A GEOPOLITICAL ENLARGEMENT IN A CONTESTED CONTEXT

BORDER DYNAMICS IN THE REPOSITIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE EAST[1]

Maria Raquel Freire

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the post-Second World War context, the European project has aimed to bring about peace, stability and prosperity. The enlargement of the European Economic Community, then restricted to six members, was always on the agenda, accompanied by a process of integration intended to expand the area of security and prosperity while ensuring proper institutional functioning. The Enlargement Policy became part of the process of consolidating this political, economic and security project and expanding the area of prosperity and stability over the years. However, various political, economic and social crises, seen as catalysts for reform but in many cases giving rise to more sceptical voices regarding the European integration process, and the war in Ukraine since 2014, in particular, have brought about a fundamental change in the European political and security framework, leading to a reinterpretation of this political instrument. Throughout the history of European integration, enlargements have been seen as one of the European Union's (EU) most successful strategies for transformative diplomacy,[2] given the willingness and reformist commitment of the candidate states to meet the accession criteria and thus align them-

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the current eastward enlargement of the European Union, looking at border dynamics and how their construction and deconstruction contribute to collective imaginaries of security and insecurity in a new geopolitical framework. The article argues that enlargement adds a differentiated security and border construction component, with material and symbolic characteristics that are fundamental to the Union's own credibility. The geopolitical shift brought about by the war in Ukraine has led to a readjustment of Union policies also in a geopolitical sense, with the European Union presenting itself as a *locus* of resistance against the 'violent other', in a dual dynamic of containing both the violence and the fundamental violation of Europe's border regime through Russia's use of force, as well as reinterpreting its past as the significant 'other', materialised in the great wars to which it does not wish to return.

Keywords: enlargement, Eastern Partnership, border.

→

 https://doi.org/10.23906/ri2025.sia03

RESUMO

Um alargamento geopolítico num contexto contestado: dinâmicas de fronteira no reposicionamento da União Europeia a leste

Este artigo analisa o atual alargamento da União Europeia a leste, olhando dinâmicas de fronteira, e de que modo a sua construção e desconstrução contribui para os imaginários coletivos de segurança e insegurança num novo quadro geopolítico. O artigo argumenta que o alargamento adiciona uma componente de segurança e de construção de fronteiras diferenciada, com cunhos materiais e simbólicos fundamentais para a própria credibilidade da União. A alteração geopolítica que a guerra na Ucrânia implica levou a um reajuste das políticas da União também num sentido geopolítico, com esta a apresentar-se como *locus* de resistência face ao «outro-violento», numa dupla dinâmica de contenção da violência e da violação fundamental do regime de fronteiras na Europa através do uso da força pela Rússia, bem como de releitura do seu passado como o «outro» significante, materializado nas grandes guerras, às quais não quer voltar.

Palavras-chave: alargamento, Parceria Oriental, fronteira.

selves with the Union's methods of action and response. Nevertheless, this policy has not been without its critics.[3] Reforms are often only partially implemented, and national actors have the capacity to minimise the impact of policies, as illustrated by countries experiencing democratic setbacks, of which Hungary has become a prime example.[4] This dimension of commitment and political will on the part of candidate countries is key. In fact, 'the EU does not have a magic wand to transform other countries – unless they already want to be transformed. This is the main lesson of the enlargement waves in the 1990s and 2000s'.[5] Furthermore, criticism of the 'imposition' of a neoliberal model with emphasis on fundamental freedoms and rights and democratic principles understood as a way of shaping potential political choices have been mentioned multiple times.[6] In this context, the idea that enlargements are geopolitical has also been put forward, with the identification of regional border areas in which the EU intended to position itself more clearly, making borders less rigid by promoting cooperation in specific areas and the values and principles associated with the European project. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was conceived in this context, not necessarily as an alternative, but as a means of offering an informal integration programme extended to States close to the EU's borders, more or less interested in a gradual process of rapprochement. At that time, formal integration was not envisaged, but this changed with the shift in the European geopolitical landscape, more specifically in the context of violence in Ukraine and the large-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. In fact, enlargement was not on the agenda during the Juncker Commission (2014–19) and in the early years of the von der Leyen Commission (2019–21), as can be seen in the institutional structure that included the Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) of January 2015.[7]

