter two gives an overview of the methodological framework which determines the way I approach the research question. It introduces the philosophical reflections underpinning this research

and outlines the methodological techniques with which I establish relationships between data and theory. **Chapter three** introduces the analytical framework. It composes a critical examination of securitization theory and accounts for the limits and potentials of applying this to the EU in its relations with its Eastern neighbors. **Chapter four** outlines the EaP policy framework and its objectives, identifying the levels of interaction and the key institutional players involved. It does so with respect to the overall context within which the EaP was launched, highlighting in turn its symbolic and practical significance.

Chapter five marks the integration of the analytical framework and the first part of the empirical findings. It consists of an application of securitization theory to the documents guiding the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbors. It contrasts the securitization process between the EU and its neighborhood as reflected in the documents governing EU external action in the years around the 2004 enlargement and those outlining its contemporary security objectives. It documents a clear shift in security thinking not only towards the neighborhood, but also towards the EU's internal community and sense of security. Based on this, chapter five further explores the circumstances leading to the formulation of the EaP, including the particular strategic considerations behind. It finally establishes an overview of how the EaP, a product and further enabler of securitization displaying a strong contextual alignment, can function as a policy for the EU as an entity to govern security. **Chapter six** consists of a practical analysis of how the EaP functions as an instrument for security governance, bridging further the empirical and theoretical findings introduced in chapters three, four and five. This is followed by a critical discussion of the perceived and practical effects of the EaP as a policy, taking into account the real-life context in which it unfolds. **Chapter seven** summarizes the key reflections, arguments and conclusions drawn and provides suggestions for further conceptual research on securitization theory as based on the findings of this thesis[3].

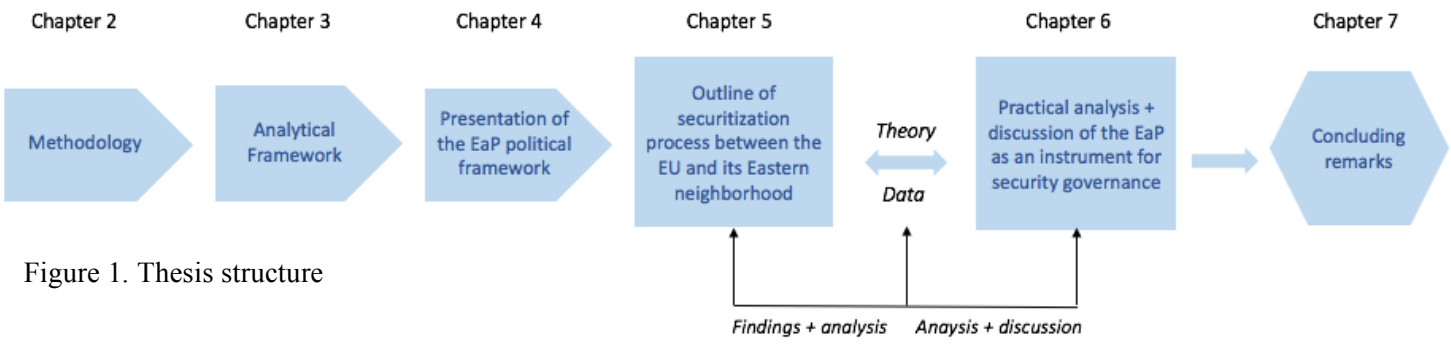

Figure 1. Thesis structure

[3] All figures and tables have been created by me unless otherwise indicated.

2 Methodology

2.1 Philosophy of Sciences

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019), a research philosophy refers to "a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge": it reflects the way in which we as researchers perceive reality and the nature of knowledge. Impacting our understandings of research questions, choices of methods and interpretation of findings, choosing an appropriate research philosophy is crucial for designing "a coherent research project in which all elements (…) fit together". In doing so, consideration must be given to the interrelations between each philosophical paradigm's ontological and epistemological postures (Scotland, 2012).

As noted by Gray (2004), ontology embodies an understanding of *what is*; epistemology of *what it means to know*. While the former refers to the study of "the nature of existence and what constitutes reality", the latter "provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate". The ontological position of this thesis is subjective, assuming that social reality is created through the "perceptions and consequent actions of social actors". The subjective standpoint with which I identify conceives of a social construction of reality through linguistic, cultural, and historical interpretations. This thesis is based on qualitative data which provide insights into and reflect multidimensional constructions of social phenomena, corresponding to the ontological standpoint chosen.

The epistemological position adopted is interpretivist. I take my point of departure in the idea that meaning is not simply discovered, but rather *constructed* by actors in different ways in relation to the same phenomenon: contradictory but equally valid perceptions of the world co-exist (Saunders et al., 2019; Gray, 2004). Reality as constructed through social interaction implies a dependence on the creation of shared, intersubjective meanings and realities. Individual cognitive processes do not just construct reality; they also *constitute* part of reality. The interpretivist epistemological standpoint thus entails a social rather than individual focus (Andrews, 2012). Social interaction is a continuous process; social phenomena are under constant change. This highlights the need for understanding how historical, geographical and socio-cultural contexts shape experiences of reality under different circumstances and at different times (Saunders et al., 2019). With the above in mind, this thesis takes an interpretivist philosophical positioning.

2.1.1 Interpretivism as a Research Philosophy

Interpretivism aims to identify "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998). Assuming that the world is "too complex to be reduced to a set of observable laws", it aims to provide an understanding of "the real workings behind reality" rather than to establish generalizability (Gray, 2004). As such, in contrast to the positivist paradigm according to which "the social world exists externally to the researcher" and that "its properties can be measured directly through observation", interpretivism is "explicitly subjectivist" and operates with a focus on "complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making" (Saunders et al., 2019).

Interpretivism can be separated into three main strands: phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. The latter is of particular relevance to this thesis. Symbolic interactionism takes its point of departure at the micro level and aims to conceptualize human behavior through focus on "practices and lived realities", emphasizing that individuals act upon their interpretations of meanings and actions in the world (Gray, 2004). It stresses the way social actors employ language and symbols in their interaction with others and depicts that these interactions, in turn, lead to subsequent adjustments of meaning and action. In other words, symbolic interactionism foresees the emergence, handling and modification of meanings through social interaction (Ryan, 2018). Blumer (1969) emphasizes the pragmatic underpinnings of symbolic interactionism. Social institutions, he argues, constitute social habits that "occur within specific situations (…) common to those involved in the situation". As a result, they "exist only as individuals interact" in a self-referent system that lead to the emergence of the 'self' from interactive processes of joint action. This then bridges the micro-and macro levels of analysis: institutions, including the EU, are consolidations of the actions and socialization of individuals.

The analytical framework of this thesis draws on securitization theory. Securitization works to identify how security issues emerge and evolve by considering language as constitutive of social reality and studying how a security act itself determines "the strategic uses of language to attain a certain aim" (Balzacq, 2009). With respect to the role of agency, power relations and context, securitization further illuminates how social orders are established, structured and how they relate to other social orders (Fligstein, 2000). Securitization can thus be conceptualized as a linguistic *and* pragmatic act: it requires taking into account social contexts and permits an analysis of the

illocutionary force of 'security' and its meaning "through a symbolic scrutiny of security interactions" between the EU, its Member States and its surroundings (Bigo, 2014; Balzacq, 2009). This then is in line with symbolic interactionist thought and the idea of "social structure being an emergent process" resulting from the practical interactions between actors across time and space (Shalin, 1991).

2.2 Research Approach

2.2.1 An Abductive Research Cycle

This thesis reflects a sequential research approach. Induction moves from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories; deduction foresees a move from the general to the specific, aiming to reach conclusions based on existing premises. Tavory & Timmermans (2012) view "research as recursively moving back and forth between a set of observations and theoretical generalizations". Abduction, they argue, "occurs when we encounter observations that do not neatly fit existing theories". Indeed, Al (2013) notes that abduction "begins with a puzzle, a surprise or a tension" and "seeks to explicate it by identifying the conditions that would make it less perplexing". The aim of this thesis is to investigate how the EaP, a framework for enhanced association and therefore not a security policy in its traditional sense, functions as an instrument for security governance. The EaP has existed since 2009 and aims to establish "an enlarged area of political stability (…) and security"; the EU as an actor aspires to defend its values of peace and security (European Commission, 2003; EUGS, 2016). In the light of this, it is curious to note 1) that all EaP partner states continue to and, in some cases, increasingly experience soft and hard security deficits and 2) the absence of a more explicit security element to the EaP policy. The research objective thus corresponds to the purpose of abduction to work out plausible theory upon "the observation of a surprising fact" (Saunders et al., 2019).

Inherent to interpretive research is an emphasis on meaning-making and context (Al, 2013). Želinský (2019) notes that abduction contributes to "facilitating a richer understanding of historical reality in social research": it entails obtaining data sufficiently detailed to explore a phenomenon and identify and explain themes and patterns inherent to it. Part of the data employed were obtained *prior* to defining an appropriate analytical framework, while others were obtained after. The research approach, constituting a circular process without an end-point, enabled the identification of relevant theory against which EU security governance through the EaP could be further explored using

existing *and* new empirical evidence (Al, 2013). This then marks a switch from inductive to deductive research.

Abduction "entails ontological assumptions that see social reality as constructed by social actors" and seeks to "explain events in terms of actors' understanding of their contexts" (Urdari & Tudor, 2014). Enabling an examination of the interactive processes between the EU, the EaP countries and other relevant actors to answer the research question, the analysis resulted in discoveries which help explain the practical problems arising from the empirical 'tension' identified. This then reflects an inferential cycle whereby I have moved through various methodological steps, allowing me to observe, "draw out conceptual dimensions" and finally generate a new conceptual hypothesis based on surprising research evidence (Timmermanns & Tavory, 2012).

2.3 Presentation of Data

The data employed is qualitative and consists of primary and secondary sources. The term 'qualitative' covers data collection and analysis techniques which produce non-numerical data to which no value can be attributed. This thesis works with textual and auditory data (Saunders et al, 2012). The principal data analytical technique is that of thematic analysis, entailing the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Lacey & Luff (2009) note that "qualitative research is particularly good at answering 'why', 'what' and 'how' questions". This thesis aims to identify *how* the EaP enables security governance and combines an exploratory and explanatory approach. Useful when "not enough is known about a phenomenon", exploratory research requires "flexibility and open-mindedness in looking for data" (Gray, 2004). Saunders et al. (2019) note that establishing the main constructs of a study may open the door to explanatory research. The exploratory part of this thesis composes two expert interviews: these were conducted prior to deciding on an analytical framework. The explanatory part can be separated in three categories, of which the first comprises two additional interviews conducted upon the establishment of an analytical framework. It further composes a series of community documents derived from the EU's official websites. These data are supplemented by secondary sources in the form of academic articles contributing to the conceptualization of the EU as a security actor in its relations with the Eastern neighborhood through the EaP.

2.3.1 Data Collection

2.3.1.1 Interviews

The first part of the data employed consists of four semi-structured interviews recorded between October 2019 and January 2020. Three of these were conducted online via Skype, the fourth in person. All were conducted in English and have a duration of between 30 and 55 minutes. For each, an interview grid divided in sub-categories reflecting the interview focus and objective was created. Coffey & Atkinson (1996) note that analysis of qualitative data "begins with identification of key themes and patterns". The categorization of interview questions was done based on a scan of literature relating to the thesis topic, subsequently subject to open coding whereby phenomena were identified, categorized and described. The framing of questions resulting from this process was then tailored specifically to each participant. With the exception of interviewee three who asked to see the interview grid prior to the interview, the interviewees were not familiar with the questions in advance and could not prepare their answers. This was a choice made to "collect participant-led accounts (…) as rich as possible" (Saunders et al., 2019). All interviews have been transcribed word-by-word by me (appendix A-D).

2.3.1.1.1 Exploratory Research

Two of the interviews were obtained prior to establishing an analytical framework. They served as part of a preliminary, exploratory investigation and were concerned primarily with the broad topic of EU security actorness in the Eastern neighborhood. The aim therefore was not to draw any definitive conclusions, but rather to clarify the nature of an existing problem to identify important variables to be further studied (Lambin, 2000). In both cases, the interviewees were experts specializing in security and EU-Eastern Europe relations, both employed at research institutes for defense and security studies. This exploratory research activity contributed to narrowing the scope of the research topic and transformed it into "a well-defined one which yields specific research objectives" (Zikmund & Babin, 2013).

2.3.1.1.2 Explanatory Research

The last two interviews were recorded upon the establishment of an analytical framework. The third interview focused specifically on the 2004 enlargement, including its role in outlining a new direction of EU 'Eastern' policy and where security fits within this policy reorientation. It served as a basis for investigating the extent to which the acceding countries of CEE were in charge of 'threat design',

representing securitizing actors rather than the EU. The interviewee is a Polish national who has previously served as an advisor to a number of governmental bodies in Poland and who has an extensive insight into the Polish role and perspective. I use Poland as an explanatory case when investigating the relation between the 2004 enlargement and the formulation of the EaP as a framework for security governance.

The fourth interview focused on the practical role of the EU and the EaP for security. This interview was conducted with an expert in foreign relations and international security at a leading non-governmental Ukrainian think-tank as part of an explanatory investigation where the research objective was already clearly defined. The EU and the EaP remained the central topics: despite displaying a strong emphasis on Ukraine, the insights provided by this interview are applicable at a regional scale beyond Ukraine as a specific case. This interview therefore contributed to the conclusive results of the overall analysis of the EU and the EaP in action.

2.3.1.2 Documents

The second part of the data employed composes a series of primary sources in the form of community documents consulted on the EU's websites, supplemented by academic articles contributing to the conceptualization and operationalization of data. I employ:

- The European Security Strategy (2003);
- The European Union Global Strategy (2016) replacing the ESS;
- The Wider Europe Communication (2003) outlining the European Neighborhood Policy;
- The 2015 review of the European Neighborhood Policy;
- The Joint Declarations of the Eastern Partnership Summits (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017);
- The Joint Communication of the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020.

The choice to study these documents is justified by several factors. First, this thesis investigates EU security governance in its Eastern neighborhood specifically. As noted by Flynn & Farrell (1999), the end of the Cold War "profoundly transformed Europe's security situation" resulting in "the European integration project [emerging] as an (…) ideal security organization" (Wivel, 2005). In other words, the post-Cold War situation made EU security considerations more relevant from an EU perspective and "from the perspective of the EU as an international actor" (Larsen, 2000). Also,

although European integration was "born out of the destruction of World War II", its rationale was "to prevent the recurrence of conflict" in *Western* Europe (Stefanova, 2005). EU relations with the Eastern neighbors have evolved under the 'new' post-Cold War European security order: EU security governance in this region is thus best studied with reference to documents formulated in a post-Cold War context. For this purpose, the 2003 ESS and the 2016 EUGS are important in that they 1) define the EU's security strategy and determine the scope within which it can unfold and 2) outline the role of the ENP/EaP in strengthening security in the Eastern neighborhood. Earlier documents defining the EU's security purposes, here comprised the Treaty of Paris, the Treaties of Rome, the 1948 Treaty of Brussels establishing the Western Union and its 1954 modification establishing the Western European Union are therefore not part of the main data employed.

Further, while this thesis has the EaP at the center of analysis, I refer also to the two main documents outlining the ENP, namely the 2003 Wider Europe Communication and the 2015 revision of the ENP. This is because the EaP is the Eastern dimension of and is governed within the frameworks of the ENP. It should be noted that the EaP was launched only in 2009: earlier documents do not make reference to the EaP policy. They do, however, call for "enhanced relations" to strengthen the situation in the "new neighbors on the Union's land border" through "a long term approach promoting reform [and] sustainable development" (European Commission, 2003). In understanding how the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbors have evolved over time, the security element here comprised, juxtaposing the pre-EaP ENP to the post-EaP ENP is thus relevant. Going beyond studying only the documents on the EaP by also including those relating to the ENP enables a more comprehensive contextual analysis.

2.3.2 Data Analysis

As noted, the first two interviews were conducted as part of an exploratory investigation where the problem statement was made in general terms. Having already undergone an open coding process of labeling patterns and properties in order to create the interview grids, these preliminary interviews were upon transcription subject to selective coding. Entailing a "process of choosing one category to be the core category and relating all other categories to that category", this data-driven thematic analysis process further contributed to the identification and integration of key themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This then led to the development of an appropriate analytical framework

with explanatory power within the context of the research, simultaneously guiding the direction of the subsequent data collection (Moghaddam, 2006).

With the point of departure in the patterns and themes classified in the analysis of the exploratory interviews, interview three and four were subject to theoretical, analyst-driven thematic analysis. In line with the research approach, the analysis of these explanatory interviews entailed the further identification of data relating to the, at this point, clearly defined research problem, after which the identified patterns were combined into sub-themes (Aronson, 1995). The explanatory interviews in particular were analyzed with strengthened emphasis on historical context and its importance for contemporary security political dynamics. This context was provided by a set of secondary sources in the form of academic articles. Some of these were published prior to the formulation of the EaP, while others were published after. The critical insights provided by these sources are employed where relevant, taking into account the importance of time as an element.

The data comprising EU community documents form the key empirical evidence on which I apply the chosen theory. Derived from explicitly explanatory research, these data contributed to identifying the extent and nature of the relationship between the analytical framework and the real-life phenomenon at centre of analysis. Aiming to create a frame within which EU governance through the EaP could be practically explored, the way the EU itself defines security and outlines its security governance 'strategy' towards its Eastern neighborhood was subject to thematic analysis in order to identify relevant steps of the securitization process. This was done according to three categories:

- Articulation of threat(s);
- Identification of object(s) under threat;
- Formulation of measures for managing threat(s);

The development of these categories was guided by the research objective expressed in the research question. The narrative organization allowed me to make sense of written contents by identifying conceptual relations, resulting in an emergent structure contributing to the further organization of ideas (Saunders et al., 2012).

2.3.3 Limitations

The data collected has a series of limitations that must be taken into account. First, this thesis investigates social phenomena with the EU at centre of analysis: the community documents employed, while providing useful and reliable information, may be biased towards the EU's own view on reality. Although the use of primary interviews and secondary data in the form of literature contributes to overcoming this bias, it is important to recall that all research is value-laden: we as researchers are biased by our worldviews and cultural experiences. Part of the research conducted for this thesis was conducted in Warsaw, Poland over a four-month period. In line with the interpretivist standpoint, this indicates an immersive involvement whereby I have acquired an insight into the subjective, Polish view on the phenomena subject to investigation. This may have affected my interpretation and understanding of the meaning I attach to this research (O'Reilly, 2009).

Further, some of the secondary sources employed are authored by nationals from EaP countries or surrounding countries with which the EU has relations. The context in which these sources were written should therefore be taken into account. This too is applicable to the interviews employed at various stages of the research of which three of four interviewees are nationals of EU countries, the fourth of an EaP country. Interpretivism foresees that "researchers are part of what is being researched" and that their "interpretation constitutes a crucial element": the above points therefore do not necessarily constitute *inhibiting* elements (Saunders et al., 2019). Nonetheless, recognizing that the data employed reflect the subjective interpretations of authors, interviewees, and, upon analysis, myself as a researcher, must be considered in identifying relationships between empirical and theoretical findings so as to draw relevant conclusions.

To this end, it should be noted that some of the sources studied were originally written in Polish and since translated into English: they represent the interpretation of the translator. I do not read advanced Polish, and therefore cannot verify the quality of these translations. It is equally possible that sources relevant for this theses which have not yet been translated into languages I understand exist. This is important to keep in mind when assessing the conclusions drawn.

3 Analytical Framework

This thesis aims to investigate how the EaP, not designed to be a security strategy, functions as a vehicle for the EU to promote, bring and maintain security in its Eastern neighborhood. The 2003 ESS set out to "enforce a secure Europe in a better world": this twofold objective reflects a normative and a security dimension alike. Similarly, the 2016 EUGS states that the EU has "an interest in promoting [its] values in the world", and that these values are embedded in its interests. Wolfers (1952) notes that interests imply a distinct direction of policy designed to promote the demands "ascribed to a nation rather than to individuals, sub-national groups or mankind as a whole". The formulation of such interests, in turn, depends on an actor's "perception of a threatening external development" (Balzacq, 2011).

Art. 47 TEU recognizes the legal personality of the EU. An independent entity in its own right, it acts as a "vehicle for the collective interests of its Member States" and can be perceived as a *collective* actor "with a concern to ensure its survival" (Hyde-Price, 2006). The EUGS proclaims that the EU's "interests and values go hand in hand"; the values upon which the EU is founded are legally defined in Art. 2 TEU and binding in all Member States (appendix E). The EU therefore qualifies for analysis using the idea that its external action, underpinning its vital interests, subordinates interests other than those of the EU as an entity (Wolfers, 1952). Conversely, if the EU's interests are grounded in its perception of threat, one can assume its founding values to embody its perception of 'secure'. This indicates a process of securitization.

With respect to the way the EU perceives sources of insecurity as reflected in the chosen community documents, securitization theory is applied to examine how the Eastern neighborhood is framed in security terms (Huysmans, 2000). Wæver (2002) notes that security cannot be "understood nor realistically achieved from a perspective limited to one's own state": it is dependent on international and regional dynamics. In an EU context, thus, securitization processes are driven by the dynamics between Member States internal to the Union, as well as by the dynamics between the EU as an entity and its external environment. EU security *governance* derives from "particular legal and political prerogatives" which provide it with "authority to speak and act in security fields": this is indeed circumscribed by "the participation of Member States in a generative process of interaction over the meaning of security", including "how threats are defined and appropriate policies formulated and implemented in response" (Sperling & Webber, 2018). The way in which the EU seeks to

"collectively shape its neighborhood according to its interests" as based on a *common* perception of threat is therefore studied through a contextual approach, taking into account the role of history, experiences and, thus, subjective worldviews for securitization (Jutila, 2015).

3.1 Introduction to Securitization Theory

According to Buzan & Hansen (2009), securitization refers to "the process of presenting an issue in security terms": it is the outcome of "a strategic process of interrelated discourses that result in the social construction of an issue as a threat". Coined by Wæver (1993), securitization theory is connected with the Copenhagen School of thought (CS) and takes its point of departure in the "intersubjective establishment of an existential threat" sufficiently salient "to have substantial political effects". In other words, securitization as presented by the CS operates according to speech act philosophy. The emphasis on social construction following a speech act implies that the very articulation of security constitutes a form of security action. According to this stream of thought, security issues do not simply 'exist', but rather emerge in the rhetorical interaction between a "securitizing actor and an audience in relation to an object (…) and that which threatens it" (Eroukhmanoff, 2018; Charret, 2009). Indeed, "it is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one": the process of securitization commences upon utilization of the term 'security', paving the way for "structuring the social practices that follow" (Taureck, 2006; Stritzel, 2007).

The CS establishes a spectrum along which issues can be classified, ranging from non-politicized through politicized to securitized. While non-politicized issues "are those that the state does not deal with", politicized issues are those "tackled within the [existing] political system". Finally, securitized issues are issues requiring "extraordinary means beyond normal political procedures" (Does, 2013). The division between politicization and securitization occurs in a 'securitization act' where an issue is framed as "a special kind of politics". In other words, securitization entails a securitization act calling for "the adoption of extraordinary measures" which illustrates a move "beyond the established rules of the game" (Buzan et. al, 1998)

Securitization theory works towards an understanding of "who securitizes, on what issues, for whom, why, with what results and under what conditions" (Buzan et al.,1998). For this, three components key to the securitization process are identified. These include:

- *Referent objects*, objects that are "seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival;
- *Securitizing actors* who securitize issues by declaring a referent object existentially threatened; and
- *Functional actors*, referred to also as *audiences*, who "affect the dynamics (…) in the field of security" without being the referent object nor the securitizing actor.

The first stage of securitization involves the portrayal of certain issues "as existential threats to a target object or community" (Does, 2013). It is relevant to recall the argument put forward by the CS: threats and securitizations are *intersubjectively* constructed. Any securitization act be challenged, and the mere portrayal of threat does not automatically equal securitization: this requires the ability of a securitizing actor to "convince a relevant audience that an object is indeed in substantial danger". It is thus the acknowledgement by an audience of a securitization act that enables the formulation of measures aimed at tackling perceived threat (Charret, 2009; Does, 2013). Therefore, securitization designates a process whereby a *securitizing actor* constructs a *referent object* and *threat narrative* claiming the existence of a *threat* to the referent object. This then is presented to an *audience* and recommends *exceptional* measures for subsequent management (Zakopalová, 2012).

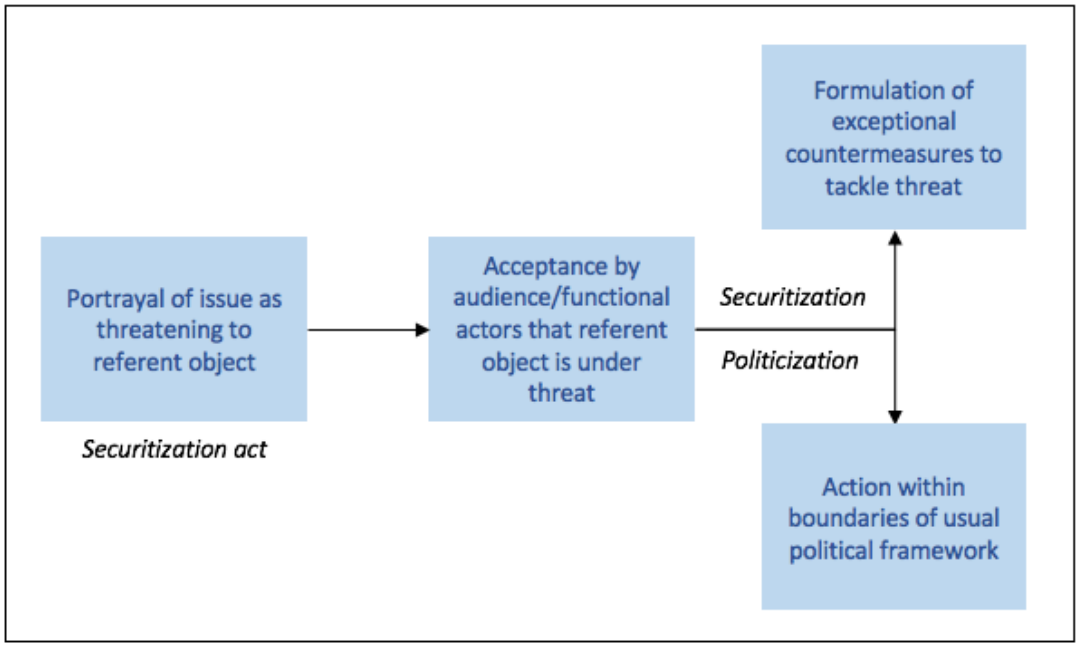

Figure 2. The securitization process

3.1.1 A Multi-Sectoral Framework

While the traditional security paradigm depicts that security equates "military issues and the use of force", security as studied through the lenses of securitization theory is considered a "particular type of politics applicable to a wide range of issues" (Buzan et al., 1998). As such, a distinction is made between security matters in five different domains, referred to as security *sectors*. Including the traditional military sector within which the referent object remains the state, securitization theory further enables an examination of the discursive conceptualization of security within the societal, the political, the economic and the environmental sectors. Each sector is characterized by the articulation of specific issues as threatening to specific objects, ranging from collective identities, national sovereignty (non-military), national economies and environmental habitats (Eroukhamoff, 2018; Joseph, 2006).

The EU and its antecedents have overcome a series of security dilemmas through unique institutional processes and "the adoption of certain core values" that have "led to peace among its Member States" (Quille, 2007; Parker & Rosamond, 2013). Assuming the above arrangements to embody the EU's definition of what security entails, the EUGS states that improving institutional resources to foster resilience remains "a strategic priority area across the EU's East". This, in turn, is to be achieved through "focusing on the most acute dimensions of fragility", which are soft and hard in nature and range from corruption and weak governance to territorial conflict and crisis (EUGS, 2016). In other words, the 'acute dimensions of fragility' presented by the EU touch upon several of the security sectors outlined above. As introduced in chapter one, this thesis approaches the role of the EU as a security actor in its Eastern neighborhood with respect to its capacity to address diverse security challenges not limited by traditional military factors. In line with the analytical scope, the multi-sectoral approach of securitization theory enables a review of the neighborhood-regional security environment in its entirety (Joseph, 2006).

3.1.2 Beyond the Copenhagen School: A Second Generation of Security Studies

The CS puts forward the idea that securitization is decided by audiences of speech acts, not by the securitizing actor. The EU articulating security, performing the securitization act, therefore does not guarantee successful securitization (Popa, 2010). Nonetheless, McDonald (2008) criticizes the "narrow scope of the CS's securitization framework (…) regarding the broader construction of security", arguing that it mentions but underspecifies "a range of issues or dynamics", particularly

the role of audience and facilitating conditions in the securitization process. Similarly, Côté (2016) highlights "an inherent contradiction" present in this view in that "defining securitization as an illocutionary speech act [precludes] its definition as an intersubjective process". In his understanding, the 'act' versus 'process' terminology is problematic in itself: the former implies "a single, definitive instance of security definition", the latter "a longer and more indefinite security construction procedure". This contradiction results in the characterization of audiences as "agents without agency", thereby "marginalizing the theory's intersubjective nature". Balzacq (2005) proposes an approach through which securitization is seen as a pragmatic and strategic process which "cannot be detached from the context and power relations that characterize the construction of threat images".

3.1.2.1 Contextualizing Security

The CS assessment of securitization outcomes through articulation restricts the role of agency, power, and context (Simão & Dias, 2016). Indeed, Taureck (2006) considers securitization as being far from "open to all units and their respective subjective threats", arguing it to be "largely based on power and capability and therewith the means to socially and politically construct a threat". Balzacq (2005) further argues that although "the very use of the concept 'security' modifies context", such use must be aligned with an external context. Analytically, this means that in the scenario where the EU is the main securitizing actor, instability in the EaP region and the perceived implications of potential spill-over constitute the facilitating conditions: this demonstrates the impact of external developments on securitization processes and, thus, the role of context for structuring practice. Further, because securitization depends on "dominant security subjectivities", the contextual lenses through which Member States, the audiences upon which securitization outcomes rely, perceive reality becomes increasingly relevant (Charret, 2009).

Inherent to securitization theory are the claims that 1) actors define and construct security and 2) security becomes "what actors make of it" through speech acts. According to Ciută (2009), these claims converge towards the fact that the *definition* and *meaning* of security are a matter of context. Indeed, securitization entails the construction of "an intersubjective understanding (…) within a community to treat something as an existential threat"; intersubjective understandings are "a product of social and group interaction and provide meaning to the (…) world" through "shared norms and identities" (Guzzini, 2015). Although conceptualized as an independent actor in international relations, the EU and its objectives are not detached from those of its Member States. Hadfield (2005)

notes that although certain "EU preferences may arise within a genuinely supranational milieu", the majority of interests emanate from the national level and "are exported to the EU level" in a manner consistent with national identities. Emphasizing the role of context thus enables an analysis centered on "the construction of threats, referent objects, securitization actors [and] measures", as well as on the meaning of security itself. Meaning varies contextually and is informed by subjective beliefs that "facilitate interpretations of objective reality, (…) construct interests and inform behavior". It is "contextualized in terms of local political histories" and requires taking into account historical circumstances and strategic myths (Guzzini, 2000; Simão & Dias, 2016).

Does (2013) reaffirms that the portrayal of issues must "resonate with a context", successful securitization being dependent "on the perceptive environment". This entails a reflection on the role of audiences as *active* agents "within an iterative and contextually situated securitization process", including the extent of their capacity to independently impact securitization outcomes (Côté, 2016). Because the EU constitutes a *collective* security actor, the above opens the door to examining how individual Member States themselves can assume the role of securitizing actors. This raises the questions of how, and under which circumstances, 'security' comes to be defined and constructed in the social integration among EU Member States (Lucarelli, 2019). Thus, investigating how the EaP reflects securitization and enables security governance requires conceptualizing securitization as "a historical process that occurs between antecedent influential sets of events and their impact on interactions" (Côté, 2016; Balzacq, 2015).

3.2 The EU, the EaP and the Neighborhood: Operationalizing Securitization Theory

The adoption of the ESS in 2003 marked the first time that the EU as a whole "agreed on a joint threat assessment and set clear objectives for advancing its security interests" based on its core values (Violakis, 2019). Replaced in 2016 by the EUGS, both the ESS and the EUGS make reference to the Eastern Neighborhood and outline the extent to which the ENP/EaP fit within the frameworks of EU security policy. It is worth recalling that "full securitization attempts (…) not only identify threats, but also call for measures to deal with them" (Szulecki, 2020). The ESS and the EUGS therefore serve as evidence of how the EU as a collective securitizing actor identifies threats, what is being threatened and justifies the use of specific measures to handle them. This, in turn, as based on an intersubjective understanding of 'security' (McDonald, 2008). While the above implies securitization, it should not go unnoticed that the ESS was formulated in the period around the 2004

enlargement: its internal and external implications must be taken into account. Facilitated by a series of external developments, the EaP itself was later launched in part due to the accession of the 'new' Member States which brought with them "new sensitivities and a strong lobbying group demanding more direct EU involvement" in the Eastern neighborhood (Pisarska, 2008). This then suggests a parallel process of securitization having taken place: one where the EU does not constitute the main securitizing actor, where the construction of threat and referents is grounded in particular historical context and where the EaP constitutes an explicit securitization outcome.

The very construction of threat should be understood as a practice because 1) it results in the meaning of security and 2) it contextually constitutes other practices in the form of subsequent policy measures. These measures "contribute themselves to the continuous construction, sedimentation and re-negotiation of what security means" (Simão & Dias, 2016). Léonard (2011) argues that security practices directly or indirectly convey to those that observe them "that the issue they are tackling is a security threat". The above entails a reflection on how the EU and its Member States perceive the EaP, designed to promote "a safe and stable Eastern Europe", as a tool for multilateral security and threat management (Marcinkowska, 2016). It further suggests that the EaP as a policy, in addition to reflecting processes of securitization, also has the potential to further enable them.

3.2.1 Clarifying Remarks

Securitization as an analytical framework accounts for the way "security is contextually produced and practically deployed by relevant actors" (Simão & Dias, 2016). As outlined above, various theoretical strands of securitization coexist. Each of these is "committed to distinctive ontologies and epistemologies (…) and to different orientations toward empirical material" (Balzacq, 2015). This thesis reflects a subjective ontology: it challenges "ideas about the universality and objectivity of security" and emphasizes the interest-driven nature of knowledge (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). In line with interpretivist thought, this entails critical reflection on the way in which social roles and phenomena are interpreted in accordance with the meaning these are attributed (Saunders et al., 2005).

Here, one can recall the dichotomous classification of 'normal' and 'exceptional' measures in dealing with perceived threat put forward by securitization theory. If the construction of threat is "a context-specific process" which takes "different forms under different political conditions", then the practices designed to deal with threat should also be treated in the context of social processes. These therefore

do not necessarily "have the same form in various political environments or regarding various topics" (Zakopalová, 2012). In a realist sense, 'exceptional' and 'extraordinary' measures may be understood as relating to the mobilization of 'hard' power instruments. The EU, however, disposes of "a uniquely wide array of political, operational, diplomatic, economic and structural instruments" in its external dealings, including in its management of conflict and threat (Gebhard & Nordheim-Martinsen, 2011). Therefore, the definition of securitization as requiring the adoption of extraordinary measures contradicts the emphasis on context which "defines the meaning of security and the basic features of how it is practiced in society". It goes against securitization theory's claim to widen and deepen security beyond narrow military-and state-centric perceptions (Zakopalová, 2012).

Art. 8 TEU states that "the Union shall develop a special relationship with neighboring countries" to "establish an area of prosperity (…) founded on the values of the Union and characterized by close peaceful relations based on cooperation". It further grants the possibility of concluding "specific arrangements with the countries concerned" (appendix F). Therefore, the relation between the EU and its neighbors, regardless of the type of policy practices guiding this relation, legally constitutes a move beyond the 'normal' sphere politics. As will be elaborated, the EaP itself was created in response to increased threat perceptions stemming from the neighborhood and reflects a level of urgency: it illustrates the formulation and implementation of policy to deal with perceived threat (European Council, 2008). With respect to the idea of securitization as a complex social process where the contents and meanings of security are dynamically (re)constructed, I therefore reject the static distinction between 'normal' and 'exceptional' measures as these inevitably vary according to empirical cases. Holding on to the implied narrow understanding of which measures qualify for securitization results in very few issues in reality being classifiable as truly 'securitized'. This directly contradicts the claim that the process by which threats emerge is socially and contextually embedded and, thus, significantly limits the analytical utility of securitization theory.

With the above in mind, this thesis takes a combined internalist and externalist approach to answering its research question. It depicts that the dynamic securitization process between the EU and its neighborhood is facilitated by 1) internal linguistic factors and 2) external[4] contextual factors. It further keeps in mind the social capital of the actor(s) articulating security and the nature of the threat

[4] 'External' is understood here as external to the EU as an *entity*. In addition to the dynamics between the EU and its external environment, it therefore also designates the *internal* dynamics between Member States as these are detached from the EU at the supranational level.

in question (Charret, 2009). The operationalization of securitization theory is visualized in Figure 3 below.

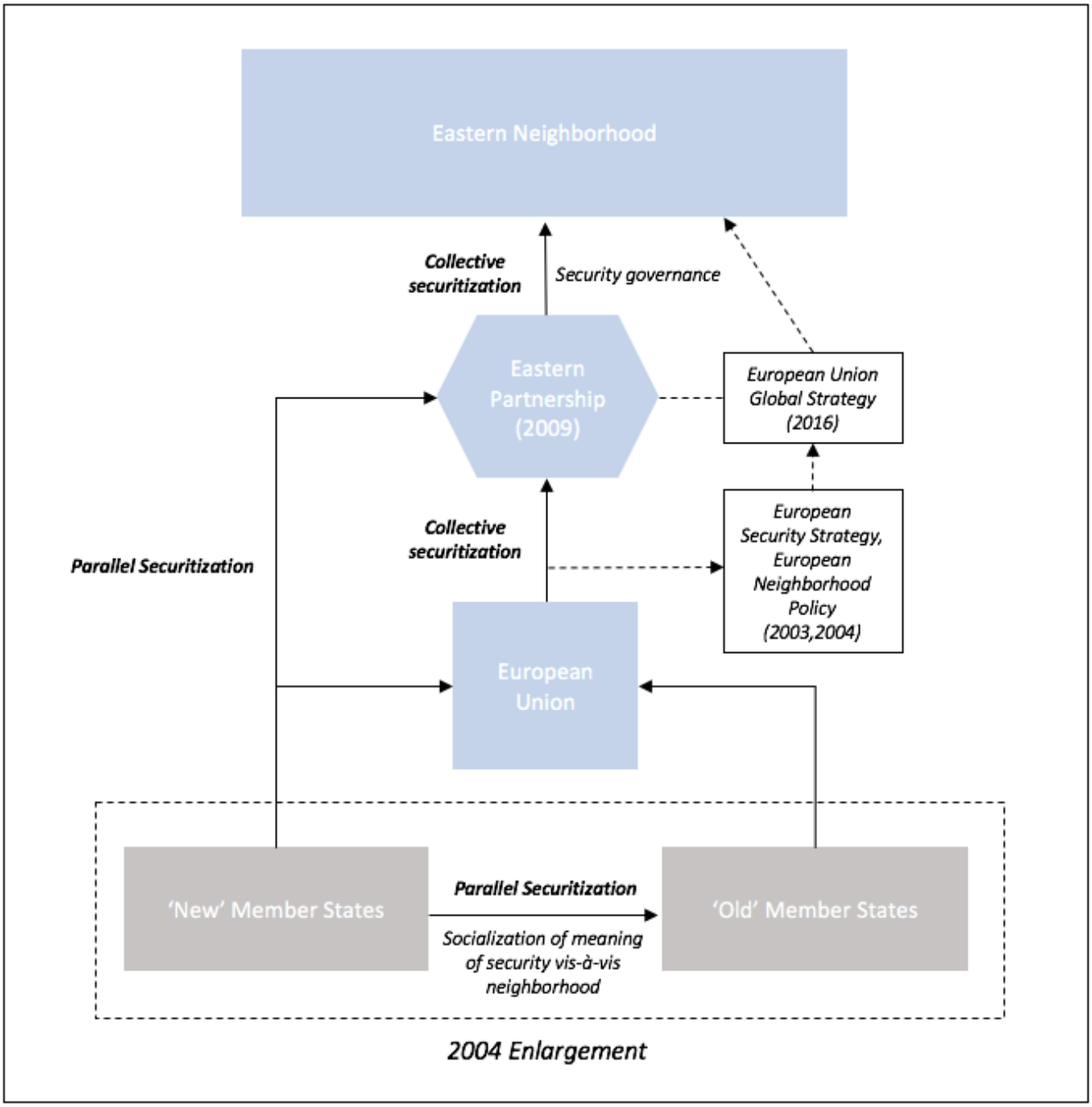

Figure 3. The securitization process(es) of the EU's Eastern neighborhood, including place of the EaP as an instrument for security governance

4 The EU's Eastern Partnership

The EaP is a joint initiative involving the EU, its Member States and six Eastern European partners: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Launched in 2009 based on a 2008 Polish-Swedish proposal, it constitutes a specific dimension of the ENP and aims to "deepen and strengthen relations between" the EU, its Member States and its Eastern neighbors through building "a common area of shared democracy, prosperity and stability" (EEAS, 2019a). The EaP composes a multilateral and bilateral track and is founded on shared commitments, responsibility and accountability as well as on differentiation between countries. It is guided by the EUGS and the ENP and works to enhance state and societal resilience so as to make "both the EU and the partners stronger and better able to deal with internal and external challenges" (EaP Civil Society Facility, 2020). Reflecting thus an internal and an external security dimension, the EaP forms in practice a framework with which the EU can transpose its values and institutions beyond the borders of formal membership, simultaneously expanding its security community towards its periphery (Schneider, 2010).

Today, the EaP constitutes a single, coherent policy framework towards the EU's Eastern neighbors. The EU's engagement with the region, however, goes back to 2003 and the formulation of the ENP which set out to "share the benefits of EU enlargement in terms of stability, security and well-being" on the basis of a "comprehensive neighborhood policy" integrating "components from all three 'pillars' of the Union's structure" (European Commission, 2003). The following will outline the origins of the EaP policy, presenting its current objectives, practical set-up and levels of interaction.

4.1 The ENP: Creating A Ring of Friends in the EU's Neighborhood

The ENP intended to serve as a bridge between the EU and its newly acquired neighbors to the South and East (Hill et al., 2017). Referred to sometimes as a product of 'enlargement fatigue', the ENP launched in 2004 on the basis of the 2003 Wider Europe communication issued by the European Commission[5] and was addressed to the EU's existing neighbors as well as to "those that [had] drawn closer (…) as a result of enlargement". Operating on the basis of bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) between the EU and partner states, it thus marked an important step in realizing the objectives of the ESS in response to the opportunities and challenges brought by enlargement (European Commission, 2003).

[5] Hereinafter Commission in-text.

Sasse (2008) emphasizes the modelling of the ENP on the "institutional and procedural experience of the EU's Eastward enlargement". Explicitly excluding membership perspective, the ENP advocates political conditionality "consistent with the general approach" taken by the EU toward "the institutionalization of its relations with non-member countries". It builds on joint ownership and foresees partner states benefitting "from the prospect of closer integration with the EU" in return for "concrete progress demonstrating shared values and (…) implementation of political, economic and institutional reform" aligned with the EU acquis[6] (Schimmelfennig, 2005). The EU, however, "does not seek to impose priorities or conditions on its partners": the conditionality inherent to the ENP is subject to the clear "recognition of mutual interests in addressing a set of priority issues". These "differ with respect to geographic location", political and economic situation, "relations with the EU and with neighboring countries" as well as to needs, capacities and "perceived interest in the context of the ENP" (Landaburu, 2006). In other words, the ENP enables the EU to bilaterally support reform and development in neighboring states, "improving the lives of their citizens" as well as its own through a differentiated approach to external relations (European Commission, 2003).

Despite the EU emphasizing "the basis for the new neighborhood policy" upon its launch to be precisely differentiation, the ENP single framework of cooperation for different countries in different regions proved somewhat ineffective (Valiyeva, 2016). Indeed, Solonenko (2008) argues that the ENP in its original shape was insufficient for bringing about successful reform, stressing the need for policy revision "in several substantial ways". The "clear demand for (…) more tailor-made (…) partnerships between the EU and each of its neighboring partners" reflecting "different ambitions, abilities and interests" resulted, among others, in the "development of a specific Eastern dimension" to the ENP (European Commission, 2015). Launched in 2009 as a "more ambitious (…) common endeavor between the EU (…) and its Eastern European partners", the birth of the EaP marked a "significant strengthening of EU policy" (Council of the EU, 2009).

4.2 Rapprochement Towards East

Miltner (2010) recalls that the first concrete EU attempt at building a policy specifically targeting the new Eastern neighborhood was introduced in 2006 by Germany under the concept of 'Neue

[6] The 'acquis' is the body of common rights and obligations that are binding on all EU countries. It is the accumulated legislation, legal acts and court decisions constituting EU law (EU, 2020).

Ostpolitik'. Developed prior to the German EU presidency in the first half of 2007, it foresaw the establishment of an 'ENP Plus' within which existing partners would be offered "a more attractive policy with a perspective of influence on decisions in areas with overlapping interests" (Whitman & Wolf, 2010). The German proposal did not materialize. It did, however, find a successor in the shape of the Polish-Swedish proposed EaP initiative.

The EaP launched on 7 May 2009 at the Prague Summit. Referred to sometimes a as counter-response to French efforts at strengthening and promoting the Union for the Mediterranean[7], the concrete proposal of the EaP was jointly presented by Poland and Sweden and was first discussed at the European Council of 19/20 June 2008. This resulted in an invitation to the Commission to "prepare a proposal for an 'Eastern Partnership' emphasizing the need for a differentiated approach with respect to "the character of the ENP as a single policy framework" (European Commission, 2008a). Its final elaboration was accelerated at the command of the Extraordinary European Council of 1 September 2008 in the light of the outbreak of the Russo-Georgian war in August 2008 (Miltner, 2010). It reflected "the need for a clearer signal of EU commitment following the conflict in Georgia and its broader repercussions" and constituted "a timely initiative to reinforce the ENP's Eastern dimension" (European Commission, 2008a; Łapczyński, 2009).

Indeed, the launch of the EaP marked an essential step towards "creating the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and integration between the EU and interested partner countries" (European Commission, 2020b). Introducing for the first time a framework for multilateral engagement with neighboring countries, the EaP takes its primary point of departure in "the need to focus on increasing the stabilization and resilience" of partner states. It is "complementary to existing bilateral contractual relations (…) without prejudice to individual partners' aspirations for their future relations with the EU" (European Council, 2009). The EaP is based on common EU values including "democracy, the rule of law, [...] respect for human rights (…), market economy and good governance". The level of commitment to these, in turn, reflects the level of integration of each EaP partner state. All hold the right to "freely choose the level of ambition in its relations with the EU (EEAS, 2020). The principle of differentiation between countries inherent

[7] The Union for the Mediterranean (2008) is an intergovernmental organization of forty-three Member States. It promotes economic integration between the EU's Member States and fifteen neighbors in North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans region (EEAS, 2016d).

to the EaP is related to that of conditionality: through the 'more for more, less for less' principle, EU support, engagement, funding, and provision of programmes for institution-building depends "on the progress made by individual partners" (Council of the EU, 2013). The EaP is founded on mutual interest and shared ownership and operates "on the basis of joint decisions by the EU and partner states". In other words, its functioning requires the active involvement of the EU and partners alike.

Since Prague 2009, the EaP has been reviewed a total of five times: in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2020. At each Summit, the Heads of State or Governments and representatives of partner states, the representatives of the EU and the Heads of State or Governments and representatives of its Member States have renewed "their commitment to the objectives and continued implementation of the EaP" and agreed on agendas containing its guiding principles (Council of the EU, 2011; Council of the EU, 2013). The following will outline the institutional set up and levels of interaction which define the direction of the EaP policy.

4.3 Institutional Set Up and Levels of Interaction

4.3.1 Bilateral Engagement

The EaP holds a special place in EU external action. It "offers a solid framework for multilateral cooperation" and "facilitates deepening of bilateral cooperation with the EU" (EEAS, 2016a). In its bilateral dimension, the most important instruments are the Association Agreements (AAs), including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs). The AAs are designed to supersede the PCAs inherent to the pre-EaP ENP framework and enable "stronger engagement (…) with partners willing and able to take on the resulting far-reaching commitments with the EU". Facilitating political association, economic integration and enhanced cooperation on justice and security issues between the EU and relevant partner states through legislative alignment, AAs and DCFTAs are currently in place with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (Council of the EU, 2013). Further, inherent to the EaP's bilateral track is a 'Comprehensive Institution-Building Programme' aimed at developing partner countries administrative capacities to assist them in meeting the commitments stemming from the AAs (European Commission, 2008a).

It should be noted that relations with Azerbaijan continue to be based on the EU-Azerbaijan PCA signed in 1999, while relations with Armenia are governed by the 2017 EU-Armenia Comprehensive

and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. Belarus, finally, cooperates with the EU only through the EaP multilateral track as a result of failure of the EU to ratify the 1995 EU-Belarus PCA (Secrieru & Saari, 2019). This reinforces the idea that EU-EaP integration constitutes a dynamic process requiring "a high degree of commitment to complex and broad-ranging reforms" and, thus, the capacity of partners to incrementally "re-orientate the direction and shape of politics" (Frappi & Pashayeva, 2013).

4.3.2 Multilateral Engagement

The EaP multilateral track aims to "support partner's bilateral relations with the EU". It constitutes an additional instrument to accompany processes of "transition, reform and modernization" and is organized at four levels:

1. Meetings of EaP Heads of State or Government held every two years;
2. Annual meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the EU and partner states, attached to a General Affairs and External Relations Council to "review progress and provide policy guidance";
3. Four thematic platforms at the level of Senior Officials, prepared and chaired by the Commission. Each platform adopts "a set of realistic, periodically updated, core objectives" to "report to the annual meetings of Foreign Ministers";
4. Panels to support the work of the thematic platforms in specific areas.

Cooperation in areas of special importance is supported by EaP Flagship Initiatives which mobilize resources and bring added focus to the issues in question (EU, 2011). The Commission, finally, is charged with reviewing the EaP internal structures "to ensure the necessary coordination for successful implementation" (European Commission, 2008a). With regards to the thematic platforms, of particular relevance to this thesis is that on 'democracy, good governance and stability'. The 2015 EaP Riga Summit resulted in the development of four new priority areas of cooperation, simultaneously aligning the thematic platform on democracy, good governance and stability with the priority area for stronger governance introduced in chapter one (EEAS, 2016a). Table 1 summarizes the two, outlining their multi-fold objectives.

Level 1: Thematic Platform on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability	
Objective	***Means***
• Developing stable democratic institutions and effective state structures • Enhancing oversight of public services and strengthening public confidence in them	• Governance peer reviews • Exchanges of best practices
• Promoting stability and multilateral confidence-building to consolidate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of partners	• Advance political dialogue in fields of common interests and specific CFSP/CSDP issues • Enhancement of early-warning arrangement with focus on conflict areas
Level 2: Priority Area on Stronger Governance	
Objective	***Means***
• Strengthening independence of the judiciary, preventing corruption and implementing public administration • Building citizens' trust • Strengthening EU-partner relations	• Improvement of rule of law and legal certainty through EU-partner state cooperation, underpinned by EU support
• Strengthening resilience of partner states faced with challenges for their stability • Address destabilizing impact of emergencies and crisis	• Strengthening democratic institutions • Enhance state-building cooperation • Civilian security sector reform • Cooperation in area of civil protection and disaster management • Financial and technical assistance • Deployment of CSDP missions • Strengthening multilateral and bilateral security dialogue and practical CSDP cooperation

Table 1. Overview of the EaP multilateral stability and security objectives, including the means, mechanisms and methods at disposal. Source: own creation based on the documents outlining the EaP.