The geopolitical enlargement involving the applications of the 'trio' – Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia –, the latter currently suspended[8] – in addition to the Western Balkans, brings a new dimension to this political instrument, which conditions the very legitimacy and credibility of the EU. In a context of hostility towards Russia,

the promise of enlargement as a form of resistance has become blatant. So what has changed in the geopolitical dimension of enlargement? What is new in this political equation? Concepts such principled pragmatism and resilience, together with the dynamics of constructing and deconstructing real and symbolic borders, have security implications in terms of what these dynamics mean, who their targets are and how changes can be implemented. However, these concepts are not new, being already clearly evident in the 2016 Global Strategy[9] and in the most recent strategic document adopted, the 2022 Strategic Compass.[10] In a somewhat reactive logic, these were part of the response to the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

In order to understand the geopolitical contours of enlargement, this article looks at border dynamics and how their construction and deconstruction contribute to collective imaginaries of security and insecurity in a new geopolitical framework. Border dynamics took on a new dimension, particularly after 2014, with Russia talking about the historical 'reintegration' of Crimea, activating 'geopolitical and historical imaginaries' of the peninsula,[11] while a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity was underway. The annexation of Crimea was framed within an identity-based reading of the post-Soviet area promoted by Russia, while also embodying the geopolitics driven by *Realpolitik*.[12] Border readings and confrontation dynamics will accelerate the ongoing processes of geopolitisation of agendas and instruments in the outlining of EU decisions and policies. In this context, the present article argues that the eastward enlargement is geopolitical, having been mobilised by an aggressive and militarised revisionist Russian foreign policy, adding a differentiated security and border-building component, with material and symbolic implications that are fundamental to the very credibility of the Union. The article begins by mapping the border dynamics and how they help us understand the adjustment processes underway in the enlarged Europe, and in the context of the new enlargement to the east. It then looks at von der Leyen's geopolitical Commission and how the transformation from a normative Europe to a geopolitical Europe, without one necessarily replacing the other, has been ongoing. The war in Ukraine has been a catalyst for these processes, and the EU's eastward enlargement embodies dynamics of rebordering, both in material terms through the alteration of the EU's external border, and in symbolic terms in the representation that these borders imply in terms of the location of security and resistance to the 'enemy' – Russia as the 'other' aggressor. These developments and how the Enlargement Policy is framed in Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, and how it constitutes a complex case in Georgia, will be the subject of analysis here. This study follows a qualitative methodology of narrative analysis based on official documents and speeches, in line with an understanding that the analysis of narratives allows us to identify trends and understandings, looking in a situated way at how ideas

and policies are presented and disseminated. The article concludes that the geopolitical change brought about by the war in Ukraine has led to a readjustment of EU policies in a geopolitical sense, of which the Eastern Enlargement Policy is another example, also implying a process of hollowing out of the Eastern Partnership.[13] In this context, the EU presents itself as a *locus* of resistance to the 'other', in a dual dynamic of containing violence and fundamental violations of the border regime in Europe through Russia's use of force, as well as reinterpreting its past as the significant 'other', materialised in the great wars to which it does not want to return.