The 2017 Brussels Summit endorsed a more result-oriented and systematic approach to EaP multilateral engagement "based on the implementation of 20 deliverables by 2020" by renewing the EaP institutional set-up (appendix G). The new approach for institutional cooperation between the EU and partners "focuses first and foremost on the efficient delivery of reforms that bring real results to the citizens". The commitments by the EU, its Member States and EaP partner states cover the four main priority areas of the EaP as introduced in Riga, which in turn are aligned with the renewed structure, the platforms and their relevant panels (European Commission, 2020b). Finally, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the EaP, the Council endorsed in 2019 an invitation to the Commission to "evaluate existing instruments and measures". This resulted in a March 2020 proposal for an EaP policy beyond 2020, outlining "five flexible and connected long-term policy objectives" that respond to "new priorities" and aim to strengthen "resilience to address common challenges" (appendix H). The EaP Summit due to take place in June 2020 will "give a mandate to develop a new set of tangible deliverables" building on the current 20 deliverables by 2020, but "with the necessary adjustments to bring it in line with the policy objectives post 2020" (European Commission, 2020a).

4.3.3 Financing the EaP

The European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) constitutes the financial arm in the EU's relations with its neighbors. Aiming to further advance "towards an area of shared prosperity and good neighborliness", the ENI supports agendas built upon the PCAs and AAs (European Commission, 2017c). With its budget of approximately €15,4 billion for the period 2014-2020, the ENI represents 24% of EU external action expenditures (EEAS, 2020). Here, it is worth recalling that securitization entails treating an issue with priority. The budgetary representation of the ENI relative to the EU's total external spending illustrates a commitment of substantial resources that aim to face "the major stabilization challenge in the neighborhood": it reflects securitization and suggests that dealing with perceived risks in the neighborhood is a priority to other matters (Does, 2013).

4.3.4 Who Sets the Agenda?

The Commission is in charge of legislative proposal, enforcement and policy implementation on behalf of the EU. It promotes its interests externally and has been the driver of policy innovation as regards the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbors (Christou, 2010). Launched indeed following a 2008 Commission communication, the EaP is practically managed by the EEAS, the Commission's

Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (EURONEST) and the Member States in accordance with agreed foreign and security policy actions. The EEAS constitutes the EU's diplomatic service and foreign and defense ministry. It was established with the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 as a merger between the external relations departments of the Commission and the Council of the EU. It is led by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who also holds the title as President of the Foreign Affairs Council and Vice-President of the Commission and carries out the CFSP/CSDP (EEAS, 2020).

The EEAS represents EU diplomatic presence abroad through EU delegations and offices, which are "responsible for all policy areas of the relationship between the EU and host countries". It works to ensure the differentiated character of the EaP and regularly addresses country-by-country developments (EU, 2020). The EEAS works closely with the Commission and the European Council, comprising heads of state of EU Member States. EU foreign policy is "steered by the European Council and defined by the Foreign Affairs Council", the latter constituting a configuration of the Council of the EU composing Foreign Ministers of Member States. The Foreign Affairs Council is responsible for all EU external action, including in the areas of 'neighborhood', security and defense; the EEAS is mandated to implement and follow up on agreed policies (EEAS, 2019b). In other words, while the *contents* of the EaP policy are defined by the Foreign Affairs Council, the EEAS, in support of the Commission, ensures its real-life practice. This, in turn, as based on the guidelines of the European Council (Council of the EU, 2020).

With respect to the idea of the EaP reflecting and enabling processes of securitization, the roles of the European Council and the Council of the EU - the only two explicitly intergovernmental EU institutions – reinforces the importance of Member States as actors in the securitization process (Lucarelli, 2019). Further, the EEAS and the Commission collaborate towards "a comprehensive approach" to EU foreign policy (EEAS, 2019b). The emphasis on 'comprehensiveness' suggests the creation of a distinct, intersubjective EU approach to external dealings, further illustrating the EaP establishing "an institutional and procedural framework" as based on shared meanings of security (Hyde-Price, 2006).

4.3.5 Beyond Institutions: Broader Participation

Beyond government representatives and EU institutions, the EaP foresees the participation of other international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE), International Financial institutions, parliaments, business representatives, local authorities and stakeholders in the fields covered by thematic platforms. Following the 2017 Brussels Summit, the platforms were given "a more political steer to the panels" and report back to "senior officials on the overall activities of the panels within specific priorities. The panels, in turn, serve as "fora for (…) in-depth discussions on specific topics" (Council of the EU, 2017).

Attention is equally paid to the involvement of civil society. The EaP Civil Society Forum, benefitting from the participation of the European Economic and Social Committee, serves as a people-to people dimension and "strives to strengthen civil society in the EaP region" to facilitate reform and democratic transformations (EU Neighbours, 2020). The EaP further reflects the participation of the Committee of the Regions through the Conference of Local & Regional Authorities for the EaP (CORLEAP) set up at the 2011 Vilnius Summit. The CORLEAP brings in "the perspective of the levels of governance (…) closest to the people" (Council of the EU, 2011). Further, while the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly "provides a platform for parliamentary oversight" of the EaP, the Parliamentary Troika, comprising the European Parliament, the OSCE and the CoE Parliamentary Assemblies "underpin the multilateral aspects of the EaP" (European Commission, 2008a). Finally, youth, business and media representatives meet every second year "in the run-up to the EaP Summit" (EEAS, 2016a).

To summarize, the EaP takes its point of departure in the EU's "vital interest in seeing stability [and] better governance (…) at its Eastern borders" (European Commission, 2008a). Complimentary to the ENP, the framework guiding relations between the EU and its partners through the EaP is provided by bilateral agreements and multilateral partnership priorities alike. Although the EaP involves a range of institutional players and other stakeholders, its practical effectiveness is to a large extent dependent "on the success of reform processes" in partner states. Indeed, the revised ENP emphasizes that the EU has "limits to its leverage" and therefore cannot alone "solve the many challenges of its region" (European Commission, 2015). With respect to the principles of shared ownership and mutual

accountability, meeting the objectives of creating stability, security and prosperity as outlined by the EaP requires the active engagement as well as the willingness and ability of partners to progress.

5 The EU's Eastern Neighborhood: A Case for Securitization

The EaP as embedded in the ENP was created out of the changing context on the EU's borders following the 2004 enlargement and further accelerated by the concerns generated by the 2008 breakout of open conflict in Georgia. These elements combined reinforced the necessity "to support regional cooperation and step up relations with the Eastern neighbors" (European Council, 2008). Securitization theory argues that security concerns as defined by securitizing actors should be prioritized; the EaP works towards creating "security, stability and prosperity" through enhancing "democracy and rule of law". This, in turn, is "a priority for the EU" (European Commission, 2020c). Keeping in mind the circumstantial formulation of the EaP and the frameworks within which it is governed, the following section will examine how the EU observes security threat its Eastern neighborhood. It will take its point of departure first in the 2003 ESS and its successor, the 2016 EUGS. The sole two concrete frameworks outlining the EU's temporal security priorities, these guide the EU's external action, including through the ENP/EaP. They constitute important sites for narrating the EU into existence as a security actor able to govern security (Mälksoo, 2016). This will be followed by an examination of how the EaP as a policy underpins an "intersubjective construction of security in a collective framework of security governance" which forms part of "broader political projects and visions" (Lucarelli, 2019; Charret, 2009).

5.1 The ESS and 'Wider Europe': Securitization in A Post-Enlargement Context

Identifying the way in which the EU securitizes its Eastern neighborhood and how this is illustrated by the EaP requires a review of its overarching frameworks. The 2004 Strategy Paper outlining the ENP emphasized the role of the 2004 enlargement in reinforcing the EU's "determination to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe", marking it "a big step forward in promoting security and prosperity on the European continent". This reflects the EU referencing the pre-existence of insecurity in Europe, resulting in the Eastward enlargement coming to serve as a means "to attain peace and security" (Higashino, 2004). However, and as noted by Landaburu (2006), there is "a reality that the EU cannot expand ad infinitum". The ESS states that while "the integration of acceding states increases [the EU's] security", it also "brings [it] closer to troubled areas". Therefore, despite enlargement having been "a key tool in projecting stability" within and beyond the EU, the ENP was introduced as a tool for closer association without membership, responding to new opportunities and

challenges and simultaneously contributing to realizing the objectives of the recently published ESS (European Commission, 2004).

The ESS had "building security in [the] neighborhood" as one of three strategic objectives. Assessing "large scale aggression against any Member State" to be improbable, it identified a series of key threats, all of which were "more diverse, less visible and less predictable in nature". The above is in line with the the idea that security as studied within rhetorical structures can be broadened "without robbing it of its analytical utility", enabling the study of security "in sectors other than the military one" (Higashino, 2004). In the context of the Eastern neighborhood, the ESS identified in particular 1) the persistence of "protracted or frozen conflicts" that "threaten regional stability" and 2) the risk of state failure as a result of poor governance, corruption and weak institutions. The above illustrates the EU as a securitizing actor making an initial securitization act by rhetorically referring to its Eastern neighborhood in security terms. Interestingly, the Wider Europe communication establishing the ENP[8] emphasized the potential of regional conflict to "destabilize (…) the process of state-building [and] political consolidation". This then establishes a direct link between the threats security and stability identified in the ESS. Further, it reinforces the idea of the EU's security objectives being grounded in a security-governance nexus: while peace and security are "the immediate preconditions for good governance", good governance constitutes the "long-term prerequisite for (…) durable peace" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2020).

The ENP emphasized that "a shared neighborhood implies (…) a joint responsibility for addressing threats (…) created by conflict and insecurity". It highlighted "the EU's task to make a particular contribution to stability (…) and to promote a ring of well-governed countries to the East". With the above in mind, one can argue the EU to establish a *double* security narrative towards its Eastern neighborhood. On the one hand, the ENP reflects a normative/responsibility narrative emphasizing the creation of a "circle of friends" founded on shared values and deeper integration through the exportation of the EU value-based security model. This, in turn, as a result of the EU's *duty* to do so, "not only towards its citizens and those of the new Member States, but also towards its present and future neighbors" (European Commission, 2003). At the same time, the ESS in particular establishes a threat/risk narrative, emphasizing the development of the ENP not just "for the good of the European peace project through cooperative security arrangements", but also for the purpose of "managing the

[8] Hereinafter ENP.

risks, threats and potential security problems prevalent within the poorly governed neighborhood", all of which can "pose problems for Europe" (Christou, 2010; ESS, 2003).

To summarize, the 2004 enlargement "strengthened the EU's interest in enhancing relations with its new neighbors": it resulted in the EU's "capacity to provide security [and] stability (…) to its citizens" no longer being "distinguishable from its interest in close cooperation with the neighbors" (European Commission, 2003). The ESS, evidencing the rhetorical move through which the EU first frames its Eastern neighborhood in security terms, highlighted the importance of a neighborhood policy. The ENP therefore was designed as a platform for the EU to demonstrate "a stronger and more active interest" in reinforcing political stability and regional security: it establishes a positive correlation between the two and conceives of a double narrative approach to governing security to the East (European Commission, 2004; Christou, 2010). Greater EU involvement in response to regional threat would serve as a "tangible demonstration of [its] willingness" to take on "a share of the burden of conflict resolution in neighboring countries". In other words, foreseeing "intensified political relations (…) and shared responsibility for conflict prevention", the ENP simultaneously reflects an understanding of what security entails *and* forms a first framework concretely embodying the EU assuming the role of a security actor its Eastern vicinity (European Commission, 2004).

5.2 The EUGS: A Changing European Security Environment

The ESS and the ENP involved "the navigation and negotiation of security, borders and governance" within and by the EU (Manners, 2013). One should note that these documents were published at a specific historical moment which marked the "reunification of Europe after half a century of Cold War division". They reflect the EU discursively constructing a particular *ontological* security through "a stable intra-group self-narrative" with a "consistent link between a 'before' and 'after' self (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). With the ESS and the ENP, the EU narrates itself into existence as a particular type of post-enlargement security actor vis-à-vis its Eastern neighborhood (Mälksoo, 2016). The role of the EU in the international system, including how it should "deal with the challenges posed by instability (…) and conflict to the East", however, were re-addressed in the 2016 EUGS (Tocci, 2016). Unlike the ESS, which foresaw preventive engagement in response to a dynamic mixture of potential threat, the EUGS was launched in the context of the realization that "peace and stability in Europe are no longer a given" (Mälksoo, 2016). As such, the EUGS provides a new, contextually aligned framework guiding the EU's relations with its Eastern partners.

The EUGS sets out to ensure "security at home" through "a parallel interest in peace in […) neighboring regions" (appendix I). The ESS proclaimed that "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure, nor so free" and established an EU sense of secure 'self' vis-à-vis its neighborhood (appendix J). The EUGS, however, while reflecting indeed a continuation of both the normative/responsibility and the threat/risk narratives identified above, establishes an explicit link between the EU's own security and that of its neighboring region. It reflects an 'under threat' narrative (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). The key threats to the European security order identified in the post-enlargement, pre-EaP years were not of military nature: while the conflicts in the neighborhood were "in need of a lasting peaceful resolution", these were at the time all 'frozen' and were associated primarily with political risk (Yilmaz, 2008). The 2008 Russo-Georgian war, however, was an armed conflict of military relevance. It served as a first example of "the limitations of the EU's governance" in its Eastern neighborhood through the ENP and challenged the EU's post-enlargement ontological security (Nilsson & Silander, 2016).

The 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and the subsequent breakout of armed conflict in the Donbass region of Eastern Ukraine served as a further perceived violation of the post-Cold War rules-based security order in Europe. Interestingly, Tocci (2016) argues the narrative inherent to the EUGS to suggest that upon its launch, "it was not just the EU's neighborhood that was in flames, but the EU itself". In other words, while the ESS provided impetus for the EU to pursue a set of preventive policies with the Eastern neighborhood as principal security referent, the EUGS reflects a clear understanding that the neighborhood, in addition to being *under* threat, also *poses* a direct threat to the EU. This then reflects an adjustment to the EU's understanding of its neighborhood, including to how it should act (Della Sala, 2018).

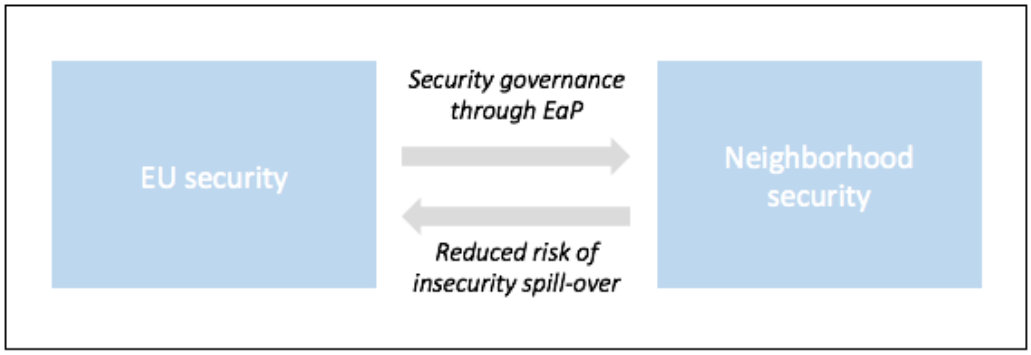

Figure 4. Interdependence between EU security and neighborhood security

5.2.1 Securitization of the EU's Eastern Neighborhood

The implications of the EU's securitization of its Eastern neighborhood are multifold and reflect a contextual process. In line with the philosophical position taken in this thesis, the identities of international actors can be viewed as "historically, politically and socially constituted variables": they form "an empirical question within a historical context" (Pischikova & Piras, 2017). The EU as a value-based security community represents "the institutional embodiment (…) of a common identity for European states" collectively devoted to upholding the rule of law and "the principle of the use of force as a last resort" (Hill et al., 2017; Quille, 2007). In other words, its security and understanding hereof reflect a "narrative of the EU as a political space having overcome historical animosity" among states through "incremental, functionalist cooperation and (…) solidarity" (Johansson-Nogués, 2018).

The securitization framework is that of a multisectoral framework "with a broader agenda (…) to the concept of security". It enables the identification of referent objects beyond the state (Does, 2011). Here, it is worth recalling that the societal sector to securitization theory has collective identities as referent object. Wæver (1996) notes that 'Europe' itself is a security referent "in a truly original way" where "integration through a security argument becomes a matter of survival for Europe". The EUGS emphasizes that "we live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the EU", that the "European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned", and that as a result, "[the] Union is under threat". This then illustrates a narrative by which the EU, the securitizing actor pursuing "the politics of threat design", places itself and its community identity as the object of "critical vulnerability" deemed "worth protecting" (Lucarelli, 2019; Charret, 2009).

The EUGS does, however, also suggests that the existential threat identified, regardless of nature, is not limited to the European *Union:* it exists within *and* beyond the EU and challenges the pan-European security order (EUGS, 2016). Johansson-Nogués (2018) argues the destabilization of the neighborhood to have "upset the narrative of European integration". In this context, it is worth recalling that the EaP, serving as a "change in relations with [the] Eastern neighbors", operates precisely through integration and association policies that aim to "strengthen the prosperity and stability" of partner states "and thus the security of the EU". The EaP as guided by the EUGS therefore functions according to 1) the understanding that EU security "begins outside its borders" in that "the developments taking place in its neighborhood affects its well-being" and 2) the EU's "sense of

responsibility (…) to engage responsibly across Europe and the surrounding regions" (EUGS, 2016). It facilitates and justifies "the expansion of European integration as a stabilization mechanism" in response to perceived threat (Simão & Dias, 2016).

The above reflects a process whereby the EU as an institutionally legitimate actor frames its Eastern neighborhood in security terms based on material circumstances and discursive strategies (Guzzini, 2015). It is, however, worth recalling that securitization processes commence with the *intersubjective* establishment of a threat perceived as demanding special attention. Security as a concept and a political tool both stems from and promotes subjectivities (Balzacq, 2005; Charret, 2009). The EaP constitutes the main framework through which the EU engages with its Eastern neighbors. It should be noted that its evolution from its inception until today reflects an alignment with the evolution of the EU's self-perception and understanding of security. This entails a reflection on how the EaP is underpinned by a contextually embedded security logic formed around the idea of 'neighborhood', including how this has affected the emergence of a common EU identity of collective security vis-à-vis the Eastern neighborhood (Christou, 2010).

5.3 The EaP as a Securitization Outcome

The 2004 enlargement forced the EU to "reexamine its relations with the new Eastern neighbors" and "provoked a reevaluation of the policies towards the entire region" (Pisarska, 2008). The physical extension of the EU's borders posed a series of new challenges: the 2004 launch of the ENP can be regarded as a response to the necessity for closer relations with newly acquired neighbors based primarily on geographical indicators. The nature of its security elements and objectives reflect those characterizing the EU in a post-enlargement context: a stable community within its new, enlarged borders, able to "influence other actors through norm-setting" and incentives to "follow a certain set of rules" (Johansson-Nogués, 2018; Interview 3).

At the same time, the acceding countries of CEE brought into the EU a set of national interests shaped by historical and geopolitical experience. The EaP was launched in 2009 as a regional dimension of the ENP on the basis of a Polish-Swedish proposal. Securitization involves the "social design of a security problem (…) and legitimates the kind of means used to stop it" (Lenz-Raymann, 2014). With respect to Poland's physical size and associated political potential, its influence on the EU's Eastern policy and its success in establishing the EaP indicate a process of securitization. Understanding how

requires taking into account the strategic interests behind, including how these reflect distinct, historically embedded security considerations. This then adds to the understanding of the EaP as a product of a parallel securitization process where the EU as an entity does not constitute the securitizing actor.

5.3.1 Poland and the Neighborhood: A Historically Embedded Perception of Threat

Poland's EU accession in 2004 resulted in its separate policies for each of its Eastern neighbors coming to be governerned within one common EU framework, the ENP (Marcinkowska, 2016). Although Poland's status as an observer during its accession preparations hindered it from formally influencing the outcomes of the discussions on the ENP, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted a large amount of groundwork prior to its launch (Interview 3). Upon the launch of the Polish EU accession negotiations in 1998, for instance, then-Polish foreign minister expressed Poland's "willingness to contribute to shape EU policy" towards East; in 2001, the readiness "to share Poland's experience of political transformation with Eastern partners" was emphasized. In 2003, finally, Poland proposed in a non-paper to introduce an 'Eastern Dimension' to the EU's CFSP, envisaging a more comprehensive Eastern policy, among others "for the benefit of all-around stabilization of the security situation" in Eastern Europe (Marcinkowska, 2016; Pisarska, 2008; Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). This illustrates Poland attempting to project its national policy preferences to EU level, indicating an understanding of EU membership "as an incentive for regional development" (Pomorska, 2007).

While the above proposal never materialized, its core was upheld in the EaP. Chappell (2010) notes that in the context of CEE, the Eastern neighborhood region had long been of particular interest not just due to "geographical proximity, economic and cultural ties", but also for strategic security considerations. Indeed, Marcinkowska (2016) argues Polish "threat perceptions and immediate defense concerns" to be particularly focused on its neighborhood. Here, it is worth emphasizing the central role played by the interpretation of historical events in shaping how security and threat is perceived at national level. The 2004 enlargement marked the successful transformation of the 'authoritarian regimes' in CEE into secure, stable and dynamic democracies (Schimmelfennig, 2001). In security terms and with reference to geopolitical context, it served as a means for "fending off a possible re-emergence of a bloc of countries to the East dominated by Russia" (Bobiński, 2007).

Precisely the role of Russia should be understood in the context of the 'new' Member States' "common difficult historical experience" with their neighbor to the East, resulting in a "careful approach" marked by "relative distrust". Unlike their Western counterparts, these perceived Russia as a "potential danger" for the countries in the Eastern neighborhood "in their integration with Europe" (Pisarska, 2008). In addition to posing a threat to the countries in the *neighborhood*, Russia had long been considered "a threat to [CEE] national security and sovereignty" (Marcinkowska, 2016). Indeed, countries such as Poland have "lived with the possibility of a Russian invasion" throughout most of history, resulting in "perceptions of relations with Russia" being "heavily influenced by a legacy of Russian domination and occupation" (Pezard et al., 2017). Interestingly, then, Bieńczyk-Missala (2016) argues relations between Poland and Russia to present a great challenge for reasons relating to not only Poland's political reorientation following the Cold War, but also due to the early acknowledgement of differences in "visions for the future of post-Soviet states".

With the end of the Cold War, Poland, situated between the EU on the one side and a series of states with comparably perceived "collapsing, unreformed and backward" political and economic systems on the other, found itself in "a buffer zone between the post-Soviet space and the West" (Wallace, 1998; Celewicz, 2006). In this context, the 2003 Polish National Security Strategy stated that "our sense of security will shortly gain an added strength in our EU membership". It emphasized "joining the EU collaborative framework in the area of internal security and CFSP" as an "effective deterrence of existing and potential threats". It further described "the consolidation of the values of the EU" as a means to "influence the shape of the international environment, particularly within the immediate neighborhood". The above reflects the EU's secure 'self' vs. neighborhood 'other' narrative. It reinforces the idea of the EU, a "trajectory (…) tied to a foundational story", as a security complex compared to those around it (Laporte, 2012; Della Sala, 2018). To Poland, EU accession marked a transition from 'under threat' to 'secure' in that it put an end, practically and symbolically, to the reality of Poland as part of a Russian sphere of influence. According to this logic, promoting "intensive efforts to expand comprehensive cooperation" with the countries remaining in the neighborhood 'other' thus would to serve as a means for strategic geopolitical development through disintegrative processes with Russia (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007; Celewicz, 2006).

The security political lenses through which Poland perceives Russia are emphasized by its push for Russia to be mentioned as "a potential source of instability in addition to a possible partner" and its

call for "emphasis on traditional security threats" upon the formulation of the ESS in 2003 (Chappell, 2010). The 2003 Polish National Security Strategy too recognized Russia's "importance for European security" and, interestingly, set out to "take measures against the emergence (…) of new divides that might come in the wake of the EU and NATO enlargements". In 2007, one year prior to the proposal for the EaP, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs further referred to Russia as "an area of special importance" whose involvement in European cooperation should "add to greater security and stability in the region". The above suggests the 'under threat' narrative reflected in the EUGS to have already been in place at the time of enlargement, albeit not at yet EU level and for different historical reasons. It illustrates Poland recognizing the potential of an overlap of Russian and EU interests in the neighborhood, foreseeing the consequences of the EU's delineation of the 'self' from the 'other' for its relations with other actors (Jæger, 2002).

While the ESS and the ENP did identify a series of risks prevalent in the Eastern neighborhood, they did so without specifying their underlying source. They reflected an optimistic security thinking embedded in a "linear transition theory" of how to create a stable and prosperous region where "Russia was not necessarily perceived as a direct threat" (Interview 2). In the view of Poland, however, the "need for an active EU presence in its Eastern neighborhood" was grounded in "clear security considerations" within which Russia occupied a special role (Interview 3). This implies Poland reacting to its historical context, identifying Russia as an explicit danger and foreseeing its implications for regional security (Balzacq, 2005). The EaP upon proposal, then, reflects the constructivist nature of the process whereby threats emerge (Christou, 2010).

5.3.2 Poland, a Securitizing Actor? Towards an EU-Wide Approach to 'Neighborhood'

Prior to the 2004 enlargement, the Eastern neighborhood was "to a large extent (…) *terra incognita*" to "the majority of EU decision makers (…) in 'old'[9] Member States": it was "somewhere out there - lands between Russia and the countries [the EU] was enlarging to" (Interview 3). The EaP initiative in particular shows an attempt to encourage strategic EU-wide thinking with regards to Eastern matters, including in the area of security. It contributed to "changing the perceptions of [old] Member States" to which "the East often boiled down to Russia" (Cianciara, 2008). The 'Eastern agenda' was brought up by Poland "on a number of political forums" resulting in several countries, not limited to the new Member States, beginning to promote a "policy of greater EU involvement in the East", a

[9] By 'old' Member States I understand all EU Member States prior to the 2004 enlargement.

topic previously not at the centre of attention (Pisarska, 2008; Interview 3). The implementation of the EaP evidences a process whereby Poland, the largest actor in the CEE region with "existing expertise and thought", successfully 'uploads' its national foreign policy goals vis-à-vis the Eastern neighborhood to EU level.