BORDERS AS PROCESSES: MATERIAL AND SYMBOLIC DYNAMICS IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MEANINGS

Traditional studies of borders based on delimitation, sovereignty and territoriality have given way to new, more complex approaches to their meaning, types and functions.[14] At the heart of this change is a dynamic reading of borders, following social practices and discourses that move away from the traditional question of 'what' and instead ask 'how', looking at ordering discursive practices.[15] In this way, the border is understood as a process, and not just as an immutable physical barrier, reflecting practices of integration and/or exclusion, openness and/or control, and also being related to identity dynamics. These logics, which sometimes overlap, show how borders are not static, expressing processes of rebordering and debordering.[16] Differentiated approaches to the same border refer to the chameleon-like nature of the border, depending on the subjects and objects. The EU's external border is, in this context, essential in the way it welcomes and projects itself, as well as in the way it retreats and protects itself. In the words of von der Leyen, 'Europe stands by those in need of protection. All those fleeing Putin's bombs are welcome in Europe. We will provide protection to those seeking shelter and we will help those looking for a safe way home'.[17] The idea of a welcoming border and the symbolism of Europe's open doors to Ukraine and Ukrainians is clear, contrasting with the debate on 'Fortress Europe', closed to people from other geographical areas.[18] These dynamics of rebordering and debordering are also reflected in the Enlargement Policy.

Borders also show how perceptions of the 'other' vary. Otherness is a complex process which varies in time and space and is highly politicised, creating new barriers between those who are 'inside' and those who are 'outside'. It is in this context that the EU has developed mechanisms such as the ENP to ensure that borders are not rigid and that cooperation can be dense and deep, in line with the expectations and wishes of each partner. However, not only did the model reveal its limitations, as analysed further ahead, but also contributed to dynamics of borderisation, contrary to the underlying idea of material and symbolic

malleability and porosity. The rigidification of the interpretation of the 'other', motivated by the escalation of the war in Ukraine and the geopolitisation of the EU, led to a reinterpretation of its external borders and of the Eastern Partnership framework, in a logic of barrier and protection against the aggressor Russia. Very interesting in the construction of the EU and in the understanding of the 'other' is how it relates to its own past, referred to as the 'past self'. The past of war that led to the emergence of the European Communities is always very present in the European political imaginary, in which the normative has taken on such a clear dimension. In line with Thomas Diez's argument,

THE RIGIDIFICATION OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE 'OTHER', MOTIVATED BY THE ESCALATION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE GEOPOLITISATION OF THE EU, LED TO A REINTERPRETATION OF ITS EXTERNAL BORDERS AND OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK, IN A LOGIC OF BARRIER AND PROTECTION AGAINST THE AGGRESSOR RUSSIA.

> 'for most of the time after the Second World War the most important other in the construction of a European identity has been Europe's own past. This temporal form of othering offered the possibility to form an identity through less antagonistic and exclusionary practices than was common in the modern international society. However, since the 1990s geographic and cultural otherings are on the increase, marking a return of geopolitics in European identity constructions and undermining the notion of European integration as a fundamental challenge to the world of nation-states'.[19]

If we then spoke of a 'borderless world'[20] or borderlessness,[21] the current context of contestation and competition points to dynamics of greater fragmentation and the construction of new barriers.

The process of constructing the 'EU self' has sought to distance itself from this violent past. As Neumann and Welsh[22] argue, the problems that dominate the EU's relationship with the 'other' are not limited to the realm of external relations, but intrinsically linked to the question of what it means to be European and what requirements are necessary to achieve that status. This question is even more pressing in the context of the current eastward enlargement. The words of Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, addressing the European Parliament, are quite relevant in this regard, emphasising the European choice and how the reforms necessary for EU accession are a choice, part of Georgian culture and values, part of their identity, and not 'some foreign ideas imposed on us – as was the case with Soviet ideology'.[23] Thus, in these processes of transformation and rapprochement, the 'other' should not be seen as simply inferior, subordinate, dominated or stigmatised, since the 'other' has agency and can resist.[24] Ukraine has taken on this role well. The Ukrainian president's response to the offer of political asylum from the United

States in the early days of the large-scale invasion became paradigmatic: 'I need ammunition, not a ride'.[25] The resistance dynamics of some members of the Eastern Partnership show, on the one hand, how Russia has become an important driver in the processes of redefining borders with strong political, security and economic dimensions, along with historical, social and identity issues. The transformation of the Ukrainian narrative from 'Slavic brotherhood' to 'the other as enemy' is very clear in this regard. These dynamics also show how the EU has become a *locus* of resistance, with membership representing security and stability against Russia in a new geopolitical context.[26]