The proposal by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs intended to "strengthen the European offer in the Eastern direction" stressing that it "should be based on, but go beyond the current ENP". It was launched as a special type of policy and reflects a contextually established understanding of 'security' and its practice (Zakopalová, 2012). This results in an analytical switch whereby the EU as an entity no longer constitutes the main securitizing actor. Rather, this role is reserved for Poland: the 'old' Member States thus become the audience whose consent is attempted induced (Balzacq, 2005). Consequently, because successful securitization lies in the hands of audiences, the above illustrates how Poland's externalization of national issues to EU level has resulted in a process of identity construction whereby a common EU understanding of security priorities has emerged (Alecu de Flers & Müller, 2009).

Indeed, identity can be studied as an "outcome of exclusionary practices" where "elements to a secure identity on the 'inside' are linked (…) to threats identified on the 'outside' (…) through discourses of danger" (Jæger, 2002). It should be noted that the 2008 Russian intervention in Georgia constituted "a crucial factor in the awakening of 'old' Member States" and "opened a window of opportunity for the pro-Eastern coalition [in the EU] to convince" of the importance of the EaP as a regional policy (Interview 3; Rinnert, 2011). The EaP thus was created in response to increased perceptions of insecurity and threat stemming from the EU's Eastern flanks. These perceptions of insecurity stem partially from a securitization process whereby Poland has 1) identified the Eastern neighborhood, its own national security and, thus, EU security as under threat, 2) conducted a securitization act and identified Russia as a specific source of threat and 3) sufficiently convinced an audience of its securitization of an issue. The acceptance in the EU of Poland's securitization act, in turn, can be attributed to 1) its political capacity and negotiation position in putting forward a constructive proposal and 2) external events contributing to a shared realization of an issue in terms of its relevance and urgency (Interview 3). The EaP therefore reflects how discursive practice can materialize into non-discursive policy practice, giving "collective meaning to a security issue" and bringing "certain

policy responses" (Zakopalová, 2012). This, in turn, in line with the idea of securitization being audience-centered, context-dependent and power-laden (Balzacq, 2011).

To this end, it should be noted that the EaP upon its launch failed to specify Russia as a threat to European security: the annexation of Crimea six years later sparked a definite EU-wide understanding of Russia as "a disruptive actor" with "the tools and capacity to wage war against its neighbors" as part of a non-peaceful and non-progressive agenda (Interview 3). Poland's *ex ante* identification of Russia as a threat reinforces the idea of Europe "as an area marked by (…) overlapping political subjectivities" (Wæver, 1996). The EaP can be regarded as a securitization outcome - a policy designed to guard against threat. However, while it demonstrates continuity of an EU sense of self and makes clear what 'we' are protecting, the question of 'against what' and, importantly, for which reasons remained at the time open to interpretation. The above is in line with the idea that phenomena are differently (re)constructed in differing social contexts and thus derive their meanings from their effect on the world (Saunders et al., 2005).

5.4 Constructing a Soft Security Instrument: A Dynamic Take on Security

With the 2009 entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU gained new impetus to CFSP/CSDP, enabling it to "strengthen the delivery of its foreign policy" through cooperation with "neighboring countries in the full range of issues in an integrated and (…) effective manner" (European Commission, 2011). This had implications for EU security actorness in the neighborhood (Wouters, 2012). With the EaP, the EU seeks to "support political and socio-economic reform" in partner states, "facilitating approximation towards the EU" so as to collectively ensure the security of the European continent as a whole (Council of the EU, 2009). Since its launch, the documents outlining the EaP have consistently reaffirmed the impediment to cooperative activities posed by regional conflict. The participants at the 2011 Warsaw Summit recognized the need for the EaP to be "significantly strengthened" and committed "to stepping up its implementation". With reference to "the persistence of protracted conflicts" posing "a serious security challenge" to the region *and* "the EU's own geopolitical and security interests", the Warsaw Summit welcomed the "EU's strengthened role in conflict resolution" within the frameworks of existing agreed formats and processes, as well as "through field presence when appropriate" (Council of the EU, 2011). This further evidences the EU identifying overarching threat and tying it to two referent objects: the security of the EaP region as intertwined with its own internal security.

The Warsaw Summit resulted in the EU committing itself to "intensifying political and security cooperation" and dialogue on "governance reforms [and] efforts to enhance regional security", requiring the "joined-up use of the CFSP and other EU instruments" (Council of the EU, 2011). Similarly, the 2013 Summit in Vilnius marked the agreement of "an ambitious agenda for the way ahead". It introduced the launch of EaP dialogues to promote "regular (…) exchanges between Foreign Ministers (…) on the EaP agenda and foreign policy issues of common concern" in order to "increase political and security policy convergence and effectiveness" (Council of the EU, 2013). The emphasis on 'convergence' reinforces the idea of the EaP as a means for the EU to realize its internal security project beyond its borders (Lavenex & Wichmann, 2009). The above further illustrates the EU making use of the Lisbon Treaty's "provisions in addressing (…) security concerns and specific interests" in contextual alignment with the external landscape in the neighborhood, indicating a strategic move beyond 'normal' politics (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). The integration of EU foreign policy instruments in its Eastern neighborhood is reflected by, among others, the on-ground presence of civilian missions in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is further evidenced by the introduction of "partner's possible participation in civilian and military EU-led operations" under the CFSP/CSDP (Council of the EU, 2011).

The 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent outbreak of violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine marked a switch in security thinking internally within the EU. The 2015 Riga Summit emphasized that "the acts against Ukraine have shown that fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders cannot be taken for granted in the 21st century". It should be noted that the 2008 Extraordinary European Council requesting the accelerated EaP launch did express its strong condemnation of Russia's military action in Georgia, labeling it "unacceptable" and "not a solution". This indicates a realization that "the paradigm had changed" and that Russian threats were to be taken seriously (Interview 2). Interestingly, however, the Georgian conflict was never explicitly mentioned in the Joint Declaration of the Prague Summit establishing the EaP. The Riga Summit, underlining "the need for stronger EU engagement" in "efforts aimed at de-escalation and a (…) solution based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity", therefore marks for the first time the explicit integration of 'harder' security elements directly within the EaP framework. It reflects the EU adapting the *contents* of its security governance and actorness to contemporary developments (Council of the EU, 2015).

The above can equally be applied to the 2015 revision of the ENP emphasizing the EU's intention to "step up to outreach to partner countries' authorities" dealing with security related matters (European Commission, 2015). The review of the ENP marked a moment where the previous notion of 'good governance' for enhancing security in neighboring countries came to be supplemented by 'resilience'. In an ENP/EaP context, resilience is conceptualized not as an end goal, but rather "as a means to attain a country's national development goals, to achieve security (…) and to recover from shocks" (Petrova & Delcour, 2019). The shift in focus from 'good governance' to 'resilience' illustrates the EU responding to an external context, committing itself to further supporting the development of administrative structures that enable partners to defend themselves against the security issues they face (Interview 1). Further, it is interesting to note the EU explicitly identifying for the first time "an increasingly assertive Russian foreign policy" and tying it directly to the persistence *and* emergence of new conflicts that "hamper development in the region" (European Commission, 2015). As opposed to the situation in Georgia, where despite "a moment of realization, it was back to business as usual very soon afterwards", the EU explicitly labelling Russia a source of threat with implications for EU governance within the EaP framework illustrates a clear shift in strategic thinking and, in turn, a convergence with the parallel securitization process outlined above (Interview 2).

The 2017 EaP Summit in Brussels further highlighted the importance of strengthening state and societal resilience in the EU and in partner states alike. It called for "renewed efforts to promote the settlement of unresolved conflicts" through the EaP as outlined in the EUGS and the revised ENP (Council of the EU, 2017). It is relevant to recall that the 2017 Brussels Summit marked the introduction of a revised EaP multilateral institutional set-up in order to provide "stronger political guidance and a more results-oriented approach to cooperation". The EUGS stresses that "managing the relationship with Russia represents a key strategic challenge" for the EU in its attempts to "enhance the resilience of [its] Eastern neighbors". This marks a departure from the idea of the 'risks' stemming from the neighborhood being manageable solely through promoting domestic governance reform in partner states (European Commission, 2004). It reflects a further securitization process whereby the upgraded institutional EaP framework comes to serve as a means for strengthening internal and external resilience, reducing "the scope for external leverage or coercion" to ensure that "both the EU and its neighboring partner countries remain free to make their own political choices" (European Commission, 2017a).

Finally, the EaP Policy beyond 2020 emphasizes "security as a priority area for the EaP" and identifies five priority areas of which one is titled "A Partnership that Protects" (appendix H). Covering the notion of 'good governance'[10] characteristic for the EaP, it highlights the need for "more cooperation and integration of partner countries into EU security and resilience structures" so as to foster prevention, preparedness and response against hybrid[11] threats (European Commission, 2020d). It is worth recalling that the EaP narrative has previously been consistent with reference to 'conflict' and 'political instability': the use of the term 'hybrid' indicates the EU facing "an unprecedented situation on its Eastern borders" (Shelest, 2015). The document itself is titled "Reinforcing Resilience – A Partnership that Delivers for All". This then indicates a common understanding of the need for "a more efficient use of resources and more (…) adaptable policies in the context of multiple crises and growing uncertainty" internally and externally to the EU (Petrova & Delcour, 2020).

5.5 The EaP: A Framework for Contemporary Security Governance

The EaP as a policy involves the EU as a whole, including the CSDP and the actions of its Member States, towards "attaining a stable, secure and prosperous neighborhood" (Koutrakos, 2015). It comes to function as an overarching soft security vehicle to a hard security end, reflecting two parallel processes of securitization with different motivations of which the objectives have gradually come to converge in response to external 'threatening' events. The EaP as a policy thus both reflects and further enables securitization. With respect to the 2003 ESS and the 2016 EUGS outlining the EU's security priorities, the above has identified two distinct but complementary ways of rhetorically framing the Eastern neighborhood in security terms. Where one indicates a normative motivation, the other emphasizes discourses of risk and threat. Both reflect a narrative link between 'values' and 'security'. The ESS and the ENP "coherently articulated a post-enlargement EU sense of self vis-à-vis the neighborhood". At the same time, while the neighborhood was indeed perceived as being 'troubled' by social unrest and unresolved conflicts, the "locus of the sources of insecurity and their effects" were perceived as "confined to the neighboring countries", hence "not constituting a challenge" to the EU 'secure' narrative (Johansson-Nogués, 2018).

[10] The new EaP policy will be operationalized in June 2020. The following analysis will focus on the current priority area on 'stronger governance' introduced in 2015. It refers only to the EaP policy beyond 2020 for illustrative analytical purposes.

[11] Used often in the context of hybrid *warfare*, hybrid threats are characterized by "surprise, ambiguity and deception" and combine various deterrence and insurgency mechanisms (Lanoszka, 2016). Since 2014, the term has been widely used to describe Russian course of action in the post-Soviet space.

Unresolved risks, however, may turn into threats. Iso-Markku et al. (2017) note that the EU has since "been surrounded by a gradually deteriorating security environment". The ESS, they argue, failed to "tackle some of the more difficult and sensitive issues such as relations with Russia" despite it being "already apparent that the development in Russia was not moving in the direction of the liberal reforms desired by the EU". Since 2014 in particular, the main priority of the EaP has become regional stabilization with the aim of mitigating "the numerous crises (…) affecting the neighborhood" *and* simultaneously addressing "a set of intra-EU vulnerabilities linked to events in the area" (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). As foreseen by Poland prior to and upon the launch of the EaP, the current EUGS recognizes the role of Russia in challenging "the European security order at its core". Its discursive strategy supports the idea that where the security of the EU is the referent object, the Eastern neighborhood, including the domestic consequences of Russian influence, is the explicit threat to be managed.

The EUGS guides EU action through the EaP: it reflects a pragmatic approach to foreign policy with a "thick substance to [the EU's] value-oriented version of geopolitics" in its dealings with the neighborhood (Averre, 2016). This then enables an examination of how the EaP serves as a soft security policy *within* the EU's overall security political framework. The above, in turn, for the purpose of managing the "stability of social order" in neighboring states in the face of military-and non-military threat, and, as a result, protecting EU internal security (Does, 2013; Charret, 2009).

Securitizing actor(s)	**Referent object(s)**	**Underlying logic**	**Functional actor(s)/audience**
European Union	Eastern neighborhood	Regional stability as embedded in relation between political stability and territorial security	Member States
European Union	EU security community/collective identity	Survival and stability of EU value-based foundational story	Member States
'New' Member States (CEE) following 2004 enlargement	Eastern neighborhood *and* national security as embedded in EU security	Historical legacy of Russian political and territorial domination of former Eastern block, risk of EU vulnerability to Russian influence	'Old' Member States, European Union

Table 2. Mapping of the of the key constituents of the securitization processes uncovered in this thesis

6 The EU as a Security Actor in its Eastern Neighborhood

The EaP as an instrument for security governance reflects historical understandings of security and sources of threat. The promotion of these understandings, facilitated by external political dynamics, have progressively led to a common EU approach to security in a 'neighborhood' context. This has influenced the EU's self-narrative as a security actor, including how the EaP and its instruments fall within the overall framework for EU security governance. Simão (2017) notes that EU security actorness has developed along two strands. The first focuses on "the normative and rule-based approach to European integration" and "the establishment of an enlarged security community among European countries", the second on "the technologies of security" set in place by the EU, not just with reference to the development of military capacities, but also to its "governance and soft security approaches". Indeed, regional developments have resulted in the EU gradually "moving from the direction of a completely *soft* power actor into a (…) more security oriented actor" (Interview 3). The EaP reflects an integration of both.

The main security challenges stemming from the Eastern neighborhood as identified by the EU relate to political instability due to weak institutions and governance and/or territorial conflict. Upon the launch of the EaP, all partner states were characterized by weak local and regional authorities and lacking commitment to EU fundamental values including democracy and the rule of law. However, with the exception of Belarus and Ukraine which at the time did not experience issues relating territorial integrity, the remaining four were also characterized by either protracted or, in the case of Georgia, recent violent conflict. In Moldova, the most pressing issue was the persistence of the conflict in Transnistria, a de facto break-away republic on the Ukrainian border over which national authorities continue to retain no control (Council of the EU, 2009). Similarly, Georgia struggled to balance its relations with separatist authorities in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the latter having recently been the fulcrum of violent conflict. Armenia and Azerbaijan, finally, experienced a hostile relationship with regular outbreaks of armed conflict as a result of the political dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a border region claimed by both countries since 1988 (Cavanaugh & Stares, 2017). Since the beginning, the role of the EU as a security actor in its Eastern neighborhood has therefore reflected a combined political and a military dimension.

Since 2014, Ukraine has joined the last category: Belarus remains the only EaP country in which instability and associated risks still do not have a direct military component. In this context, Raik &

Saari (2016) draw attention to the Ukrainian conflict: in addition to being "a shock for Ukraine and Europe", it has served as "a catalyst for broader geostrategic tensions" that challenge the current security order. Averre (2016) argues Russia's annexation of Crimea and involvement in Eastern Ukraine to have marked "a turning point in the evolution of European security governance". With this in mind, the following will consist of a practical analysis of how the EU governs security through the EaP in a changing regional security environment, taking into account the importance attached to cooperation and the concept of resilience. It will further reflect how the EU's security objectives and methods are challenged by existing and newly identified threats in the region, enabling a discussion of the broader historical and geopolitical framework within which the EU extends its influence (Dimitrova & Dragneva, 2009).

6.1 Governing Security through the EaP

6.1.1 A Multilateral Framework: Democracy, Good Governance and Stability

As introduced in chapter four, the EaP consists of a bilateral and a multilateral track. The latter composes four thematic platforms which guide EU action in partner states and offers an inclusive framework for engagement aiming to address a series of shared challenges (EaP Civil Society Facility, 2020). Indeed, Tkeshelashvili (2015) notes that the majority of the security issues in the neighborhood are regional and "cannot be addressed effectively on a bilateral basis": multilateral cooperation makes positive results more realistic. The platform on democracy, good governance and stability is aligned with the priority area on stronger governance introduced at the Riga Summit. It works towards strengthened democratic principles, institutional reform and "stronger cooperation in the area of security" so as to enhance the resilience of partner states against diverse threats (EEAS, 2018a).

The settlement of protracted conflict in the neighborhood is recognized as a priority from both "a political and security perspective". It constitutes an area where "the EU should and could do more" (European Commission, 2011). The EaP multilateral track enables the EU to take an active role in conflict resolution within its frameworks or "in support of existing agreed negotiating formats and processes", including through field presence (Council of the EU, 2017). The EU deploys three civilian on-site missions in its Eastern neighborhood, all governed within the frameworks of the CFSP/CSDP. These are the 2005 EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), the 2008 EU

Monitoring Mission to Georgia (EUMM) and the 2014 EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine (EUAM). The EUBAM aims for peaceful conflict resolution through the 5+2 format[12] as well as through technical confidence-building[13] measures and "approximation of legislation and procedures in customs, trade and trans-boundary management" between conflicting parties (EUBAM, 2020). Similarly, the EUMM works to prevent a return to hostilities through means of confidence building and around-the-clock monitoring presence (EUMM, 2020). The EUAM, in turn, assists authorities toward "a sustainable reform of the civilian security sector (…) based on EU standards of good governance" (EUAM, 2020). These thus "play an important role (…) as regards preventing further crisis from developing" and illustrate the EU tying the resolution of traditional military conflict to non-traditional areas of security (EEAS, 2018b; Kirchner & Sperling, 2018). The activities of these missions are supported by the panel on cooperation in the area of CSDP within the platform on democracy, good governance and stability (EEAS, 2016b). This evidences the EaP as a supportive means for governing security by combining "democratic reform, regional cooperation and development" with "more direct involvement in crisis management" (Freire & Simão, 2013).

The security concept built into the EaP does indeed imply strengthening the institutional structures that enable partners to withstand and recover from internal and external crisis (Moga & Dîrdală, 2019). The EU provides financial support for driving governance reforms via programmes on "decentralization, the rule of law, public administration reform and anti-corruption" as well as training of "civil servants, judges, prosecutors, police investigators and public defenders" by means of Twinning projects "which bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and the beneficiary countries" (European Commission, 2017b; European Commission, 2020e). The Structured Consultation on the future of the EaP published in March 2020 report, among others, the development of public administration reform strategies by Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia, the setting up of a High Anti-Corruption Court in Ukraine and strengthened critical infrastructure for addressing hybrid threats in all EaP countries. Kobzova (2015) emphasizes the correlation between political corruption, the consumption of state resources and the weakened ability of countries to defend themselves. The above institution-building activities thus illustrate the EaP functioning as an

[12] The 5+2 format aims for conflict settlement "based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders. It involves Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE, Moldova, Transnistria, the United states and the EU (OSCE, 2019).

[13] Confidence building entails building cooperation between law enforcing organizations on both sides of the administrative boundary lines between EaP countries and their disputed territories (EUMM, 2020).

instrument for addressing a series of structural challenges which threaten to "undermine the stability" of partner countries and "disrupt societal peace and territorial cohesion" (Moga & Dîrdală, 2019). The development of resilience for managing security-related weak spots "through approximation with EU templates", in turn, reinforces the idea of the EU's understanding of 'secure' mirroring its own institutional arrangements (Petrova & Delcour, 2019).

The EaP further works towards strengthened security dialogue and practical CSDP cooperation. It enables partner states to participate in EU-led CSDP missions: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have committed personnel to CSDP civilian and military operations. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova emphasizes participation in CSDP mission as not just "an important aspect for the development of bilateral political relations", but also as a factor indirectly contributing to increasing "the level of security of [the Moldovan] state on the European continent" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, 2020). Similarly, as stressed by the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, practical security cooperation with the EU enhances experience gaining and "the interoperability of the Georgian defense forces" (Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2020). In other words, participation in EU-led CSDP operations provides to partners increased opportunities for training and capacity building which prepare them to better respond to domestic security challenges. Beyond the acquisition of operational experience, one can assume the above to also enable partners to "raise their international profile through constructive crisis management roles where national security interests are not necessarily at stake": this bolsters institutional legitimacy and sends a signal to potential external aggressors (Tardy, 2015).

Indeed, the risk of external pressure in its military and political sense alike remains a challenge to all EaP partners. Prior to the launch of the EaP, the European Council stated in its extraordinary meeting "that the EU considers it more necessary than ever to support regional cooperation and step up relations with Eastern neighbors". This, in turn, in response to a series of tensions[14] in which Russia constituted a key factor (Peters et al., 2009). Rinnert (2011) rightly notes that Russia continues to have a dominant impact on the national security of *all* EaP parter states, pursuing a range of strategies to counter their pro-EU involvement. Examples of Russian pressure include misuse of energy pricing, military cooperation for security guarantees and the "instrumentalization of protracted conflicts"

[14] In addition to the Russo-Georgian War, I refer here also to the 2009 gas wars between Russia and Ukraine which endangered the energy security of the EU. With respect to the research objective as outlined in chapter one and the main point of departure in territorial conflict, this is not elaborated in detail.

(Füle, 2013). The EaP multilateral track enables "cooperation and encouragement of direct links between partners" despite differences in "foreign policy priorities and existing territorial disputes": it "promotes dialogue (…) and builds bridges between" not only the EU and its neighbors, but also among the neighbors themselves (Valiyeva, 2016; European Commission, 2020b). Therefore, the EaP in its multilateral dimension further constitutes a tool for expanding relations to and between neighbors *without* Russian interference. In this sense, it serves as a proxy and reinforces "each country's right to choose its future freely" in the absence of Russian political, economic or military pressure (Rinnert, 2011; EUGS, 2016).

6.1.2 Bilateral Engagement and Differentiated Security Guarantees

While the above outlines the EaP functioning as an inclusive security framework, each partner is indeed "free to choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in its [bilateral] relations with the EU" (EEAS, 2019a). In this context, one can distinguish between Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on the one hand, and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus on the other. Where the former are "interested in closer integration with the EU" and thus are more open to EU influence, the latter have opted for alternative, less sophisticated integration schemes, leaving the EU with less scope for action. The highest level of integration in an EaP context remain the AAs: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have "accepted the full package of EU demand spelled out in the AAs", despite the costs involved (Kobzova, 2015).

It is interesting to note that the AAs go beyond pure political and economic objectives and reflect a security element. The EU-Georgia AA, which entered into force in 2016, emphasizes "the importance of commitment of Georgia to reconciliation and its efforts to restore its territorial integrity" and, in turn, the "EU's commitment to support a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict" (EU, 2014a). Similarly, the EU-Ukraine AA, in force since 2017, expresses the commitment of both parties to "promote the independence, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders" (EU, 2014b). Khuntsaria (2014) notes that consistent EU support for territorial sovereignty and the non-recognition of disputed territory is vital for partner countries not only "in their diplomatic efforts to resolve [these] conflicts", but also in managing their relationship with Russia. The EU-Georgia AA serves as a reminder to Russia of "the importance of pursuing the implementation of the 2008 six-point

agreement[15]": this, along with the activities of the EUMM, provides Georgia with a set of diplomatic instruments with which it may confront Russian aggression. Likewise, the EU undertaking soft security measures in Ukraine enables counterbalancing Russian interests without direct confrontation by "improving the resilience of the Ukrainian state" and "showing political support to [its] government and people" (Nováky, 2015).

The above illustrates the EU pursuing a strategy of long-term engagement to conflict resolution: one can therefore argue that the AAs inherent to the EaP constitute supplementary indirect frameworks for security governance in that "closer association with the EU creates stronger guarantees" for political security and territorial integrity (Rinnert, 2011). Closer association, in turn, requires cooperation between the EU and EaP partner states in a "common framework of mutual assistance, values, interests and solidarity" (European Parliament, 2014). This then reflects the normative/responsibility security logic identified in chapter five, implying "equality between the referents of security" and "a common interest and commitment to ensure that security challenges" are adequately addressed "in the context of the security objectives identified by both sides" (Christou, 2010).

It is, however, worth noting that the AAs operate according to conditionality via the 'more-for-more' principle, where the availability of EU financial support is tied "to the implementation of partner countries' reform agendas" (Schnellbach, 2014). To illustrate, the EU-Georgia AA stresses the "commitment of Georgia to developing its administrative and institutional infrastructure" and "to progressively approximating its legislation in relevant sectors with that of the EU" (EU, 2014a). The EU-Ukraine AA too highlights the importance of Ukraine's commitment to "building a deep and sustainable democracy" and "ensuring respect for common values" through "convergence with the EU in political, economic and legal areas" (EU, 2014b). Reflecting further the security-governance nexus identified in chapter five, this suggests that the extent to which the EU engages as a soft security actor beyond the EaP multilateral track depends first and foremost on the willingness of partners to conform.

[15] The six-point ceasefire agreement was brokered by the EU in August 2008 and signed by the Russia and Georgia in the context of the Russo-Georgian war. Led by French president Nicolas Sarkoszy under the French EU presidency, it put an end to hostilities between conflicting parties (EUMM, 2020).

Here, it is worth recalling the EU's threat/risk security logic whereby a 'security boundary' implying "the presence or absence of violence (…) and liberal values" as markers for an inter-subjective dividing line is discursively drawn (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). The emphasis on alignment with EU standards of governance incorporated into the AAs demonstrate in practice the implications of this: rather than "a common European security space", the EU on the inside and the neighborhood on the outside "is more clearly defined". This, in turn, implies "an asymmetrical relationship and the imposition of EU norms and values" through a "hierarchical development model" in order to address what the EU has "identified as a threat to itself" (Christou, 2010).

6.2 The EaP: An Instrument for *In*security?

Key to securitization theory is the idea that articulating security "produces a specific threatening state of affairs" (Balzacq, 2005). This thesis takes its point of departure in the EU's securitization of its Eastern neighborhood and explores how its security practices unfold in a real-life context. It should be noted that the real-life context in which the EaP operates is not limited to EU's neighborhood: it constitutes the *shared* neighborhood of the EU and Russia. It is worth recalling that the extent to which actors perceive something as threatening is to a large extent rooted in historical myths: challenging these can be presented as threatening to the survival of a nation or a community. Indeed, in addition to serving as "a facilitating condition of securitization", historical context itself can "be the referent object of securitization" (Jutila, 2015).