A GEOPOLITICAL COMMISSION AND ENLARGEMENT: BORDER AND RESISTANCE DYNAMICS

Some argue that the EU's engagement with its eastern partners was not essentially geopolitical, but motivated by normative considerations, based on dynamics of interdependence and interconnection, emphasising the EU's role as a civil and normative power and avoiding entering into a zero-sum game with Russia.[27] In this vein, the understanding is that 'the disagreement between the EU and Russia [is due to] a lack of clear strategic thinking on the part of the EU or a lack of a clear geopolitical approach'.[28] The term 'geopolitical' has been used in European jargon to identify an approach to foreign policy focused on the distribution of military and economic power and the resulting power dynamics.[29] Zaki Laïdi argues that the EU has understood that interdependence can be weaponised for political ends, as energy policies with Russia demonstrate, and does not necessarily imply a liberal transformation of political systems, which means a radical change in the EU's perception of the world.[30] Josep Borrell, the former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, stated that the EU needs to

> 'speak the language of power, and not only rely on soft power as we used to do. [...] In a world of geostrategic competition, in which we see increasingly the use of force in different ways and in which economic and other instrument are weaponized, we must relearn the language of power and conceive of Europe as a top-tier geostrategic actor. This is certainly not the case yet and it is a difficult learning process, and in the area of European common security and defense policy, we still punch below our declared ambitions'.[31]

This alignment opens up the discussion on the Union's position as a normative actor seeking to assert itself on the basis of its constituent values and principles, and how this can be combined with this new approach that points towards a language of power, strategy and geopolitics,[32] contained in the so-called 'Geopolitical Commission'.
Regardless of the EU's own discourse, neighbouring countries and other actors with interests in the region view its actions in regional terms as being driven by geopolitical assumptions.[33] This has been most evident in the eastern neighbour-

hood, where Russia has interpreted the EU's growing influence and desire to impose a unilateral project for building a region as a geopolitical threat to its sphere of influence.[34] Although the Kremlin's initial reaction was reserved, concerns that the EU was creating its own sphere of influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States, limiting Russia to what it describes as priority partner status, as well as the EU's development of an alternative to Russia's integrationist plans in that Commonwealth, combined with the Ukrainian government's 'panic' in autumn 2013 to sign an Association Agreement with the EU, clearly changed the equation.[35] However, these countries located on the borders of Russia and the EU should be able to pursue different paths in their policies, without necessarily having to opt for closer relations with one or the other of these actors. This was the rationale behind the actions of some of these states in the post-Soviet space, promoting multivector policies over several years, as the cases of Ukraine and even Azerbaijan clearly illustrate. However, in the autumn of 2013, when the Ukrainian authorities had to choose between integration into the EU framework – with the signing of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area – which was on the agenda, or integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, which Russia was sponsoring, the alternative ceased to exist and a choice became necessary. Naturally, this choice implies a differentiated geopolitical alignment. For David Cadier, this means a zero-sum game in the geopolitisation of EU foreign policy, in the sense that it barricades neighbouring states between two mutually exclusive alternatives.[36] The EU's desire to integrate Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia has been strongly driven by the need to counter Russia's growing influence in the region. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and large-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the EU has emphasised that geopolitical stability in Eastern Europe is closely linked to its own security. This was already the rationale behind the Eastern Partnership and the idea that the broader framework of the Neighbourhood Policy aimed to create a 'ring of friends' around the Union's borders. When the Eastern Partnership was created in 2009, separating the southern and eastern dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the question of a greater involvement of these states in EU policies changed the border dynamics, from a logic of separation to one of greater – albeit informal – integration, with a strong emphasis on the imaginary of European belonging. The revision of the ENP in the autumn of 2015 made it clear for the first time in official EU documents that the neighbourhood is a geopolitical space and that the EU should be involved in conflict resolution in the region.[37] Enlargement is therefore part of a strategic move to strengthen the Union's external borders, both symbolically and materially, and