Dias (2013) notes that to the Russian political elite, the EaP is perceived as a means for the EU to intervene in "what it constructs as its own sphere of influence". The gradual integration of the countries in the 'shared' neighborhood as facilitated by the EaP "provides impetus for Russia's expansionist appetite", in turn endangering the political independence and territorial integrity of partner states (Khuntsaria, 2014). To illustrate, Russia has implicitly conditioned its support for a political settlement of the conflict in Ukraine to a suspension of the EU-Ukraine AA (Cadier, 2015). Further, it has provided "political and economic support for authoritarian regimes in the region" and, importantly, utilized the protracted conflicts in the neighborhood, all of which rely on Russian support, as a means to control the European aspirations of the EaP countries. This shift in regional policy in response to the perceived "risk that post-Soviet countries would join Western political and economic structures" reflects an alternative securitization process whereby Russia establishes an understanding of the EU and its EaP as threatening and subsequently mobilizes a series of counter-

responses. This, in turn, adds complexity to the EU's attempts to address the threats stemming from weak governance, political instability and regional conflict (Christou, 2010). Seen in this light, one can argue the EaP to endanger the security of all parties involved.

6.2.1 Whose Sphere of Influence?

Russia considers the countries in the shared neighborhood as "a sphere of privileged interest" directly linked "to its own internal development and international projecting" (Dias, 2013). Seen through these lenses, the EaP constitutes a threat to Russian security and identity (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016). The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of an era in which "Western soft power was as its zenith in Eastern Europe" as evidenced by the "acceptance and institutionalization of a new European ethos" in many of the newly independent states (Slobodchikoff & Davis, 2017). The launch of the EaP in particular provided impetus for fostering integration between the EU and partner states around a body of common shared values. While the EU narrative emphasizes "the voluntary nature of the approximation of these countries to the EU political, social and economic model of development", it was denounced by Russia as "a rollback policy aimed at undermining [its] position and influence in the region" (Frear & Kearns, 2017). It should be noted that the EaP, although both reflecting and further enabling processes of securitization, is *not* officially a security policy. It illustrates the EU bringing together different strands of policy as enabled by the Lisbon Treaty, but it remains separate from the CFSP/CSDP and its activity "consists mainly in providing technical assistance on administrative reforms". Understanding how Russia came to characterize the EU as a security threat thus requires taking into account "the prisms through which Russian policy-makers perceive regional politics" (Kotkin, 2016).

6.2.1.1 An Introduction to Russian Foreign Policy

Kotkin (2016) identifies three main drivers of Russian foreign policy, emphasizing first the assumption of Russian elites "that their country's status and survival" depends "on matching the West". Russians, he notes, "have always had an abiding sense of living in a providential country with a special mission": this attitude can be traced back to Byzantium, which Russia "claims as an inheritance". While this sense of exceptionalism has "furnishes Russia's people and leaders with pride", it has also fueled "resentment toward the West for supposedly underappreciating [its] uniqueness and importance" (Tsygankov, 2010). Second, Russia's has been "buffered throughout history by often turbulent developments" in neighboring regions, resulting in a permanent feeling of

vulnerability. For this same reason, Russian security has "traditionally been (…) predicated on moving outward in the name of preempting external attack". This requires a powerful state. In other words, Russia understands a strong state willing and able to "act aggressively in its own interest" to constitute the sole guarantor for security and domestic order (Kotkin, 2016).

While the EU's security concept is to a large extent "focused on cooperation, shared values, responsibilities and mutual respect among nations", Russia defines security as the absolute "absence of danger" in a zero-sum way (Forss, 2009). It frames international relations, including its neighborhood, in terms of "fierce competition and spheres of influence" in an arena of "uncompromising (…) struggle for domination" (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016). With the EaP, the EU attempts to create 'a ring of friends' that is to respect EU values through organizing "a cooperation, security, stability and prosperity area" (Costea, 2011). Similarly, Russia aims to establish a 'belt of good neighborliness' to "prevent an anti-Russian bloc from penetrating its borders". From a Russian security logical perspective, therefore, the EaP constitutes "a divisive initiative forcing countries to choose between the EU and Russia" (Cadier, 2015).

6.2.2 Expanding the EU Model: A Threat to Russian Security

The EaP "relies on conditionality and incentives" aimed at "transforming the EU's periphery by exporting its internal model" (Lavenex & Wichmann, 2009). In economic terms, changing trade structures in partner countries poses a threat to Russian interests: the "greater degree of regulation of the public sphere" challenges "the Russian economic model (…) centered on opacity and patronage" (Frear & Kearns, 2017). The EU thus constitutes a geoeconomic competitor, the EaP an instrument in this struggle (Cadier, 2015). Further, recalling Russian national identity to be grounded in its Slavic roots and the exceptionalism introduced above, Russia claims "an interest in ethnic Russians or Russian speakers abroad", contributing to a sense of "historical entitlement in the territories of the former USSR (…) to which Western institutions and their 'interference' represent a challenge" (Slobodchikoff & Davis, 2017; Frear & Kearns, 2017). For this reason, the EaP poses a geocultural threat to Russia's "dominant identity" associated with "an imagined community based on the markers of the Russian language, culture and a common glorious past" (Feklyunina, 2015). Finally, the EaP can be seen as a securitization outcome strongly embedded in historical experience. The countries that pushed for this initiative, Poland first and foremost, with the support of other CEE countries and, finally, Sweden, "are among those countries most critical of Russia" (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016).

To these, therefore, the EaP functions as a means "to counter Russian influence at their border": it comes to function as an instrument for defense. The above factors combined thus add to Russia's rejection of "what it perceives as unwanted Western hegemony over the norms and values [guiding] the pan-European order" as built on the standards of the EU itself (Kobzova, 2015).

Forss (2009) notes that Russia feels secure "only when everybody else, particularly those around its borders, feel insecure". Its understanding of the EaP sheds light on its "objectives and perceptions about the region" and reflects "its desire for Western recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in the former Soviet space" (Kotkin, 2016). Here, it is worth recalling the notion of ontological security: it occurs in the absence of external anxieties and dangers to a nation or a group and when identity and autonomy are never threatened. Insecurity, then, arises with the attempts "to deal with external anxieties and dangers" and when "identity and autonomy are in question" (Kinnval et al., 2018). Securitization refers to a process whereby "an actor makes a claim that [an] object, deemed worthy of survival, is existentially threatened" and "justifies the use of extraordinary measures to counter the threat" (Does, 2013). The above therefore implies a securitization process whereby the EU and the EaP come to be constructed as threats to Russian ontological security; its use of military and other forms of force projection to secure its foothold in the region illustrate attempts to deal with this insecurity (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016).

6.2.3 Governing Security through the EaP: Change or Continuity?

The above suggests the EaP to have resulted in an ontological security dilemma between the EU and Russia, where one actor's behavior "aimed at enhancing the continuity of its political community" and identity threatens that of the other (Akchurina & Della Sala, 2018). The EU's impact within the EaP regional security space goes beyond the two-way relation between the EU and partner states: it is constrained by a Russian security narrative and "governance practices aimed at retaining the [region] within its sphere of influence" (Christou & Croft, 2014). The EaP reflects an EU understanding that exporting values through "technocratic joint solutions to political problems" is "central to achieving (…) a united and peaceful continent" (EUGS, 2016). This collides with Russian preferences for "military presence, managed instability and coercion" (Wilson & Popescu, 2019).

The Ukraine crisis "exposed the clash of [EU] and [Russian] goals in the shared neighborhood" and "highlighted the limitations of the EU's confrontation averse and technocratic approach" to governing

security (Raik & Saari, 2016). The EU discursively presents Russia as having violated the European security order in Ukraine: even those Member States "willing to overlook the earlier conflict in Georgia" as a complicated situation have since joined this view (Frear & Kearns, 2017). The 2015 Riga Summit emphasized a series of new challenges among which Russia is labelled a source of instability; the departure from the ontologically 'secure' EU was reinforced in the 2015 review of the ENP and consolidated in the 2016 EUGS. This combined introduced a narrative of the EU's unsettled self and resulted in the "political (…) and security stabilization of the neighborhood" increasingly becoming "a main political priority for the EU" (European Commission, 2015; Johansson-Nogués, 2018).

The EaP beyond 2020 too emphasizes the need for a strengthened security dimension. It highlights the existence of new threats which "present new challenges" and require "a coordinated response". It does, however, hold that "good governance should remain cornerstone of the EaP" and that the principle of conditionality is important for improving results (European Commission, 2020d). Therefore, although the EU's post-2014 discourse points to intensified turbulence and indicates a strengthened strategic character to EU actorness on problems affecting the neighborhood, its practical approach to exerting such actorness and thus to governing security through the EaP consistently reflects continuity rather than change.

6.2.3.1 The EU Snoozes, the EU Loses

The EaP works towards the empowerment of partners "to prevent and manage crisis alongside the EU on a range of security issues" through a long-term process of integration and cooperation (European Commission, 2015). The diffusion of EU norms and rules at its periphery reflects a process of europeanization designed to ensure the participation of partner states in "the realization of its internal security project" (Lavenex & Wichmann, 2009). It should be noted that the Eastern partners are divided both politically and mentally "when it comes to their place in Europe" (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016). Partners such as Armenia and Azerbaijan, for instance, view collaboration with the EU mostly through the lenses of "their varied foreign policy strategies" and "not as blueprints for domestic reform and democratic transformation" (Kobzova, 2015). Insisting on the expansion of the EU institutional and legal order through multilateral and bilateral engagement reflects an inadequate "response to the needs and interests" of individual countries, resulting in the EaP being "unlikely to find legitimation in the neighborhood" (Korosteleva, 2011).

On the other hand, for countries such as Ukraine and Georgia, whose "European aspirations and (…) European choice" the EU does indeed acknowledge and welcome, the lack of membership perspective and the conditionality tied to support for "political stabilization [and] reform" results in failure to "fully embrace the societal change (…) that would bring it closer to the EU" (EU, 2014b; Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016). Bosse (2009) draws attention to the the contradictory objectives of the EaP: these "undermine the EU's credibility" in that its "idealist values (…) collide with the goals of protecting" its own interests. Indeed, interviewee four defines the EaP as "a doubled standard policy" and emphasizes an understanding of the EU's main goal being to modernize the neighborhood according to its own vision "in order to have predictable partners on its borders". The EaP, he argues, "does not provide neither security, nor guarantees and even low financial perspectives" in that "the financial assistance is ill-defined and comes with many conditions", finally adding that "if the EU is sincere about its policy, it should understand that [the EaP] – this support – is not enough" (Interview 4).

To illustrate, Georgia, for instance, despite having distinguished itself within the EaP "by pushing ahead (…) with a radical reform agenda" and proactively attempting to enhance its security by rebuilding its state institutions", remains vulnerable to Russian pressure through its separatist regions (Emerson, 2016; Kobzova, 2015). The EaP foresees the creation of a resilient and thus secure neighborhood through "reform of domestic structures following EU templates". However, the inadequate transformation-incentives offered and the "limits of political conditionality" combined with existing "internal political weakness in partner states" inhibit such resilience-building (Petrova & Delcour, 2019; Valiyeva, 2016). The above suggests the binary normative/responsibility vs. threat/risk security logics pursued through the EaP to result in the EU "shielding and protecting itself behind policies that undercut its transformative potential" rather than offering "the full benefits of freedom and interaction" (Christou, 2010). It further implies that in order for the EU to have "a better connection with the realities in the region", it should pay attention "to practical and immediate security threats and needs" (Tkeshelashvili, 2015).

In this context, Simão (2016) argues that the prescription of long-term technocratic solutions may fail to "provide short-term incentives towards peace" and security. Interestingly, however, Russia's securitization of what it considers its sphere of influence and its "methods, principles and processes" for achieving this has, in a sense, enabled it to do so (Christou & Croft, 2014). In Armenia, for instance, Russia plays a key role in domestic security, particularly in regards to the Nagorno-

Karabakh conflict with neighboring country Azerbaijan (Grigoryan, 2014). Although the Azerbaijani armed forces are twice as big as those of Armenia, Russian support and the stationing of military troops on Armenian territory grants the latter "superiority over any adversary in some specific areas" (German, 2012). In 2013, Armenia withdrew from signing the EU-Armenia AA in response to Russian threats to, among others, cancel security guarantees. The EaP itself does not include *explicit* conflict resolution mechanisms but aims to indirectly "provide an appropriate environment for their settlement through promoting democracy [and] cooperation" as well as and in support of CFSP/CSDP action where applicable. While Armenia's rejection of the AA and integration into the Euroasian Economic Union[16] safeguarded its *short*-term security, it also made it "more open to Russian pressure", curtailing its ability "to make sovereign choices" in the *long* term (Kobzova, 2015). Thus, EU reluctance to directly involve itself in the settlement of conflict contrasted with "Russian military presence in the region (…) limits its [security] projection capacity" and discourages partners from pursuing long-term political and economic integration (Valiyeva, 2016).

The above arguments combined suggest the EaP to have resulted in an integration dilemma, leaving partners between "the choice to further integrate into the geopolitical space of the West" or that of Russia (Interview 4). Indeed, cutting gas supplies or deploying troops to conflicted areas "sends a strong signal to all of Russia's neighbors, including its allies" (Wilson & Popescu, 2019). Further, while succumbing to Russian influence may be "far from appealing to partners that value the EU model of governance", pursuing closer integration with the EU is made complicated by the permanence of political practices that limit the resources needed for state-building. This, in turn opens the door for Russian influence and pressure, indicating a vicious cycle (Christou, 2010; Kobzova, 2015). The EaP is founded on "ownership, responsibility and mutual accountability": it emphasizes the impediment of conflict to cooperative and institution-building activities and vice versa. While strengthening institutions does indeed need to be accompanied by political will, the very question of ability too remains relevant. The above results in a situation where even those partners willing to undertake necessary reform may be left unable to do so. In this sense, the EaP therefore does not imply meaningful security governance in that 1) it does not foresee the adequate integration of partner states into EU security structures and 2) it also does not sufficiently transform partners into strong, democratic states able to rely on their own forces to counter external threat.

[16] The Euroasian Economic Union (2015) is an economic union between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Armenia. It promises to "replicate the security and economic prosperity of the EU in the post-Soviet space". AAs with the EU are exclusionary to Euroasian Economic Union participation (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

Finally, referring to Belarus becomes relevant: it remains the only country in the region which does face immediate issues relating to territorial integrity. Curiously, it also has "institutionally the weakest relationship with the EU" and is the only partner to participate only in the EaP multilateral framework (Secrieru & Saari, 2019). The discussion presented above indicate Russian use of military, economic and other methods in the EaP space to form part of a strategy aimed at dissuading neighbors "from pursuing closer integration with the EU" in response to what Russia perceives as a threat to its own interests (Galeotti, 2017). Although the Ukraine crisis resulted in the Belarussian government "strengthening the European vector in its foreign policy" and pursuing "a more independent course of action", Belarus is perceived in Moscow as an ally (Secrieru & Saari, 2019). Kobzova (2015) notes that "Belarus' dependence on Russia is such that any sharp rupture in relations would cost [its] economy and security (…) more than it has cost Ukraine". This then raises the question of whether loyalty towards and (re)integration with Russia constitutes a viable security guarantee, at least if the countries in the neighborhood wish to ensure full control of their territorial sovereignty (Interview 4).

With the above in mind, one can argue the nature of the EaP in its current format to multipartite insecurity rather than security. First, its very existence comes to constitute a threat to Russian security. This is illustrated by Russian support for separatist movements in the region, its implementation of pressure campaigns "against Western-oriented governments" and its "mix of political warfare and more direct efforts", all of which have intensified in response to the EaP. This, along with the binary security logics pursued through the EaP, limits EU efforts at shaping the neighborhood according to "its vision and order" under the banner of democracy and good governance. It prevents the EU from strengthening sovereign structures in partner states and, thus, ensuring "its own security and survival" (Interview 4; Valiyeva, 2016). The EaP as a means for security governance derives from a dynamic securitization process in which the Eastern neighborhood constitutes a key dependent variable. The EU's inability to adequately navigate through the tensions emerging from its real-life application, however, further endangers the security of the EU and partner states alike.

6.2.4 Beyond Security in the Eastern Neighborhood

The shared neighborhood between the EU and Russia has been "a parcel of the deterioration of relations" between the two, forcing the EU to "address the unintended geopolitical implications of its EaP policy" (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016; Raik & Saari, 2016). To this end, it is worth noting that the implications of Russia's securitization of the EaP as an "attempt to weaken [its] great power" go

beyond promoting instability in the neighborhood (Valiyeva, 2016). As noted by Galeotti (2017), Russia "carries out and encourages active measures" *in* the EU "to destabilize (…) governments and societies" and create a more conducive environment for itself. These measures involve a wide range of actors and are largely determined "by the correlation between the strength of countries' national institutions" and their vulnerability to Russian influence as based on "economic dependency and shared culture and history".

In Bulgaria, for instance, Russia draws "on shared religious faith" or "plays up its historical role as a defender" with reference to the Ottoman Empire (Galeotti, 2017). In countries where institutions are strong and dependence on Russia low, the information-aspect is significant and "directly targets the general publics and political elites" (Popescu, 2015). Examples include Russian moral and financial support for Eurosceptic political parties, Russia-linked cyber-hackers infiltrating elections in a number of EU countries and transmissions of 'fake news' by Russian media presenting the West as hypocritical and in crisis (Polyakova & Boyer, 2018). The aim, in turn, is to "spin a narrative, discredit democratic institutions and values" so as to put into question countries' "support for Western policies and institutions" (Chivvis, 2017). Finally, countries characterized by hostility are exploited "as negative examples (…) and warnings to others". Here, one can note "the continued threats embodied in Russian military exercises" in the Baltic sea, serving as "a proxy for all of the West" (Galeotti, 2017). The interdependence between EU security and that of its neighborhood has been placed in sharp focus, particularly since 2014 (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). The above arguments combined, however, suggests that the EaP, advocating a "step-change in relations" with the Eastern neighbors as based on pan-European solidarity has, in a sense, contributed to the creation of new inter-*and* intra-European dividing lines (European Commission, 2008b; Valiyeva, 2016).

7 Concluding Remarks

This thesis explores how the EU governs security in its Eastern neighborhood. Reflecting a combined internalist and externalist approach, it takes its point of departure in securitization theory to uncover the processes by which the EU frames its neighborhood in security terms, including how this is reflected and put into practice through the EaP. Securitization entails the continuous social (re)definition of security in social settings: it foresees the emergence and management of threat as "shaped by the actions" of securitizing actors that "link together social constructions of threat with socially acceptable governance or policy measures" (Lucarelli, 2019). The EU's security discourse reflects a sense of self derived from past trajectories which seeks to define *what* the EU is and *where* it is going (Akchurina & Della Sala, 2018). The findings document the emergence of a double security narrative from the EU's securitization of its neighborhood. Where one reflects a "self-conceptualization as a peace project with a mission to spread its values", the other stresses discourses of threat (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Both, in turn, point towards an ontological security rooted in certain values, habits and routines which enable the EU to act in the face of uncertainty (Kinnval et al., 2018).

The 1991 end of the East-West divide resulted in the EU becoming "a driving force for a stable wider Europe", contributing in turn to a self-perception as an ideal type security community in a new regional security order with reference to which EU security developments can be understood (Ekengren, 2008). The ESS and the EUGS constitute the concrete frameworks outlining the modes whereby the EU as an entity can pursue its external security priorities. Through a comparative analysis of the two, this thesis has identified a switch in EU security thinking. Where the former discursively highlights the existence of insecurity *in* the Eastern neighborhood, reflecting a clear inside-out distinction of a secure EU 'self' and an insecure neighborhood 'other', the latter marks a departure from the idea of threat being confined by the EU's external borders (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). Contemporary EU security objectives toward the region indicate a direct relation between neighborhood (in)security and EU (in)security: the securitization process traced in this thesis reflects an understanding of the EU's post-Cold War, post-enlargement ontological security as in crisis.

The EaP itself was launched in 2009 and can be regarded as a direct product of a contextually and historically situated securitization process conducted primarily by Poland and which reflects the broader geopolitical priorities of the acceding countries of the 2004 enlargement concerning the

neighborhood (Roth, 2011). In this sense, the EaP goes beyond considerations on geographical borders in organizing the European space and evinces an expanded geopolitical outlook, including "a high sense of strategic vulnerability vis-à-vis Russia" (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Indeed, while "discursive practices are important in explaining how security problems originate", these too can "develop with little if any discursive design" (Simão & Dias, 2016). The Russo-Georgian war served as an external facilitating condition in the socialization among EU Member States that a neighborhood-specific policy *beyond* the ENP was needed: this, along with Polish efforts, contributed to changing conceptions with regards to 'Eastern neighborhood'. Nonetheless, Russia remained to the majority of 'old' Member States first and foremost a partner for strategic cooperation.

The 2014 annexation of Crimea made it clear that Russia presents a genuine political and military threat to all of Europe. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in 2017 that the initial failure of the EU to "respond to Russia's drive for domination over ex-Soviet territories" revealed a significant weakness, "led to war in Ukraine" and "ultimately undermined Europe's security architecture". Indeed, as shown in chapter five, the main security threat "as understood in Warsaw coming from the East comes from Russia": that understanding too was present in the 1990's and in the 2000's, and is now more present than ever (Interview 3). The extent to which the EaP functions as an instrument for governing internal and external security, and with respect to what threats, therefore is context-dependent. This reinforces the interpretivist acknowledgement of how past and present experiences shape meaning and how "the broader social context impinges on those meninges" (Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In practice, the EaP forms a channel with which the EU can export its internal stability and security model to its neighborhood. In its multilateral dimension, it reflects inclusiveness and serves interests with various orientations. It contributes to intra-and inter regional integration to foster resilience against external threat through technical assistance and in support of on-site missions in a climate of cooperation and good neighborliness (European Parliament, 2014). Its bilateral dimension reflects differentiation and provides those partners willing and able with extensive political dialogue, enhanced practical security cooperation and increased financial, institutional and, importantly, moral support. In this sense, the EaP can be regarded as a *supportive* soft security policy driven by the "tools of political integration and persuasion" and with which the EU can provide guarantees and contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflict without explicitly confronting military threat (Dannreuther,

2006). Underpinning EaP multilateral and bilateral cooperation, however, is commitment to the governance norms upon which the EU is founded. Indeed, the EaP aims to "advance political association and economic integration" through reform based on alignment with EU legislation: the resulting europeanization of the neighborhood enhances EU internal security and ensures its geopolitical and economic interests. The EaP thus entails the transformation of the neighborhood into an environment corresponding to the EU's own security concerns and its need to preserve a stable sense of self.

With the above in mind, therefore, one can assume the EaP to function as a means for the EU to govern its *ontological* security in *and* through the neighborhood, dependent first and foremost on the "habits of interaction among members" which enable shared interpretations of the uncertainty of the world (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). The EU has historically overcome insecurity through shared identities and reciprocity among states; an important constituent of common identity is a shared "perception of the same external 'other' as a threat" (Matonyté & Morkevičius, 2009). The EaP thus reflects an external continuation of the EU's ideational approach to governing internal security through emulating norms and values which shape conceptions and ideas. This, in turn, as grounded in "essentialized differences between two spatial markers" – Europe and the 'East' (Makarychev, 2014). The uncertainty in question has been progressively specified with each EaP review and reinforces the interpretivist idea of reality being in a state of flux. With respect to the parallel securitization process conducted by Poland and its gradual convergence with that of the EU, the EaP as an instrument for security governance implies a negotiable definition of threat shaped by the broader historical and geopolitical context in which it conceives and operates.

To this end, it should be noted that narratives constructing ontological security may increase ontological insecurity in others. Contemporary EU-Russia relations in the region reflect a security dilemma where one actor's security gains threaten the other's (Jervis, 2001). The EU's projection of its foundational narrative as a universal basis "for promoting democracy (…) and resolving conflicts" has provoked a sharp response from Russia which has further "fueled the security deficit in the region" (Laïdi, 2008; Secrieru & Saari, 2019). Its reaction to EU 'expansion' into its sphere of interest goes *beyond* impact in the neighborhood and seeks to also challenge the ability of EU Member States to "uphold the ontological reference points" that relate to the practices underpinning the EU security community (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). While this has led to a sense of internal vulnerability, the

EU's commitment to the idea of the neighborhood as *wanting* and *needing* stabilization through EU values and technocratic solutions indicates an inability, or unwillingness, to answer the regional security challenges of the twenty-first century.

The EaP must be actively utilized by partner states. The EU's double security logics towards its neighborhood have, to an extent, resulted in EaP partners finding themselves in an integration dilemma between two geopolitical actors. The absence of a defined balance between EU interests, i.e. ensuring its *own* security and survival, and its normative 'desire' to spread its values psychologically and practically inhibits attempts at and approaches to solving regional conflicts, promoting political stability and, thus, effectively governing security (Valiyeva, 2016). There appears to be a capability-expectations gap between the EU's securitization as reflected by the increasingly strategic discourse and progressive outline of means to realize this in the documents governing the EaP, and their real-life effect.

7.1 Completing the Abductive Cycle: Rethinking Securitization Theory

This research was motivated by the observation that despite ten years of existence and several reviews, the EaP has failed to significantly promote security in the neighborhood. Its implementation was accelerated by the outbreak of armed conflict in Georgia: it set out to reach peaceful resolutions to existing conflicts and enhance political stability through democratic state-building. Nonetheless, the EU's Eastern neighborhood has experienced a gradual deterioration in regional security, including with respect to territorial integrity. As introduced in chapter three, various strands of securitization theory coexist. Some are particularly focused on context and power relations, including how these elements affect securitization processes and the relational dynamics between securitizing actors and functional actors, i.e. audiences. Given the emphasis on precisely power and context, it is curious to note the lack of attention devoted to studying the implications of securitization on the dynamics *beyond* securitizing actors and audiences.

Securitization implies a dual relationship between referent objects and "problems or conditions that (…) are described as threats" to these (Zakopalová, 2012). This thesis has identified a process whereby the EU simultaneously sets out to protect *and* manage its neighborhood as part of a strategy to enhance its ontological security according to path-dependent perceptions of the security concept. This creates an asymmetric power relation and establishes a governance hierarchy where the transfer

of norms for promoting and governing what the EU understands by 'security' is entirely one-sided. Becoming a referent object is not a voluntary process. Investigating the implications of this could help explain policy shortcomings, particularly with respect to those countries that appear more reluctant to pursue a closer relationship with the EU and thus 'benefit' from its security governance.

To this end, I would suggest to also expand the securitizing framework to cover the implications of securitization *beyond* the relationship between securitizing actors, audiences, and referent objects. The analysis has shown that Russia has dynamically emerged as a direct threat to Europe as a whole: this, however, can be attributed in part to the EU's securitization in the first place. While the proposal to launch the EaP was indeed marked by security concerns relating to Russia as an antagonizing regional actor, these were to a large extent historically defined. Upon its launch, and despite the mechanisms behind its accelerated launch, the EaP did *not* specify Russia as a threat. The conclusions drawn show that the EU's capacity to "sustain itself as a meaningful entity in the neighborhood" is largely determined by the development of EU-Russia relations: Russian regional policy impacts directly of the functioning of the EaP, its security governance potential here comprised (Raik & Saari, 2016). Third parties such as Russia therefore can constitute a different type of actor with significant implications for securitization processes. These are not functional actors/audiences because their consent is not needed for successful securitization, nor are they referent objects. However, they may impact on the real-life *effect* of securitization processes once concluded.

Russia views itself as bound to the EaP region by civilizational ties, its international role embedded directly "in the structure of its relations with post-Soviet states". The way the EU and Russia relate to each other in the region sheds light on the different normative bases from which they construct the world and illustrates a collision between two visions of the European security order (Akchurina & Della Sala, 2018; Raik, 2017). Thus, recalling the importance of social context for determining how security is perceived and practiced, taking into account the role of such *contravening* actors is relevant. In addition to their *ex post* consequences for securitization processes, these may impact *ex ante* in that their implications may be considered 1) by securitizing actors as they conduct a securitization act and 2) by audiences as these accept the securitization act and agree to the mobilization of countermeasures.

The EaP constitutes a single, coherent framework for interaction between the EU and its Eastern neighbors. The above take on securitization theory presents a possible explanation for the EU's reluctance to implementing a clearer and more comprehensive security dimension to the EaP despite an increasingly turbulent regional security environment: the confliction around the acknowledgement that further strategic engagement through the EaP could be perceived in Moscow as a definite crossing of a 'red line', triggering a stronger Russian counter-reaction and, potentially, the fear that the EU, confined ontologically by its value-based power projection concepts in the region, still would not be able to respond adequately. The above then reflects the abductive approach taken to this research and proposes an explanation for the recognition of a surprising observation in the light of existing theory (Timmermanns & Tavory, 2012).

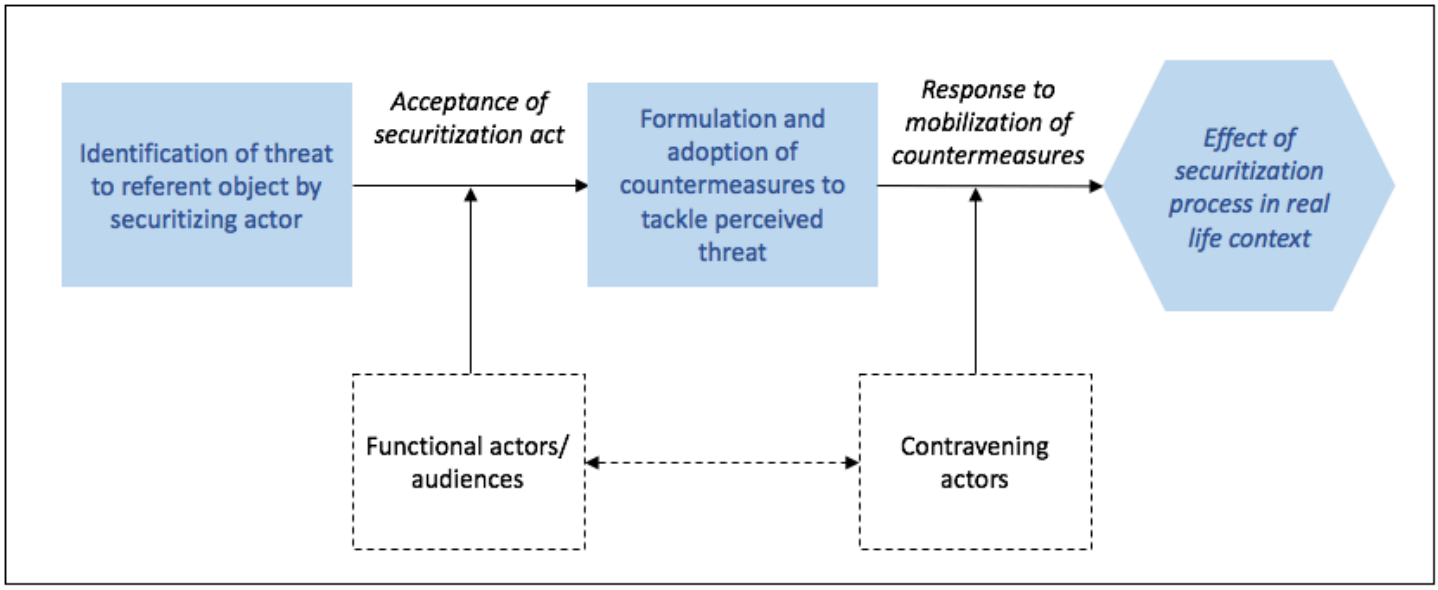

Figure 5. The points of interference of contravening actors in the securitization process

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A

Transcription of interview one, conducted via Skype 5 November 2019

Respondent (R): Hello!

Interviewer (I): Hello.

R: Hi Siri, now is a good time to talk!

I: Great! Nice to meet you, and thank you very much for allowing me to interview you for my Master thesis. First of all, before we start, is it okay with you if I record the sound of this interview?

R: Yes, it's okay.

I: Perfect.

R: Let me warn you that I have approximately half an hour, so let's try to move fast. And I will recommend you also a couple of publications of mine which deal with the same topic, so I will provide you with these links afterwards.

I: That would be super, thank you! So, as I briefly explained, I am looking to investigate how the EaP functions as an instrument for the EU to consolidate its role as a security actor in the Eastern Neighborhood. Before you begin, would you like to briefly introduce yourself and your work?

R: (…)[17] I have worked on different aspects of European Union foreign policy, also on the Eastern Partnership in the past.

I: Super, thank you. I have four overall themes and a few question for each. To begin with: the EU is a value based security community, and has been a peace project since day one. Yet, 'security' is a term which is not often explicitly used, for example in the Treaties. Therefore, broadly, how do you perceive the term 'security' in an EU context? What does it entail and where does it derive from?

R: Well, the EU has a very special approach to security which stems from the history of european integration. So the experience that the EU has had in using economic integration as a tool to secure peace within the EU, is something that very strongly still influences the EU's understanding of security and also its foreign policy and security policy. So the EU has been trying to export the same idea of using economic ties and economic integration as a way to foster stability in different external

[17] Name and title/place of employment have been left out for anonymization purposes.

relationships and has tried to offer it as a model to other parts of the world. So it is kind of an indirect approach to security. But then when it comes to, as you know, more hard security issues, the EU security and defense policy is much younger and only in recent years started to develop into something more serious.

I: I think this begins to answer my next question: we have the CFSP and the CSDP but whether or not the EU is the most security actor, or if maybe NATO is more appropriate, so the question of whether or not you can consider the EU a security actor, or merely an actor with a security agenda?

R: I would say that the EU is a security actor, but it is just a different kind of security actor compared to, let us say, the traditional security of what a security actor means. And in the current international context where we see, I think, a return of the more traditional realist understandings of power, of the relevance of military power and of great power competition, the EU is a bit struggling to adapt and to catch up with these developments because it has had such different approaches to security.

I: Yes.

R: But then with the outside, I mean neighboring areas, we can also see this influence of the EU's own historical experience. The model has been to export or expand the EU model - the norms, the values - and the EU stands as an instrument to improve the security situation in neighboring countries. So again, not dealing with security issues directly, but kind of trying to build an environment which would be more favorable to peace and security.

I: Okay, super. Then as part of my research, I want to also look at how the Eastern enlargement of 2004 may have shaped the EU's security agenda towards the eastern neighborhood. You can say that with each wave of enlargement the EU acquires not only new member states, but also new external challenges to deal with, and also new internal interests and sensitivities. The EaP is from 2009, but how would you perceive the overall switch in security policy towards the Eastern neighborhood following the 2004 enlargement?

R: The whole eastern neighborhood, of course, became so much more important after the eastern enlargement, but in terms of security aspects, it is a bit contradictory, and eastern member states in general emphasize the division of labor between the EU and NATO, and want to see NATO focusing on the military hard aspects of security, and then the EU doing the sort of softer side and normative policies. So this in a way is true also for the eastern member states approach to the EaP but at the same time of course enlargement had the effect of making the EU so much more engaged in the region, which had implications for the security environment, above all because Russia saw the EaP as a contradiction to Russian interests and as interference with Russia's sphere of influence, so without really wishing to get into a geopolitical contest or competition, this is actually what happened. While the EU and Russia are very different types of actors in the Eastern Partnership region, they do in a way compete with each other. This is not how the EU would want to see it – the EU is always trying to say "we don't want to commit, compete, it is not a zero sum game, it is not against anybody",

but the Russian side simply sees it differently and has a very strong zero-sum approach and this is something that the EU is not able to change – that the Russian perspective is different - and this means that there is a tension over this region.

I: So do you think, taking into account this geopolitical war that is ongoing. Or, maybe not war, but geopolitical….

R: But the EU is not part of a 'war'.

I: No?

R: No.

I: Do you think that you can then say that the EU, through its engagements through the EaP, has brought more damage than good in terms of security in this region, taking into account Russia's strategic response?

R: I don't agree with that view. First of all, I think it is very important to look at the efforts of the Eastern Partnership countries themselves to actually be able to build close relations with the EU - especially the so to say more Europe oriented ones - Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova – but even the others, *all* the countries in the Eastern Partnership region have pursued closer relations with the EU as a way to kind of counterbalance Russia's influence, which is seen as problematic, and so these countries feel that they need a counterweight, in a similar way, by the way, they are very receptive to the increased role of China in the countries, because they see that also as a counterweight to the Russian dominance. So I think in that situation, it was the right thing to do for the EU – to support the countries and to go ahead with the kind of agenda of supporting political reforms and economic development, trade, and … But not saying that the EU did everything right, I mean what was the mistake was that for a too long time, the EU was kind of pretending that somehow the Russian view was not relevant, or the Russian view somehow was wrong, or that the EU was doing nothing bad, but not recognizing that actually the Russian side has their own positions, and that we need to take them seriously in the sense of, you know, recognizing that this is what the Russian positions *are,* and we need to be… we need to face the consequences also. So in that sense I think that the EU was a bit…walking into trouble without really paying enough attention to the kind of tensions that it was causing in the region.

I: Okay. So now jumping to the ENP and the EaP mainly: the ENP sort of sets out, or, highlights the need to empower and enable partners to prevent and manage crisis, and what I think is interesting is that for the EaP, 5 out of 6 countries currently suffer from territorial conflict – either frozen or active – but 'security' in itself is *not* an overarching objective as such in the EaP. What are your thoughts on this?

R: Well, the fact that there are these unresolved conflicts shows that Russia is trying to keep control over the countries, and…it does not have that many tools available. Russia's economic ties with the

countries for example have been diminishing considerably in the past years, so maintaining these conflicts is a way for Russia to have influence on the countries as a whole and to prevent them from pursuing a more independent, or more western oriented, or more European oriented foreign policy. Then again, as you say, the EU does not really have that much direct tools to engage with this issue. It just has some missions, some special representatives, I am sure you are familiar with all of this, so it is not that it will do *nothing*, but in the end, if Russia is ready to use force and kind of hard influence in these countries, and the EU is not ready to do *that*, then unfortunately, ultimately the Russian hard power have a certain influence. It is pushing the countries at the same time *away* from Russia, it is pushing the countries to seek more actively alternative paths and alternative relationships, but its still, like, helping Russia to keep some tools of influence. But it is not a greatly successful policy from the Russian side. And then on the EU, well, here we see what the limitations to the EU as a security actor *are*- it is not a hard power actor, and especially in the relationship to Russia in the common neighborhood between the EU and Russia, the EU does not have any sort of … Any political will or capability to get engaged militarily, so this is just the way the situation is. So the a very kind of asymmetrical picture with the EU and Russia who are using very different tools and I think that clearly we can see that the EU, in spite of all its internal troubles, its still a much more attractive partner, which can support long-term development of the countries, whereas Russia is more of a obstructive force that is trying to put breaks and then trying to keep control but then not really offering much of a positive agenda.

I: Great. I just briefly mentioned these four thematic goals of the EaP. One of them is 'good governance' and according to the EU itself, this relates to the strengthening of institutions, good governance and *stability*. Do you think that one can draw sort of a parallel between stability, good governance and security?

R: Well, not a parallel, but certainly there is a connection. And one more fashionable word in the past years has been 'resilience' - so related to this package. Earlier good governance used to be the sort of punch word which was used about supporting reforms in different countries. Now, focus is more on resilience, but I would say essentially we are talking about similar things in EU policy. It is about building up institutions that are functioning and supporting the rule of law, independent judiciary … different parts of the administration that is capable to take care of their public tasks. So I would say that this is something that, kind of, helps the countries to deal with the security issues that they are facing. So it is not a direct support to the defense sector, but more like a strengthening of the state structures so that the state is more able to protect and defend itself.

I: So sort of *indirect* security provision through institution building and strengthening of …

R: Yes, and corruption, of course, is an obvious case - that corruption makes countries more vulnerable to interference, so there is a very clear link to security. Not so much military security, but we are anyway talking about – or looking at – Russia's interference in the region, talking about various, so to say, hybrid methods of influence, where the actual hard forces are one part of the tool

box. But Russia also prefers to use more soft tools if that is possible, and it allows it to achieve the same goals.

I: Yes. Lastly on the EaP, we spoke about Russia and also indirectly, I suppose, the significance of national interests within the EU for EU foreign policy, but why do you think that … because the EaP has been successful in terms of trade, but not so much in terms of stabilizing. So why do you think that, for instance, enlargement policy has been successful for stabilizing – for security provision – but not the EaP?

R: Well, I actually think that sometimes we exaggerate the impact of the EU on the enlargement countries. I mean, the conditions for security and for reforms were much better in the countries that have now joint the EU anyway. So the starting point was more favorable, and then of course it helped that the EU accession process had this clear promise of membership and all this support that the EU was offering, but I think that the domestic conditions are still even more important. So, the enlargement model cannot be simply, like, copied to any country, and expected to have similar results. This is quite clear when we look at the western Balkans also: it has not worked as well in the western Balkans context which has been more difficult. So with the Eastern partner countries, it is very hard to say what would be different if, let's say, Ukraine had been included in the enlargement process even back in 2004. The orange revolution happened, there was a very strong push from the Ukrainian side, and I would say also from among the expert community, that Ukraine should be offered membership perspective. And the EU did not do that. So its... its hard to say to what extent developments in Ukraine would have been different with a membership perspective – maybe it would have had *some* impact, but I don't think that we would have seen similar progressive reforms as we saw in the case of Poland, for example. It is just that different countries have different actor roles – their own problems and their own limitations. So the EU should be, I think, more *humble* about its expectations, and paying attention to the local conditions in different partner countries.

I: Great. Then I have a bit of a theoretical question, maybe, if you think sort of realism vs. constructivism, do you think that … with the EU being this normative power, wanting to do good, do you think that the EU's efforts and actions in the eastern neighborhood are really because of wanting to do good – so value based security – or more, in terms of serving own interests and managing the periphery to avoid spill-overs, so more strategic security?

R: My understanding is that in the EU among the EU foreign policy community, there is actually a very strong influence of a kind of idealist approach to foreign policy, and this understanding that the EU really tries to be a different type of foreign policy actor, and developing its normative power, and not its kind of hard power. This was a thinking that became very strong in the post-cold war era, when the security situation in Europe was very favorable and there was not so much need for hard power, the expectation was that hard power was becoming less relevant or even irrelevant in Europe. So, I do take this kind of normative and value-based – idealistic – approach seriously in the sense that… I think that was what the EU was really trying to do. But then, of course, comes the question of why didn't it bring more success? And now the world is developing in the opposite direction, and the EU

is just in the process of adapting to that and kind of realizing that it cannot afford to be just a soft power – a normative power – but that in order to be a player in the international arena and in order to be able to also just to defend and protect itself, it needs to develop also the harder elements of power, and kind of give up on this idea of being a very special kind of actor. But I think in the eastern neighborhood, the EU was more motivated by the kind of idealist and value-oriented goals. Or that's how many of the policy makers actually saw the situation, and were kind of hoping that the EU would be able to shape the neighborhood in such a manner, and kind of rejecting the more realist interpretation. Of course the picture is a bit more mixed, and you find different views within the EU and among the member states, but especially looking at Brussels and looking at the EU foreign policy making community, it's my take on it.

I: Okay. I have a very brief last question, just wrapping up I guess: what do you think that the EU can do in order to better consolidate its role as a security provider, and, so again thinking, we spoke about constructivism, how can the EU further this socialization of interests to continue to be effective in the eastern neighborhood?

R: Hm, well, that's, a big question of course. I think the focus should stay, as it has been, on the kind of institution building side and supporting the kind of reforms that the partner countries themselves are willing to make. So, in that sense I don't see a good alternative, but where the EU has to think hard is how to engage more with the security problems in the region... and here, the EU is not going to – I don't know – copy or adapt a similar approach as Russia, or to engage in these conflicts in a military way – that's not the way to go. But since it is kind of supporting the ability of the partner countries to actually pursue their own chosen path of development and their own reform agenda, it should also find ways to make them more capable to take care of their own security. So there is some… some of this work is actually happening, some support to the security sector, mostly in the kind of … or it is in the softer… so to say, softer sphere of security, the EU is really carefully avoiding any engagement with the military sector. But that is one way to help and then also the EU can probably do more in the conflict regions to actually help to create the local conditions that would be even more favorable to settling conflicts… if one day the political environment becomes more favorable. So there is this local level work to be done, and here again the EU has been very conscious in the case of Ukraine, for example, to be more present in the conflict affected areas, and also, like, on the Ukrainian control to parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and these territories in eastern Ukraine which are under Ukraine's control but affected by the war. So that is one area where I think that the EU could actually be more engaged.

I: Yes. Super, thank you. If you have any additional comments or questions or anything, but I have nothing more.

R: Yes, well, good questions! And I wish you good luck with the thesis.

9.2 Appendix B

Transcription of interview two, conducted via Skype 17 December 2019

Interviewer (I): Hello!

Respondent (R): Hello, can you hear me?

I: Yes, I hear you,

R: Good, I hear you too.

I: Perfect. Nice to meet you and first of all thank you for letting me interview you for my Master thesis, which, as mentioned on e-mail, aims to investigate how the EU's Eastern Partnership can function as a channel through which the EU can consolidate its role as a security provider in the Eastern Neighborhood. Before we begin, I have to ask you if it is okay that I record the sound of this interview?

R: Yes, that is okay, but if the interview is cited, I would like for it to be anonymous.

I: Yes, of course, no problem at all.

R: Yes, okay, good!

I: No problem at all.

R: All good.

I: So to begin with, very broadly setting the frame, I would like to ask you: how do you perceive security from the point of view of the European Union? I mean given that the EU has been since day one a peace community – a peace project – yet security is not something that is mentioned very explicitly in the treaties, so to you, what does this entail?

R: Well, I mean, to be honest I think this is exactly that security is everywhere and nowhere, but I think here, the thing is that from the very beginning, the EU has really understood peace in a very comprehensive manner, and given the fact that we have NATO and the US – because after the war, obviously the US played a big part in kind of organizing the security architecture, globally of course, but also within Europe. I think that here NATO really is the primary hard security organization, that would not exist without a very strong American role in it, so obviously, I mean, from day one, hard security issues were then really dealt with by NATO or by Member States at national level, but not at EU level.

But on the other hand, security *is* present within the Union everywhere. So I would say that from the very beginning, the sort of internal and external dimensions of security have been kind of interwoven in EU structures, so I think that is kind of like the key to understanding how the EU really approaches security issues. And I think of course also the fact that it really has not had anything to say about security per se, because this has been the realm of MS.

I mean it is kind of national – it is really a national question in the sense that is is not – it did not use to be dealt with at the European level as a topic at all, so I think you know, given the history, it is very understandable where we are right now. And also of course our puzzlement now that NATO is a kind of shaking a bit, and also the US commitment to European security is weakening. So we are in a new situation, and this is the context clearly in which your thesis, for example, is set.

I: Yes.

R: But I think overall, the fact that security in todays world is very multifaceted. So for example, I mean, in your paper you mention hard security vs. soft security, and I think these concepts are completely outdated today. For example, cyber threats are very hard threats, that can really threaten national security – its very core of states. On the other hand, I suppose cyber security would be, in your formulation, a soft security issue, which it is not. So I don't think that we can really afford dividing security issues into hard and soft, because in the era of hybrid threats, it is … everything is hard.

I: So the whole context of security is completely different today in your opinion than in the 1990's for instance. It is no longer possible to just separate security into categories?

R: Well, I think the example of cyber security basically really sums it up for you. That, you know, by using what you would, in your formulation, define something as soft, it basically can incapacitate all technological armaments that we might have, so I mean it is very *hard*. So just basically that if you cannot operate your military systems – weapons systems – I don't think that you can then say that cyber is a soft security issues, because … It is just that it is kind of outdated. Not completely irrelevant necessarily, but outdated.

I: Alright, interesting. So, I think we have touched upon it a bit already, but with that in mind, given sort of the big role of Member States in EU foreign policy making, and also, you can say, in terms of military conflict, the inability of the EU to intervene and really stabilize in, for instance, Georgia or in Ukraine at the moment, do you think that the EU can be considered a security actor, or merely a sort of composed actor with a security agenda, or how do you perceive this actorhood?

R: I mean when I was looking at your questions, I was just thinking that, for example, I mean, when you talk about in your sort of second set of questions about 'how do you perceive the overall security policy towards the Eastern Neighborhood?' following the 2004 enlargement. Well here I think that you have sort of a reference that you should look up, which is the security strategy that was approved

in 2005. It basically gives you – it really is a document that outlines the mode of that era. It was overly optimistic, the action was really embedded in sort of very linear transition theory, Russia was not necessarily perceived as a kind of *direct* threat at least, so perhaps the idea that we would not really have that much issues with Russia in the eastern neighborhood was very strong, so it was very optimistic times. So I think like security obviously, it is the EU security strategy, but it is much more geared towards kind of like a positive security thinking in the sense that how we can, kind of, make very stable and prosperous region rather than kind of, like, it was not really concentrating on how can we *deter* Russia or anything like that. I mean, it was not just at all the *talk* at that time.

But then I think it all changed. So I would not say that the enlargement per se was sort of the moment when the change came, it was much more 2008 and the war in Georgia. So this is something that really kind of … and also 2008 was also the start of the economic crisis and everything, so basically the whole atmosphere and the way to talk about the future changed altogether. And after that I think Russia, at least directly after that, there was kind of like this thinking that now the paradigm has changed and we have to take Russian threats seriously, but on the other hand it was a rather short lift at the same time. So although there was this kind of moment of realization, then it was back to business as usual pretty soon afterwards, and we all remember the kind of 'reset' policy between the US and Russia, and that was really an attempt to reach out I think. So … so I think the problem here is … that … so I would say the shift was externally driven, because it was driven by the war in Georgia, but on the other hand I think, perhaps, let me just see further what you were interested in – how and what aspects, okay, so, I don't think that, I mean, let me just say that … well you ask about which aspects does the EU securitize -

I: But I think what I mean here is, the question is also, don't you think that, even if you say that okay, security or containing Russia became more an issue after 2008, do you not think that the interest of countries like for example Poland or the Baltic states that have been under Russian influence, don't you think there are security elements to that in the sense that compared to me being from Denmark, I could imagine, in Denmark it is less of an issue than – maybe it is not really a sensitive thing – so I think that is what I also mean by securitize and also feeding into the idea of diverging interests in terms of what is a threat and what can be *considered* a threat given the history?

R: Yes, okay, well for sure, I mean I am sure that there was also this kind of internal element to that, so yeah, I guess both contributed, but I would still say that perhaps the external one was more dominant. I mean yes, of course, I guess the EU is, you know, the sum of its member states obviously, so I would say that, discursively at least, you can say that after the Georgian war there was this … you could see the divide within the EU, that there were more hawkish countries that really saw Russia as a threat, and in particular after the war really thought that the Eastern Partnership policy would be kind of a – that it should include a security element – but let me just say that this was never the dominant voice from the EU. So it was kind of internally a debate also involving those elements, but the EaP policy never really had that in the end as its core. So in a way, because it is the sum of its member states, I don't think that the more hawkish countries have ever really defined the policy as it has been formulated. So it is an internal debate really, rather than an external debate.

I: That is an interesting –

R: Yes, but definitely that narrative does exist within the EU. You are right. And trade-off between the interests of new and old member states, I don't think that those are the categories to be honest, the new and the old, but of course there is a trade off on every single question within the EU. I think that for example coming from Finland, I think, and I have worked at the foreign ministry, so I know for sure that the thinking goes, at least within the foreign ministry, that if you want to have our concerns taken seriously, for example related to the Baltic sea security issues, we need to also show solidarity and support for example when it comes to African crises, those that are not direct security issues necessarily, but I mean, of course it is a trade off – this is also something that applies to the Baltic counterparts, that oftentimes it might make sense to see things as, kind of like, that if you expect support in certain issues, then you have to also support other security concerns of other countries. So yes, of course there is tradeoff, but it is not only security issues, it is everything else.

And then the kind of, I found your question about how and which aspects of the Eastern neighborhood securitize a very difficult one. I guess if you look at the original, the 2003 security strategy, then you might see like organized crime, human trafficking, and things like that, perhaps nowadays I am not sure which are the ones. I mean, of course Russian aggression – that is definitely a security threat – but all the others, for example organized crime, is obviously still there. Then when it comes to corruption, in a way I hope that it would also be seen as a security threat and not only as a governance issue or economic issue, because I think this is exactly what is enables – hybrid influencing in these countries, and also within the EU. So perhaps the point is … I am not sure, usually I guess security – to securitize – is seen as kind of a negative thing but I mean, obviously many things have a security aspect as well, it is not the only thing, so it is not about the process securitizing as such, but it is just, kind of, basically about risk analysis: seeing the security side of things. So perhaps not to use the verb securitize, but you know, definitely one has to also see them under the security angle.