ENLARGEMENT IS THEREFORE PART OF A STRATEGIC MOVE TO STRENGTHEN THE UNION'S EXTERNAL BORDERS, BOTH SYMBOLICALLY AND MATERIALLY, AND OF A PROCESS OF CONTAINING RUSSIAN TERRITORIAL EXPANSION.

of a process of containing Russian territorial expansion. The Brussels strategy is one of exclusion and isolation of Russia, which was not necessarily the case in 2009, when the Eastern Partnership was launched.[38] It is important to remember that the three countries that have been granted candidate status have ongoing territorial conflicts with Russia: Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Transnistria in Moldova, and Crimea and the territories occupied in the ongoing war in Ukraine. 'For the EU, incorporating a country that is at war – or, in fact, recovering from a devastating conflict with a significant part of its territory under de facto Russian sovereignty – is a formidable challenge.'[39] The EU thus assumes the role of a *locus* of resistance in the face of Russian aggression.

Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, geopolitical discussions have gained ground within the EU, with the dynamics of democratisation framed as a counterpoint to the authoritarian Russian model. It has become clear that regional security cannot be disconnected from the Union's policies towards states on its external borders, and that economic cooperation and institutional development are not enough in the new geopolitical framework, in which security guarantees take on a new dimension. While the Eastern Partnership aimed at a process of border removal, the insecurity that developed around the EU's external borders, whether in the form of gas and oil pipelines, migratory flows or political instability, contributed to processes of border strengthening that seek to isolate the EU from external threats.[40] On the other hand, it should be noted that the inequalities that have always characterised the relations between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, which are diverse also among themselves, have contributed to processes of border redefinition that have limited both the regional dynamics of integration and the EU's political positioning in this space. The new enlargement to the east reinforces these dynamics, which are part of the events that have been redefining European security and the strategic documents adopted by the EU, and which must be read in context. The 2022 Strategic Compass, in the preamble written by the then High Representative Josep Borrell, affirms the need to

> 'ensure that we turn the EU's geopolitical awakening into a more permanent strategic posture. For there is so much more to do. The essence of what the EU did in reacting to Russia's invasion was to unite and use the full range of EU policies and levers as instruments of power. We showed that we are ready to pay a severe price to defend our security and that of our partners – the price of freedom'.[41]

The document adds that the EU needs to 'take a quantum leap to develop a stronger and more capable European Union that acts as a provider of security, based on the fundamental values of the Union'.[42] While in the previous strategic document, the Global Strategy adopted in 2016, resilience and pragmatic principles paved the

way for a less normative approach, the Strategic Compass takes a clearly more geopolitical approach in its content and language – in the Global Strategy, the word 'geopolitics' is not used, but in the Strategic Compass it appears 15 times in the text. The Global Strategy indicates a shift towards a resilience approach focused on developing response capabilities and greater autonomy within the framework of the EU and its partners. This implies a 'geopolitical shift' in that strategic interest and 'pragmatic principles' gained ground and the importance of military capabilities was recognised, emphasising the security of the Union and its neighbourhood. and limiting references to democratisation.[43] The basic idea that by offering economic incentives and participation, albeit partial, in the integration process, the EU would mobilise its neighbours to commit to democratic and market reforms, has revealed its limitations. Given the meagre results of this strategy and the growing instability to the south and east, the Global Strategy focuses more clearly on protecting the Union's interests and ensuring stability and resilience.[44] The limitations of the Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership in stabilising the neighbourhood are also acknowledged here.[45]

In this context, the Enlargement Policy further undermines the Eastern Partnership by offering candidate status to three of the partners covered by this initiative, with Belarus suspending its participation, Azerbaijan maintaining a stance that privileges the economic dimension without democratic reforms or conditionality of principles, and Armenia maintaining a course of slow rapprochement with the EU in a context of great dependence on Russia. Recognising that its involvement with neighbouring countries has always been limited in the face of Russian advances and threats, the EU has moved forward with the possibility of the 'trio' joining, seen as a turning point. By applying for EU membership, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have made a clear statement about their understanding of European security and border practices. In fact, this change repositions the EU, which aims to become a more robust geopolitical actor, in line with the commitments and aspirations of its treaties. If the EU fails in this endeavour, it will be signalling to Russia that the use of force and military intervention win the day, and that autocracy prevails over democratic values.[46] The EU clearly sees itself as an actor who wants to play a more active role in its neighbourhood against Russian aggression, as exemplified by its material and human support for Ukraine,[47] increasing its geopolitical influence to ensure that neighbouring countries remain close to Western Europe, both politically and economically, as well as in terms of security.