I: This sort of feeds into, or takes us to, you mentioned good governance and that corruption should be seen as a security threat and not just a matter of good governance, but I think my impression is that, also when you – that the EU, to use the word securitize – securitizes good governance exactly, and that the rationale is that if you can build strong institutions that are able to take care of national security, then we can make these EaP countries resilient and in turn create a secure environment –

R: Exactly, and I think this is exactly where the EU is useful, since how security isn't even today at the very core of Eastern foreign policy, but I would say that nevertheless this is exactly what the EU is good at – where it is kind of exactly that it – those issues that overlap external and internal are kind of, come very easily and naturally to the EU as an actor I think, so exactly that. Perhaps where we can contribute is kind of building resilience within those countries to reform obviously, but also through security sector reform, obviously through political support, I mean, those are the things. And when it comes to security issues, here I think it is member states that are the key actors. Now we have the Normandy meeting for example, clearly it is still … Usually I think the EaP as a policy it is an EU policy, so it does not have a strong security element a part from the resilience part for example,

but then if you look at then the member states and obviously, I mean, they try to then influence and offer political support and kind of for solving the crisis. But I would agree with you that this is not necessarily working that well, and that obviously it is not working well because all the protracted conflicts are still there, so I think even here usually the formula has been that the EU could have been – or has been – an actor, but also that is has relied on the US backing in one way or the other. So, just by itself it doesn't really necessarily have that much leverage... so I think here lies the problem really.

But I personally, I don't know how you approach the issue in your thesis, but to me, I mean, whatever member states do – if it is not contradictory to what has been agreed on EU level – then obviously it is an EU policy as well. So for example if Germany is kind of active vis-à-vis Ukraine, it is pursuing EU policy as well because it is an EU member state. So I don't think that you can really take out the member state position. I mean very often in crisis, this has been the case: EU institutions cannot do very quick decision making obviously, because of its institutional format, so then I think in crisis situations it has almost always been one of the bigger member states that have then taken the lead and really … Like for example in the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 it was clearly Germany that was leading the EU policy and always informing and getting the approval of other member states. So … but I think this is very typical, now it seems to be moving and perhaps it is France – I don't know – but clearly oftentimes it is the big member states that are then, in practice, going forward with EU policy.

I: Speaking of Ukraine, you briefly mention Ukraine and we also spoke about Georgia, why do you think that the events in Ukraine provoked a much stronger reaction from the EU than the 2008 Russo-Georgian war incident?

R: Okay, we can move to that, but perhaps I would like to just see whether I still have some things to add.

I: Yes, of course.

R: Let me just see. So, for example, in the previous section, you ask something about the EaP has not succeeded in bringing much stability: why do you think enlargement policy was successful for this, but not the EaP? I think that here the key is really that Russian policy is very different towards the Eastern neighborhood that what it is towards the Eastern european countries within the EU or ever was. And here I think that you should really check out the Russian security concept or strategy, because it is really describing very completely how it sees this region, and what it basically states is really that this is the Russian sphere of privileged interest, and clearly it has this notion that it should be the primary actor within this region and in very exclusive terms. So for example that it sees integration schemes as a threat – integrations schemes vis-à-vis the EU as a threat. So even though that we Europeans, we would highlight the fact that this is not – this policy is not against anyone – it is a fair point and I am sure it is also true from our perspective, but from the Russian perspective, this is … they don't agree with this notion, and they see it as a zero-sum game, so obviously we have a different kind of logic there I think.

Even here, you would have different kind of countries, but for example for Ukraine, I mean, Ukraine is of key importance to Russia, and it will not let go very easily of that, whereas for example Georgia is probably a different matter in that respect. It is not culturally … It is not the same thing. It is not a Slavic country, it is a really small country, it is not economically important, there are various reasons – historical, cultural, whatever have you. Even ethnic. And many many reasons for that – they are just of different categories. And then I think also because it is easier for Russia to operate in this environment [EaP region] because first of all, the nations are much more divided, for example if you look at Moldova, basically half the country would like to see a Western integration whereas half of the country would like to integrate towards Russian dominated structures, so I think with this kind of environment, it is way easier to really divide and rule from Russia's perspective, and also the economic dependence is greater, and also the sort of oligarchic structures are much stronger in this region, so these are things that Russia can easily deploy, in a way. And these are societies that it is familiar with, so I think that is the thing.

Also I would like to highlight that I don't think that you should really use the term 'frozen' in regard to these conflicts. I think the better term would be protracted or unresolved, because frozen means that they would be frozen to wherever they started from. But the conflict dynamics are in constant change. Basically today we are not solving the same conflicts that we were faced with in the 1990's, although they are … they just haven't been resolved, but it doesn't mean that they wouldn't be evolving over time. So the conflict dynamic is changing all the time.

Now we can go back to your question about Ukraine and Georgia. I think I already mentioned that this is a different context, but it is just that the countries are not similar to one another. Obviously Ukraine is a bigger deal than Georgia for Russia. Also the conflicts were very different. As you know in Georgia's case, it was actually Georgia that started the military action, so obviously even the EU countries were much more divided how you should react to that, and I think that there was much more support of the … the situation was not as clear as it was in the case of Ukraine. So I think… and also I mean… And here I think that the reference for your thesis could be, for example, the international fact findings mission report on the Georgian war, that was published in, I am not sure about the year, but after the conflict, so let's say for example 2009. It goes into detail in how everything happened and what was the timeline, and just points out to the fact that in this conflict, you cannot easily state who is the responsible party for the conflict. So it is impossible to assign the overall responsibility to Russia or to Georgia. It was a bit more complex. Whereas I think that the Ukrainian – the Crimea and then eastern Ukraine – basically was so outrageous and so brutal and so evident that Russia was really kind of very aggressive and was invading Crimea. There is no question what happened there or who was responsible, so it was much more clear cut as a case.

I think even in that respect, and you have to remember the fact that in the Georgian case, you had – the conflict was already there – you had a conflict from the 1990's and it was still there, so obviously, for example, Abkhazians and South Ossetians also played a part here, whereas in Ukraine, there was no conflict. It was really created by Russia and pro-Russian forces. So I think also the fact that this

was a peaceful region where conflict then was created is a completely different – it is a different context. Not completely different, but quite different. So yeah.

Then you had some good questions about – oh, yes, this one. You ask "*to what extent do you think that the EU's external action serves its own interests and managing its periphery to avoid negative spill-overs as opposed to do good in the neighborhood?*".

Well, here is the thing. I don't believe in this kind of – again, it is simplistic juxta-positioning in a way – it does not work like this. Of course you have interests and you cannot separate interests completely from something else, and also when it comes to values, I would argue that value-based policy is often in the *long-term* interest. And then, what you might refer to as just 'interests', that would be *short-term* interests. So for example: a country argues that we should forget about Ukraine so that we could trade gas with Russia, that would be the short-term interests – just to go back to business as usual- but then again the long-term interest of the EU might be to hold on to the notion of sovereignty of Ukraine and territorial integrity of Ukraine, so that you wouldn't create a president that then could be used against you for example. So it is probably in our long-term interest to disregard the short-term economic interest and try to pursue a more long-term policy that is sustainable and serves also our long-term interest. And perhaps even then you can create … oftentimes I mean … then you … these kind of short term economic-interests they are not necessarily serving your interests that are more fundamental.

So in this case I would say that obviously all EU external action should be based on interests and values, but we should not think that values wouldn't be in our interest, because they are also … And I think actually, and here a very good reference would be the Global Strategy from 2016, because it is really playing with these notions and really trying to making it more concrete what kind of principles pragmatism should we pursue in our external relations and so on. Here definitively that would be a key document to really analyze I think.

I think now the new commission is trying to, perhaps somewhat uneasily, tries to combine these kind of … claiming that it is a geopolitical commission to defending values. Here is another interesting debate to get into.

I hope there was something useful there.

I: Very much so, very much so. It was really … thank you – really interesting perspectives and definitely some things that I will investigate further and re-think.

R: At least I hope there was some background use for that and if there are more specific questions you would like to answer further, feel free to contact me and if I know everything I can always point you towards someone who knows. Also I mean, just looking at the very last page of questions, there was something like "*How should the EU tackle*…". Also you have said "*Has the EU brought more damage in terms of security than good"* – I would definitely argue that things would be much worse

without the EU, so I think we are playing a very valuable role for example in Ukraine. Do you remember the talk about Novorussiya policy?

I: Yes.

R: I think that was something much worse, and for example with the sanctions really we managed to send some kind of red lights for Russia's actions. So definitely the situation would be worse. And what is also important is that in particular since I am dealing with the post-soviet space, I see that at least in those countries you an imagine alternative futures, whereas I think that if the EU would not play a role whatsoever, this would be really a post-soviet region for good in a way. You have to have some visions for alternative futures and not always just looking back in time to the soviet past. So I think that is very important and useful, and I am not overly pessimistic whereas I think it is fair to say that definitively if you look at the security strategy from 2005, the world that it imagined was so naïve and simplistic, and we definitely did not create prosperity and stability or whatever we promised to bring. So I do agree that it was also not what we planned back in the day, but nevertheless the situation would be worse.

I: So you think even if we follow the idea that Russian actions are to a large extent a response to the EaP and the EU, you think that there would still be this sort of Russian attempt at maintaining influence and keeping its grip on the region?

R: Let's not forget about just the EU and Russia, but also these countries. I mean, this is the key – these countries - the EU is not - we are not - we have been offering much less that what has been asked from us by these states, so I think that they would have had their policies and attempts to act as independent states with strategic autonomy away from Russia, so I think we would have had all the issues and problems even in the case that we wouldn't have done anything. So I think in this case, yes, the EU policy is worthwhile and … and I think the way to go about any ... what I do agree that we should do, and I think your topic is useful and timely also as a topic, because I think that the EU has avoided having a discussion on security issues when it comes to its eastern neighborhood. Probably also in its southern neighborhood – could be – but since I'm not looking at that region I cannot tell you that. At least in the East we have really avoided doing that, and I think partly at least because we don't want to agitate Russia and we want to be play bound in order to not provoke Russia's reactions, which is understandable as a goal, but nevertheless I think now we are at a point where I don't think Russia's policies will be changing and its basically very happy with its foreign policy, so I think that now we are in a phase where we really have to pin down what are our key interests in the region. We have to engage in some kind of strategic thinking and also thinking about security issues within this region, and kind of working out the priorities, our interests – the red lines – and then working out a consensus. And I think it is going to be a long process, because the interests of the member states are very different, but nevertheless I do think that there is a possibility to actually work out both Russia and the eastern neighborhood, and what is our strategic thinking about it. And I think that this is now coming up and therefore I think that your thesis is well times in a sense. I think you can also contribute to the debate that is clearly heating up in Brussels, so well done!

I: Thank you. Yes, I think – the last questions were sort of just summing up – and I think we have covered most. So thank you so much.

R: My pleasure really. And looking forward to reading your thesis once it is finished.

9.3 Appendix C

Transcription of interview three, conducted in person in Warsaw, Poland, 31 January 2020

Interviewer (I): Thank you for agreeing to having me interview you for my Master thesis on how the Eastern Partnership can function as an instrument with witch the EU can act as a security provider in the Eastern neighborhood region. As part of that, I want to also investigate how the 2004 enlargement may have contributed to a shift in direction of EU policy towards this region, so that is mainly what I will be asking you about today.

To begin with, could you start by introducing yourself, your work and your relation to the field?

Respondent (R): (…)[18] I have actually written my PhD on exactly this topic, so the influence of the new Member States and the enlargement on the EU's Eastern policy. So it was not the Eastern Partnership when I was writing – actually the Eastern Partnership did not exist when I started to write my PhD, but it did evolve into a separate initiative, so that is part of what I do. (…) I work with Eastern Partnership and these societies on a number of different levels.

I: Perfect, thank you. So just to set the frame: the EU is a value-based security community, and has been, since day one, a peace project. But security itself is not something that is often explicitly mentioned in the Treaties. So how do you perceive security in an EU context, and given maybe certain short comings, do you think that the EU can even be said to be a security actor, or merely an actor with a security agenda?

R: I think the definition of the EU as a security actor has evolved over the years, and still 10-15 years ago we have been talking about the EU as a structural power, so an *actor*, a semi-actor, that is able to influence other actors in the international system through norm-setting, or norm-providing, and giving a number of different incentives for these countries to follow a certain set of rules. These rules of course were in the framework of the big three elements – democracy, human rights and rule of law – and the understanding was that the incentive for these countries would be to want to integrate with the largest market in the world. But as a benchmark, in return, they would have to reform and become open markets, they would have to become transparent, democracies with strong anti-corruption elements and so on and so forth. So the first idea when the EU started to discover its potential somewhere in the early 2000's as an international actor was the structural power.

I see that as changing because security has become such an important element of today's world, but most importantly such an important element for the constituencies for the general publics, and for the last few years we have seen a kind of shift in thinking about security in general. The EU is no longer perceiving itself – with everything that is happening in the world – as a soft power institution, but

[18]Name and title/place of employment have been left out for anonymization purposes.

much more it is discovering its potential for hard power solutions. What does that mean? It means that for the first time we are looking at actually having much more on the ground presence, whether through border guards through joint missions, sea missions, border missions, but also talking for the first time about some kind of military capacities of Europe. That is still far fetched, but we are moving from the direction of a completely soft power actor into a much more security oriented actor that will have to and will need to have some kind of hard power instruments.

I: Super. Okay, so if we go back to the late 1990's-early 2000's, we're seeing in these pre-accession years and in the years around the [2004] enlargement the formulation of the European Security Strategy and in 2004 the Wider Europe communication outlining the European Neighborhood Policy. In your opinion, how, if at all, did the 2004 enlargement contribute to a switch in policy and interests towards the region? Security wise, but also just in general.

R: I think it had a huge impact and I will be happy to share with you my study that was the basis of my PhD. I interviewed for that specific study I remember about 25 I think members of COEST, so the working group on Eastern Europe within the Council of the European Union. I did that in 2007, and most of my questions were regarding the new Member States' impact on the agenda in Brussels – so how has between 2004 and 2007 the agenda in COEST changed because of the new Member States coming in. There was a very clear both quantitative and qualitative effect on that agenda, and it was also interesting to see which countries were the most active – some have been punching much above its weight such as Lithuania at that time, Poland also to some extent but that could have been expected very much. So yeah, there was a very clear element to the fact that these countries entered the EU, and of course that is part of the foreign policy – national foreign policy – downloading of your ideas and also uploading some others into your agenda, so that was to be expected.

But I have also discovered that it was not the only factor, actually, Member States yes, new Member States had that impact, that was natural, but also the simple fact that you have shifted the border has had a mental effect on old Member States. So all of a sudden, they were – whether they wanted to or not – they had to discover what is there on that new EU border - so what is this Belarus, what is this Ukraine, what is this Moldova. That was to a large extent, to the majority of EU decision makers at that time, *terra incognita,* somewhere out there, lands between Russia and those countries that were enlarging to. That also – this physical change of the border – has brought this kind of impetus to into the EU policy.

But also, finally, there is another factor, the third factor, which was that the dynamics also influenced other actors and changed behavior of countries such as Russia, who felt endangered – in a certain existential danger – maybe not at first, but in time – of this enlargement, especially as the EU started to propose new instruments such as the European Neighborhood Policy, but more importantly the Eastern Partnership later. And the reaction of Russia, for example through gas wars with Ukraine, and getting engaged in first the Orange Revolution and then the negotiations over the gas war over the European Commission, has also made the EU start to react to this. So that gave an additional

impetus to EU Eastern Policy. So there were a lot of dynamics, they were not by far only determined by new Member States, but that was one of the factors for sure.

I: I think this feeds into my next question which was whether you think [this switch] was more internally driven or sort of externally driven –

R: I would say both, but surely I don't think that the Russian Federation was aware – I don't think anyone was fully aware of the extent that actually enlarging the EU would have an impact on many of its interests, direct interests, because it is not only about the question of Eastern Partnership, but also about energy policy. The way the new Member States have perceived energy security and energy policy was completely different than the old Member States, they were much more reliant on Russia and demanded from the Commission some kind of protection in terms of competition, in terms of the Single Market, so that also pushed the European Commission to undertake many actions that it probably would not have done had there not been an enlargement.

I: Okay. Then I would like to know – because obviously the Central-and Eastern European countries are not a uniform group - so can you think of any divergent interests or priorities at the time in terms of *what* should be the priorities and which approach to deploy towards this new neighborhood region?

R: New Member States – the 10 new Member States – yes, of course, and again that study shows really nicely how some of the 10 new Member States saw this Eastern element as priority, and some decided to actually specialize in other things, and there was even a time where the Czech Republic wanted to be really specializing in Cuba because of the good relations that the Czechoslovakian communist government had with Cuba and those relations kind of were sustained over time and so on, so I think most of the Member States were trying to find a niche in the EU's foreign policy.

But a part from that there was also very clear security considerations. So I wrote about this in the paper, there was a very clear – I call it the Carpathian divide – so the Carpathian Mountains – so above that Poland and the Baltic States had a completely different view on Russia and on the need for an active EU presence in its Eastern neighborhood, while those south of the Carpathian Mountains – Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary – to a large extent did not feel the same way, and actually were not huge proponents of either future enlargements or actually seeing Russia as a major security threat in the future. And of course we are talking here about 2007, 2008, 2009, the years pre-Crimea. Has that changed? Partially so, but it is mainly due to the recent developments not only in Ukraine, but also around the disinformation campaign that Russia has waged against the West and most importantly the meddling into elections in a number of Western states. So those countries are also – or at least their elites are changing a bit their point of view, *but* still there is a very clear divide on how much time, resources, willingness to commit to the Eastern Partnership – what the Baltic States and Poland are willing to do versus those on the south.

I: Alright. You mentioned before how there seems to also have been a sort of 'socialization' of mental processes within the EU. Can you give an example, or think of by which mechanisms did countries such as for example Poland try to upload its interests and bring them on the EU agenda?

R: Well, it is pretty much always the same. I mean, you bring this up on a number of political forums, so you have on the side the Council of the European Union where you have on every single level experts in COREPER and you have also the ambassadors, you have the ministerial level, so in discussions the fact that all of a sudden you have at least four – if not more – countries that start to bring up a topic that was not really at the very center of attention – let's say Ukraine – yes. Because really the discussions were not focused about Russia at all.

The main focus when I spoke with the – when I did my interviews – was that Ukraine was all of the time *blablabla* and there was a sort of Ukraine 'fatigue' because Poles talk about Ukraine all the time. So there is a very big push for future enlargements – we are not closing the door of the EU – that was the thing, you know, what is next, how can we actually expand this prosperity and security *beyond* the current EU borders. How can we project that further on? So these discussions were happening on the level of the Council, but also through European Parliament members in the European Parliament itself on the floor of the European Parliament, the European Parliament actually became very active also during the Orange Revolution. That is one of the elements that are external elements actually – that had a huge impact on the EU's perception.

It is funny because it happened almost exactly at the same time as the enlargement, so it is very hard to say, you know, what had – what kind of overall impact on the EU's thinking about Eastern policy – but we have to remember that was the first time actually that the EU got involved through Javier Solana, and through the Polish and Lithuanian engagement who brought Javier Solana into Kiev, who invited Javier Solana saying 'there should be an EU really intervention, not us as new Member States but the EU as a whole', so he weighted in although he was very hesitant at the very beginning. And then they discovered a whole country of 15 million people who were extremely pro-European, who wanted to be part of Europe, who saw themselves and their future in Europe, and that also changed your perception – this Javier Solana from Spain who knew nothing about Ukraine, and all of a sudden he discovers a country that is at the end of the day not so different than Poland was in the 1990s, and that also forces a certain type of commitment and emotional engagement, so yes.

So again, the Council, the Parliament, a number of European Council plenaries, but also simply the entire expert community from think-tanks, NGO's, that also travel to Western Europe – Eastern European experts – come here, listen to our foreign policy priorities, Poland of course is a very big actor in the region, so that also counts in, and basically that is the process.

I: Perfect. Brings me to my next question actually, you mentioned Polish foreign policy, so from a Polish perspective, what are the perceived threats coming from the Eastern neighborhood, and how do Poland's national security interests relate to the security situation in the Eastern neighborhood?

R: So what are, from the Polish perspective –

I: What are the perceived threats, or how do Poland's national security objectives relate to the Eastern Neighborhood?

R: Well, unfortunately for us, the major security threat as understood in Warsaw coming from the East comes from Russia. And that understanding was there in the 1990s, in the 2000's, and now it is more present than ever. So I think the hope was that maybe this threat will become irrelevant over time, just as we have perceived for a number of centuries almost, the German threat as an existential threat. And that threat, due to the process of unification, of European integration, reconciliation and a number of other processes has eased, and now we are talking about friendship and strategic partnership. I think the belief in the 1990s – these late 1990s early 2000s - was that this would also happen with Russia over time. But 2014 was kind of - to our dismay, proved that the worries that are in Warsaw are very true, very real, that we are not dealing with a democratic country that has a, let's say, peaceful and progressive agenda for the world, but it is rather a disruptive actor that seeks the stability of a very corrupt regime, and will do anything to assure that this regime persist over the long term, and it will use a number of foreign policy instruments to rally its own people in a kind of big war against the West.

So from the Warsaw perspective, the biggest threat for our security and our sovereignty – including territorial sovereignty – is the Russian Federation today. Because it has proved that it has both the tools and the capacity to actually wage war against its own neighbors, and it is not only a war as we know of traditional means, but also hybrid war. And not much more other than that is in the Polish focus when it comes to security.

I: Great. I have just two questions on the Eastern Partnership. First of all, relating a bit to what we just spoke about, so the Eastern Partnership was a Polish-Swedish initiative. Do you think that, without Poland, or without the enlargement from 2004, a similar initiative would have been proposed? Or do you think that the accession of Member States which have different historical relations with this region made the difference?

R: I think that the European Neighborhood Policy would, and did, evolve regardless of let's say new Member States although there is a lot of groundwork done before 2003 that you might not know of that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did actually to work on this European Neighborhood Policy. The first idea was Wider Europe, and it was only about the Eastern part and then of course Sarkozy wanted to extent it to the South and that's how it – but *that* initiative might have happened without Polish active participation.

But Eastern Partnership, I don't think so. I think that with most of these types of initiatives, it is really a question of chemistry between not only two countries, but also two leaders, and it was clear from the start that Carl Bildt and Radoslaw Sikorski [former Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Poland respectively] are very good friends who wanted to do more

for Ukraine, who are very much interested in actually enhancing the EU's presence generally in Eastern Europe, and using the already existing expertise and thought in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs mainly in this regard. So how could we reshape the European Neighborhood Policy in a way that it would also respond better to the needs of the Eastern neighbors. They proposed an initiative that was acceptable for most Member States, also because they had the capacity to – both countries had the capacity to at that time – to convince their partners, they had a strong negotiating position, and it was a very constructive proposal, yes, that found a lot of support in the countries concerned, so in the Eastern Partnership countries at the end. So I think that there are a lot of things that happened based on really not only on Poland or so, but on the right people at the right time, at the right general atmosphere, positive atmosphere, around the cooperation with the East.

And also it was – we have to remember – just after the first gas wars with Ukraine, so the European Commission was also looking at ways of supporting or of showing support to Ukraine over the long term. The Germans were building North Stream I at that time, and there were huge discussions about the loss of transit fees that Ukraine will have to bear because of this pipeline, so some of the German officials that I spoke to understood that if we will give Ukraine a bit more – this Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement – under an Eastern Partnership, or a *promise* of an agreement under the Eastern Partnership, it will somehow – the money that will come from trade will somehow help Ukraine to bear the question of the transit fees. So there were a lot of considerations at that time, but again I don't think that if Poland would have not taken on with this initiative – if it would not have done it in such a smart way by engaging Sweden as well – I don't think it would have come to life.

I: Okay. So, to sum up, and ask the final fundamental question, so security in itself is not an explicit or overarching objective of the Eastern Partnership despite the fact that 5 out of 6 Eastern Partnership partner countries have some type of territorial conflict on-going – frozen or active. So in your opinion, what is the role of security within the Eastern Partnership framework and, in turn, where does the Eastern Partnership fit within the existing European security and defense structures and mechanisms?

R: When the Eastern Partnership was conceived, the whole idea was this kind of soft power, trade, closer cooperation, people-to-people, civil society platform. So it had, of course, the potential for a security instrument, but Brussels did not see it as a security instrument. It saw it as an instrument for closer cooperation, of … only it was thinking of it as a security instrument in the sense that the more prosperity there is, the more security there is. You know, that type of logic. It was a typical instrument of this liberal paradigm of win-win cooperation. But of course, Russia was perceiving this as exactly the opposite way – it was perceiving this as an initiative directed, or created, in order to diminish Russia's influence in the region, of so-called geo-economics if you read about this you might know but if you haven't, you should read – so perceiving basically economic cooperation as a way of geopolitical expansion of influences. Not necessarily a 'win-win', more of a colonizing type of mentality that you have, and this is how it [Russia] saw the Eastern Partnership: that the EU is trying to colonize through bringing economically closer the Ukraine, and of course this kind of transparency – democracy – also weakened Russia's agenda with those countries because it is much easier to

control a corrupt country than a non-corrupt, democratic country. So a lot of that. So for Russia, there was always a security component to it.

Now, today whether there is a security component… it is hard to say. Not in the Eastern Partnership initiative per se, that does not exist and probably will not exist, but there has to be some kind of security component for the future of the EU's relations with Eastern Partnership countries. And the security component has to have elements which are already starting to develop, for example energy security, the question of information security, cyber security, so elements in which the EU could be a provider not only of norms or a market in which we cooperate, but of real instruments that protect these countries from the new type of threats that they will have to deal with. And then of course the EU is a completely different actor for those countries, and I think that is the direction we should be developing. We saw this already in energy and I think we are going to see more of it, but beyond energy we have to move much further than that.

I: Great. Thank you.

R: You're welcome Siri, my pleasure – hope it was helpful!

I: Do you have any concluding remarks or anything you would like to add or ask?

R: No! I will be happy to – if you write me a line, I will send you that report – I think you will find it very useful for the MA you are writing currently.

I: Great, thank you!

9.4 Appendix D

Transcription of interview four, conducted via Skype 9 January 2020

Interviewer (I) Thank you first of all for allowing me to interview you for my Master Thesis where I am exploring how the EU's Eastern Partnership can function as an instrument for the EU to be a security actor in its Eastern Neighborhood. While of course I have the EU as my center of analysis, I am very interested in hearing a bit of your thoughts from a partner state perspective, so a Ukrainian perspective.

Could you maybe start by introducing yourself and your relation to the field?

Respondent (R): (…)[19] My expertise is European Integration models, Eastern Partnership and the internal situation of the EU. I think I can help you with your project. I have knowledge, experience and my own opinion about this subject.

I: Okay, perfect. To set the frame: EU-Ukraine relations go back to the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1994, and are now shaped through the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement under the Eastern Partnership.

So, from a Ukrainian perspective, what is the role of the EU and the EaP, and is security provision part of this?

R: From a Ukrainian perspective or from my own perspective? In Ukraine, we have many different opinions, so I can talk only about my own personal opinion. In general, I perceive the EU as a great, modernized power and its potential to modernize our country. In economic terms, we have good relationships and good perspectives in implementing EU laws in order to modernize our economy as well as our political system, but with regards to security issues, the situation is different, because in my opinion, and in the opinion of the other experts who know the subject, the EU is not a great security power itself, because it relies on US security guarantees within NATO. That is why the EU cannot provide security in its neighborhood without the US and without NATO as a security guarantee in Europe. Its main aim – through its policy - is to modernize the neighborhood in order to have predictable partners on its borders.

But the EU has only soft power, and Russia has hard power, and due to these policies which contradict each other – one being the EU's policy approach, the other being Russia's – Ukraine is sandwiched between both power. The EU and Russia. And the result now, we are situated in a grey zone, and both of them want to see Ukraine as their own sphere of influence. Russia uses hard power – its military power, its economic power and other hybrid means – in order to re-integrate Ukraine into its sphere of influence. The EU does not have such potential. From a Ukrainian perspective and from my own perspective, the strategic situation – the geopolitical situation – today is bad. To put it simply, it is bad. In order to guarantee security – to provide security to this region – I think there are three our four ways:

The first way is to fully integrate Ukraine into Western security structures. Security and economic structures, so integrate into the EU and NATO – become a full member of NATO. The second way

[19] Name and title/place of employment have been left out for anonymization purposes.

is part of the first way, it is to give to Ukraine bilateral security guarantees from the US, and to guarantee the status of Ukraine as a main ally of NATO, but without formal membership. The third way is to re-integrate with Russia, and to come back to the situation of 1989, to be fully integrated with Russia and the Euroasian Economic Union. And the fourth way would be a strong Ukraine which relies on its own powers, own forces, its strong military, its strong internal state without corruption, its strong economy, its strong military forces. I think these are the only ways to provide security.

This situation, with the EaP, if it does not change in the near future, the situation is the same. Because as we can see, from all of the EaP partner states, five out of six of them have frozen conflicts on their territories. Only Belarus does not have a frozen conflict, because it has sort of a status of a satellite state of Russia, and it can also be integrated into Russia. That is why I think the EaP and the whole strategy of the EU towards Ukraine is failed. It can be modernized, it can be changed to a more predictable and more defined policy – it's a double standard policy, it does not provide neither security, nor any guarantees and even low financial perspectives, because the financial assistance to Ukraine also is not well defined, and it has many conditions to get it. That is my opinion on the EaP.

I: So this security 'narrative' that is right now in the EaP – stability, resilience, good governance – you do not think that has been successfully brought by the EaP? Bringing this stability and prosperity as sought after by the EU?

R: If we talk only about the EaP, the potential of the EaP to provide all of the mentioned features is low. If we talk about Association Agreements and bilateral agreements – not just the EaP but bilateral relations with the EU – the Association Agreement has potential more than the EaP itself. Because inside the EaP, you have six states – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova – these are different states, but EU policy is the same as for Ukraine and as for inside the Eastern Partnership. Bilateral relations have more potential with the EU, so Association Agreements. But Association Agreements also have limited potential, because it is more about economic perspectives and less about political stabilization, and we have low progress in court reform, judicial reform, anti-corruption reform, we have less progress in this matter.

I: Okay. So you mentioned before how Russia's actions in Ukraine demonstrate a new type of military thinking that combines both traditional military means with a new emphasis on hybrid methods, so strategic ambition, deception, surprise and so on. Do you think that, because Ukraine finds itself in the receiving end of this situation, that the Ukrainian understanding of what security is is different from the EU's understanding of security?

R: Yes, Ukraine's understanding is completely different from the EU's, and also as you can see, great powers of the EU, France and Germany especially, have good relationships with Russia, and personally good relationships – president Macron has a personally good relationship with president Vladimir Putin. I don't understand why the EU tries to bring us into its sphere of influence because it has good relations with Russia, think the Nord Stream 2. We are not a subject; we are an object of international policy. Inside and in the framework of the strategic vision of the EU, defined in the EaP.

I: So you think – because often you talk about Russia seeing, for instance, Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence, but the EU as more of a normative power than wants to do good and that wants to drive reform – but you perceive the EU's ambitions as similar to Russia's in terms of spheres of influence, or how do you see it?

R: No, it is not similar. The EU – the strategic vision of the EU – is to have predictable and stable neighbors on its borders. That is the strategic aim of the EU. The strategic aim of Russia is to reintegrate Ukraine and our states into new Soviet Union under Moscow domination. It is a different approach, different projects and different aims. The EU does not view Ukraine inside the EU, Russia would like to integrate us. And this has different approaches, different means of how to achieve these goals. Russia's used hard measures, including military, and the EU can use only soft power and sometimes economic blackmail such as not to give us financial assistance if we do not implement some conditions.

I: With this in mind, what do you think that the EU can do to optimize and try to stabilize the security situation in Ukraine, and help make Ukraine more resilient to the threats it is currently facing? How can the EU optimize its own policy towards Ukraine?

R: It is a difficult question. I do not think anyone from Ukraine can answer it. The EU has to either integrate us to give us clear membership perspectives, and we need NATO membership perspectives, and integrate us into the Western security structures in the framework of NATO. Another method is to increase financial support, help us implement judicial reforms, anti-corruption reforms, military reforms, because the EU monitors these processes, but if you read the reports, the association and implementation reports, they exaggerate out problems.

I: So you do not think that – you mention how the EU has soft power and engages very much - also the EU Advisory Mission under the CSDP, a civilian mission. So you don't think that if the EU were to engage more militarily, that would contribute to anything?

R: You mean to the resolution of the Donbass conflict? Maybe the EU is not a great power, it can deal between the US and Russia on some conditions, because it is complicated issue. The EU is also not an equal part to Russia in terms of military, in terms of military, the hard power lies only with the US that can solve this problem. The EU tries to negotiate, to get a deal with Russia, but as we see, Russia - not only in Ukraine but also in Syria – Russia has the final say in this situation. They control the situation more than the EU. The EU is only some kind of moral power. The same we can see in the Council of Europe, when Russia joined the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, without any implementing of the conditions. Russia is an aggressor state but can still participate in all meetings of the Council of Europe.

If you talk about soft power, the experience proved that hard power has more potential than soft power to solve this issue. These complicated situations.

I: So you would not, in your opinion, classify the EU as a security actor at the moment?

R: No, the EU itself, without NATO, is not a security actor. Its security power is only with the US and with NATO. Without NATO, the EU is very weak in security. Also without the UK after BREXIT.

I: But do you think that there is a demand in Ukraine for the EU to *be* a security actor?

R: I do not hear such a demand. The EU continues to be a soft power, and to preserve its close ties with the US without any problems with Trump. But the EU tries to use its leverage as a negotiator

with Russia. But what will be the final outcome of these negotiations, we will see in the future. Can it be resolved this conflict or not? We will see.

I: Okay. It seems as if, if we go back to 2008, you have the Russo-Georgian war, and you can argue that this already established a 'de facto' regime of Russia's right to intervene militarily to protect its interests in the post-Soviet space. Why do you think that the events that took place in Ukraine in 2014 provoked a much stronger response in the EU in terms of protecting the European security order compared to in Georgia where no one really reacted to the same extent?

R: Why the EU responds more now more than in 2008? Well, first of all because Ukraine is more closely situated to the EU – it is situated on its borers. Second, aggression against Ukraine is the second example of Russian actions – Georgia was the first one. Before 2008, there was no signs of direct Russian aggression. Ukraine became the second example, that is why the EU has to react also to preserve its status as a Human Rights – as the main Human Rights defender. The EU, at the international stage, presents itself as the main Human Rights defender. In a situation, if the EU reacts to the Human Rights situation in different regions – Middle East, northern Africa, and if such a situation happens on its borders, the EU has to react to save its face. And in 2014, there were many victims of the conflict. The conflict in Donbass accounted for nearly 13.000 victims, the second after the Afghanistan war in 1979; in Georgia, as I remember, it was around 200 victims. 200 human victims. In Ukraine, 13.000 people died. The EU has to react and has an obligation to react. And also we are speaking of a full military operation, a lot of people died.

That is why – but I think the reaction of the EU is not enough, including sanctions. Sanctions are not enough for Russia – Russia continues its aggressive actions. It is not, I think, it is not enough of a reaction – in 2014 as well as now.

I: So how do you, thinking in more conceptual terms, this sort of 'neo-imperialistic' approach that Russia has to foreign policy and Russia's overall behavior in this region, how do you think this impacts on the overall security of the Eastern neighborhood? Not just in Ukraine, but is it also a threat to other countries?

R: After the sanctions, Russia still feels strong, it feels like a strong power. It can continue despite the sanctions and try to influence Belarus. Now, it also uses economic pressure – not military – but also economic pressure to integrate Belarus so that the state loses sovereign power, and this also adds to the situation. All the countries in the EaP – Moldova now has a pro-Russian government and a pro-Russian parliament. The situation is in favor of Russia and not the EU – that is the status in the whole region. Besides maybe Azerbaijan, which pursues its own policy, it is not too much impacted by the EU and Russia also does not have much impact on Azerbaijan. Armenia is also some kind of satellite country – Russia's military is on the borders of Armenia. And the immediate threat – or fear, maybe – continues in Belarus, in Ukraine. But mostly in Ukraine, because Belarus is an ally – it is perceived as an ally state, and Moldova has a friendly government and president, and friendly majority in the parliament towards Russia. That is why Moldova does not have such a threat from Russia. And Belarus would perceive its policy towards closer relations with the EU, the US, there has been a visa-free regime with Belarus for the first time, and Belarus also can perceive military pressure, besides economic pressure, but also military pressure, from its so-called ally Russia.

I: Okay, that is very interesting. I just have one last summing up question then: based on what we have just discussed and talked about, do you think that in any way, the EaP – not the Association

Agreements, not the – just the EaP, does it have a place within the Ukrainian architecture or not? Or, is there a possibility for the EaP to play a role in the Ukrainian security architecture?

R: I think that the EaP, in terms of the role it has played in security, has been negative, not positive. Because all the countries have frozen conflicts, I think that it can be good if the EaP will transform into some kind of new policy. The EU does not want to transform the EaP into some kind of 'Wider Europe' – maybe to guarantee status to these countries as part of the European Economic Area – like Norway. To preserve the EaP in its current format, it does provide any security, but it does provide insecurity as you can see. Because it is an undefined policy – it is ambiguous. EU policy is ambiguous and double standard. It is not about security; it is mainly about economic perspective. And the EU is an economic power preferably. It is not a geopolitical power, not a security power. It is an economic power – a great economic power. NATO is security – economic and security – and bilateral security guarantees can also be an exit from this situation.

But now, when the new power in Ukraine is announced, we can rely on negotiations with Russia. As you can see from the ongoing negotiations, in order to negotiate, you have to give a strong stance, and a strong stance is also about military, it is about economy. If a country is unstable, if it is weak and does not have potential to negotiate from a strong stance, we can negotiate only with Russia – with a power such as Russia. We can negotiate only from a weak stance, and how can we then resolve this conflict? It is a calculation – we have lost territory and people, and without this, I do not think we can be strong. We can only – the best way is to freeze this conflict – it is to stop war, stop victims which appear every day, and just to freeze the conflict. The fact will be that we don't control these territories – Donbass, Crimea – and the situation will be in Transnistria, in Moldova, and in Georgia. But now we have a hot conflict with human victims. In our potential, we can freeze it, but not resolve it in our interest. We cannot do that because it is about potential – of Russia, and also the Western, the French and German positions. They are friendly to Russia. Only their words are against Russia. But in their deals and on the ground, they continue to have a good relationship, because these are economic relationships. Putin is – many European leaders visited Moscow in May for the anniversary of the ending of the World War Two. So to me, these are not allies of Ukraine – they are moral support allies only. They provide moral support for us, and to some extent financial support, but it is not enough to resolve.

I: Thank you very much, that is a very interesting perspective. Do you have any last remarks? I have no more questions.

R: No, I think I said what I wanted to say. We in Ukraine perceive our future as closer to the EU than to Russia, and I hope that civil society and governments will too perceive Ukraine as part of a geopolitical space. Right now we are in the grey-zone – we have a choice either to integrate into the geopolitical space of the West, or the geopolitical space of Russia. We say that we would like to go to the West and try to secure a young government which can persuade civil society to also feel this way. But Ukraine, after 30 years in the Soviet Union, it has not transformed into a modern country. In our jobs, we still have a Soviet mentality. Because Soviet propaganda – or Russian propaganda – also has very strong power. It does not collapse in our people's mind unfortunately. You might know the saying – without Ukraine, Russia cannot be a strong power. Ukraine has a deeply rooted Soviet mentality and public structures, and the strategic policy of the EU in the 1990's in the 2000's was not about integrating Ukraine. It was not enough for us. If the EU is sincere about its own policy, it should understand that this policy – this support – is not enough for us.

Unlike for instance Poland, which the EU perceived as territory for future expansion in the communist block, Ukraine is perceived as some country in between. A country between two powers. And such a situation as we have in Ukraine is useful for the EU, because it understands the role Russia, and if the EU would have a very large border with Russia, it would have a lot of conflicts. We always can have more conflicts with neighbors than with countries that are not neighbors. Now the EU has a border with Russia only in the Baltic states, and you already have problems in that area. Poland also has a large border with Belarus – for now, Belarus is an independent state, but if is integrated into Russia, the EU will have a large border with Russia.

9.5 Appendix E

Art. 2 Treaty on European Union, *derived from* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2012/art_2/oj

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

TITLE I
COMMON PROVISIONS

Article 2

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

9.6 Appendix F

Art. 8 Treaty on European Union, *derived from* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3AC2010%2F083%2F01

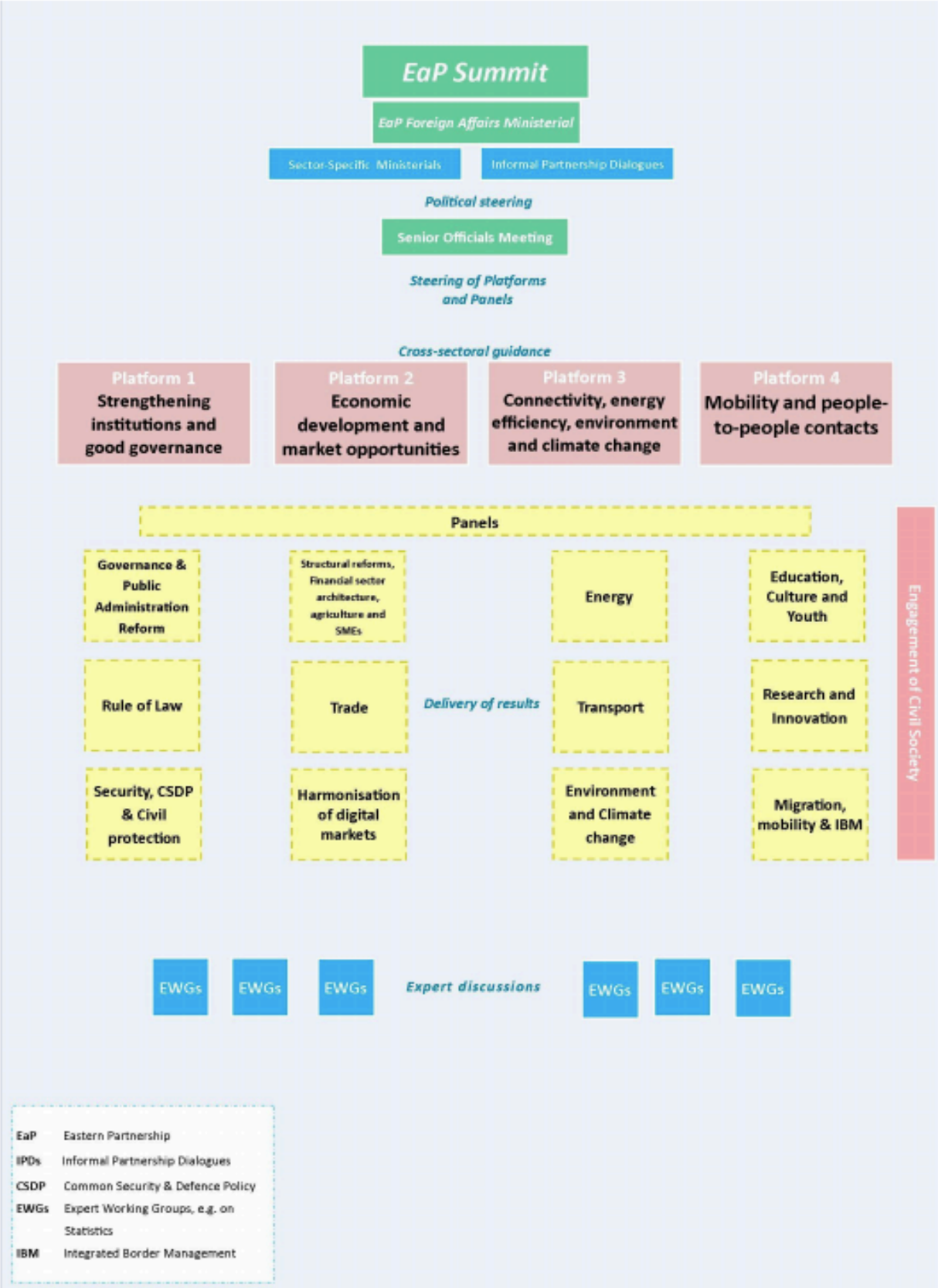
Article 8

1. The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.

2. For the purposes of paragraph 1, the Union may conclude specific agreements with the countries concerned. These agreements may contain reciprocal rights and obligations as well as the possibility of undertaking activities jointly. Their implementation shall be the subject of periodic consultation.

9.7 Appendix G

***Revised multilateral EaP structure (2017)**, derived from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31758/final-statement-st14821en17.pdf*



9.8 Appendix H

Policy objectives of the EaP Beyond 2020, *derived from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_453*

Beyond 2020, the EU, its Member States and the partner countries will work together to strengthen resilience as an overriding policy framework through **five policy objectives**:

A Partnership that CREATES

Strengthening the economy is key to meeting citizens' expectations, **reducing inequality** and making partner countries places where people want to build their futures. **Strong interconnections** between the EU and the EaP, as well as among the partner countries, are important drivers for economic development, regional integration, trade and mobility. The aim is to create **decent jobs** and **economic opportunities**, ensuring prosperity for people living in the partner countries.

What's next?

The EU and the partner countries will work together for resilient, sustainable and integrated economies:

✓ Increasing the **trade** and further regional and bilateral **integration of economies**

✓ Focusing on the full implementation of Association Agreements with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas and other **trade agreements**, for maximum benefits

✓ Providing stronger incentives for **structural reforms**, improving **access to finance** and supporting **SMEs**, **particularly women and young entrepreneurs**, to foster growth and investment

✓ Strengthening the interconnections through more investment in physical **connectivity** and **infrastructure** (in transport, energy and digital)

✓ Continuing to **invest in people**, with an emphasis on the young

✓ Better connecting **education**, **research** and **innovation** with private sector needs.

A Partnership that PROTECTS

Good governance and **democratic institutions**, **rule of law**, successful **anti-corruption policies**, the **fight against organised crime**, respect of **human rights** and security, including support to populations affected by conflict, are important preconditions for a functioning market economy and for sustainable growth and are the backbone of strong and resilient states and societies

What's next?

The EU and partner countries will renew their commitment to the fundamentals of the partnership, in particular for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security:

✓ Proposing ways to better measure the impact of **judicial reforms**

✓ Considering progress in **rule of law** reforms when deciding on assistance; the EU's incentive-based approach will continue to benefit those partner countries more engaged in reforms

✓ Reinvigorating EU support for **fighting economic crime and corruption**

✓ Continuing cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to enhance prevention, preparedness and response to **natural and man-made disasters**

✓ Stepping up support for **security dialogues and cooperation**.

A Partnership that GREENS

The European **Green Deal** makes it clear that environmental and climate challenges require urgent action by the EU and the partner countries. In the move towards **climate neutrality**, the EU and partner countries have the joint responsibility to fulfil their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and modernise their economies, reducing their carbon footprint.

What's next?

The EU and partner countries will work together towards a resilient and sustainable future:

✓ Transforming the region into fair and prosperous societies, with modern, resource-efficient, clean, circular and competitive economies, while increasing their **environmental and climate action**, including through more sustainable use of natural resources

✓ Developing **new green jobs** and economic opportunities linked to the **green transition**

✓ Developing **local** and **renewable energy sources**, thus halting the loss of biodiversity

✓ Continuing investment in **environmental governance** and in raising awareness, including by teaming up with civil society

✓ Accelerating the shift to **sustainable** and **smart mobility**

✓ Scaling up action in areas that are critical for **people's health** and **well-being**.

A Partnership that CONNECTS

A modern economy based on data can only be fully realised if citizens and businesses have access to high quality electronic communications infrastructure and services at affordable prices. The **Strategy on Shaping Europe's digital future** calls for a strong digital presence in the EU's neighbourhood to enable growth and drive sustainable development.

What's next?

The EU will invest further in the digital transformation of partner countries and will aim to extend the benefits of the Digital Single Market:

✓ Supporting the extension of secure and very high capacity Gigabit **broadband**, in particular in remote or less densely populated areas, and ensuring services are available at affordable prices

✓ Supporting the implementation of **roaming** and **spectrum** agreements among the partner countries and, where appropriate, with the EU

✓ Strengthening **e-Governance** in the EaP region to increase the efficiency, transparency and accountability for public administrations and facilitating reforms

✓ Scaling up support to highly innovative digital **start-ups** and facilitating their business cooperation across borders

✓ Further supporting and assisting the **cyber security** of the partner countries.

A Partnership that EMPOWERS

Transparent, citizen-centred and accountable public administrations, free and fair elections are essential for democracy. Together with an engaged **civil society, free, plural and independent media,** as well as the **protection of citizens' rights**, these are key ingredients for resilient, fair, inclusive, and democratic societies.

What's next?

The EU and partner countries will work together towards resilient, fair and inclusive societies:

✓ Ensuring that authorities **involve citizens** in decision-making, with the aim to support democratic systems and empower people to make informed choices

✓ Further supporting the capacity of **civil society organisations**, particularly grass-roots organisations and youth, to meaningfully engage in policy-making, and promote reforms and public accountability

✓ Promoting a well-functioning **media environment**, and independent journalists to ensure access to accurate and fact-based information

✓ Promoting social, economic and political **inclusion for all**, including women, children, persons belonging to minorities and conflict-affected populations

✓ Ensuring **mobility** and people-to-people contacts in a secure and well-managed environment, and ensuring support to vulnerable migrants and refugees.

9.9 Appendix I

***Relevant extract of the EU Global Strategy (2016)**, derived from*
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

We need a stronger Europe. This is what our citizens deserve, this is what the wider world expects. We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned. To the east, the European security order has been violated, while terrorism and violence plague North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe itself. Economic growth is yet to outpace demography in parts of Africa, security tensions in Asia are mounting, while climate change causes further disruption. Yet these are also times of extraordinary opportunity. Global growth, mobility, and technological progress – alongside our deepening partnerships – enable us to thrive, and allow ever more people to escape poverty and live longer and freer lives. We will navigate this difficult, more connected, contested and complex world guided by our shared interests, principles and priorities. Grounded in the values enshrined in the Treaties and building on our many strengths and historic achievements, we will stand united in building a stronger Union, playing its collective role in the world.

1. A Global Strategy to Promote our Citizens' Interests

Our interests and values go hand in hand. We have an interest in promoting our values in the world. At the same time, our fundamental values are embedded in our interests. Peace and security, prosperity, democracy and a rules-based global order are the vital interests underpinning our external action.

> "Our interests and values go hand in hand. We have an interest in promoting our values in the world. At the same time, our fundamental values are embedded in our interests."

Peace and Security

The European Union will promote peace and guarantee the security of its citizens and territory. This means that Europeans, working with partners, must have the necessary capabilities to defend themselves and live up to their commitments to mutual assistance and solidarity enshrined in the Treaties.

> "Europeans, working with partners, must have the necessary capabilities to defend themselves and live up to their commitments to mutual assistance and solidarity enshrined in the Treaties. Internal and external security are ever more intertwined: our security at home entails a parallel interest in peace in our neighbouring and surrounding regions."

Internal and external security are ever more intertwined: our security at home entails a parallel interest in peace in our neighbouring and surrounding regions. It implies a broader interest in preventing conflict, promoting human security, addressing the root causes of instability and working towards a safer world.

9.10 Appendix J

***Opening of European Security Strategy (2003)**, derived from*
http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf

Introduction

Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history.

The creation of the European Union has been central to this development. It has transformed the relations between our states, and the lives of our citizens. European countries are committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to co-operating through common institutions. Over this period, the progressive spread of the rule of law and democracy has seen authoritarian regimes change into secure, stable and dynamic democracies. Successive enlargements are making a reality of the vision of a united and peaceful continent.

No single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own

The United States has played a critical role in European integration and European security, in particular through NATO. The end of the Cold War has left the United States in a dominant position as a military actor. However, no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own.

Europe still faces security threats and challenges. The outbreak of conflict in the Balkans was a reminder that war has not disappeared from our continent. Over the last decade, no region of the world has been untouched by armed conflict. Most of these conflicts have been within rather than between states, and most of the victims have been civilians.

As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), the European Union is inevitably a global player... it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world.

As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), and with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union is inevitably a global player. In the last decade European forces have been deployed abroad to places as distant as Afghanistan, East Timor and the DRC. The increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU makes us a more credible and effective actor. Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world.