Enlargement thus takes on geopolitical contours and plays a key role in ensuring that the European order does not collapse under pressure from authoritarian and revisionist powers such as Russia. The Russian narrative has become undeviating in its criticism of the West, highlighting the blame that has permeated Russian foreign policy and seeking to reverse responsibilities: '[it was] them who started the war. And now we are using force to end it'.[48] The political space for dynamics of debordering in the enlarged

Europe has shrunk. The barriers that have re-emerged between Western Europe, those wishing to join the EU, and Russia, are reinforced daily by the violence in Ukraine. Thus, by including countries such as Ukraine and Moldova on the path to enlargement, the EU is making a clear statement that it intends to expand its zone of stability, now with formal institutionalised contours, promoting rebordering in relation to Russia and Belarus, and eliminating any kind of physical or symbolic barrier in relation to candidate countries. The President of the Commission, von der Leyen, has been very vocal in her support for enlargement. She believes that we need to

BY INCLUDING COUNTRIES SUCH AS UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA ON THE PATH TO ENLARGEMENT, THE EU IS MAKING A CLEAR STATEMENT THAT IT INTENDS TO EXPAND ITS ZONE OF STABILITY, NOW WITH FORMAL INSTITUTIONALISED CONTOURS.

> 'move past old, binary debates about enlargement. This is not a question of deepening integration or widening the Union. We can and we must do both, to give us the geopolitical weight and the capacity to act. And this is what our Union has always done. [...] We have proven that we can be a Geopolitical Union and show that we can move fast when we are united. And I believe that Team Europe also works at 30+'.[49]

In her speech marking two years of Russian aggression in Ukraine, von der Leyen highlighted the reformist course that Ukraine has followed, even in the context of war, with the adoption of

> 'new legislation to expand national minority rights, to improve the judicial system, and to ensure checks and balances on power. This is what led us to launching the accession negotiations. And this progress is happening not only because Europe is asking for it. This is the deep desire of the people of Ukraine. Ukraine is Europe, because Europe is in the hearts and minds of Ukrainians. And soon enough, Ukraine will also be in our Union'.[50]

The Ukrainian President emphasises how his country, currently at war, is fighting for a free and democratic Europe, whence follows that the country's destiny can only be in the EU.

> 'Ukrainians will always make Europe stronger! [...] All of us in this room, all who stand with us in defense of freedom and Europe, are more than leaders and politicians, civil society activists and diplomats. We are all founders of peace. Exactly the founders of peace. This is our primary duty to our countries, to our Europe, and to our history.'[51]

The implicit resistance to Russia's hegemonic agenda in the post-Soviet space is also evident in the case of Moldova. The reconceptualisation of borders and secu-

rity in opposition to the aggressor 'other' has become very present in the narrative. For example, the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, stressed that

> '[b]y applying to join the European Union, we want the world to know: we choose democracy over autocracy, liberty over oppression, peace over war, and prosperity over poverty. The EU candidate status gives us hope, a clear sense of direction, a unifying goal, an anchor, and a strong sense of belonging. Belonging to the free world'.[52]

In this context, the case of Georgia raises several questions due to the grey area in which it finds itself, as a reluctant candidate country whose domestic policies have become less pro-European and clearly more favourable to closer ties with Moscow, thereby promoting the rebordering of relations, when the goal was the opposite. The European Commission suspended Georgia's EU accession process in October 2024 on the basis of their adoption of legislation that restricts the principles of the rule of law and fundamental rights, including the law on foreign agents, which identifies and limits the activities of local agencies and actors whose foreign funding is considered a threat to the national interest, contrary to the basic principles of the Union.[53] The following month, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze suspended the accession process, based on the European Parliament's decision not to recognise the legislative process in the country, criticising the EU for blackmail and postponing a possible start to accession negotiations until 2028.[54] This clearly demonstrates how reversible the processes are and reveals an unintended consequence of policies which, by exerting pressure for reform, may clash with internal dynamics of contestation and/or resistance. In the process of strengthening European security, in which border dynamics have taken centre stage, the logic of integration has not always prevailed, as illustrated by the case of Georgia.

CONCLUSION

The war in Ukraine has fundamentally changed the EU's approach to enlargement, shifting towards a more geopolitical logic imbued with security concerns. On the one hand, at its external borders, the EU's approach has sought fluidity through the promotion of values and principles that bring these states closer to the Union; on the other hand, the more states reject EU values, the more their otherness is reified as geographical distance.[55] In the face of Russian aggression, the EU has changed its Enlargement Policy to include countries that are strategic partners in securing its borders, reinforcing its values and counteracting external threats, namely Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. This marks a shift from the EU's previous approach, in which enlargement was largely viewed through the lens of economic integration and internal reforms, to a more geopolitical vision that seeks to strengthen the Union's position in a changing international landscape and in the

face of a revisionist Russia. 'Geopolitical Europe', in Laïdi's words, is no longer an option but a condition for Europe's survival.[56]

The narrative clearly shows the importance of combining the normative actor, encompassing the components of the rule of law, democracy and human rights that inform the EU's actions, with a more strategic approach, underlined by the pragmatism of principles and normative and material resilience. Border dynamics consubstantiate the perception of threats and responses in the conflicting processes of debordering and rebordering of the EU in its relations with its wider neighbourhood. If the Eastern Partnership meant debordering, geopolitical enlargement is clearly synonymous with rebordering vis-à-vis Russia. In this way, the EU has been assuming the role of a *locus* of resistance, with the prospect of these countries' accession confirming a view of antagonism towards Moscow. In these processes, the definition of the 'other' has taken a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, Russia as the 'threat-other', and on the other, the EU's own past as 'the violent-other-self' to which it does not wish to return. In this markedly geopolitical context, the Enlargement Policy goes hand in hand with the EU's credibility in its ability to respond in a contested context. R:I

Reception date: 18 February 2025 | Approval date: 23 April 2025

Maria Raquel Freire Researcher at Centre for Social Studies of the Universityy of Coimbra (CES) and professor of International Relations at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra (FEUC). Her research interests focus on peace studies, foreign policy, international security, the European Union and Eurasia.
> FEUC, Av. Dias da Silva, 165, 3004-512 Coimbra, Portugal | rfreire@fe.uc.pt | ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2952-6017

ENDNOTES

1 This publication is the result of work funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology under the Uni-I&I University Multi-Year Funding | Program for R&D Units (UIDP/50012/2020) and the Marie Curie Staff Exchange project (CARSI, no: 101086415). A previous version of this paper was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, No. 86, June 2025.

2 SCHIMMELFENNIG, Frank – 'EU political accession conditionality after the 2004 enlargement: consistency and effectiveness'. In *Journal of European Public Policy*. Vol. 15, No. 6, 2008, pp. 918–37.

3 The difficulties surrounding the enlargement process in the Western Balkans should also be considered.

4 BECHEV, Dimitar – 'Can EU enlargement work?'. Carnegie Europe. Brussels. 20 June 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/can-eu-enlargement-work?lang=en&center=europe; 'HUNGARY'S VIKTOR Orbán threatens to blow up EU's Ukraine policy'. POLITICO. 22 November 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-viktor-orban-threatens-to-blow-up-eu-ukraine-policy-european-union/.

5 BECHEV, Dimitar – 'Can EU enlargement work?'.

6 For instance, KOROSTELEVA, Elena A. – 'Evaluating the role of partnership in the European Neighbourhood Policy: the eastern neighbourhood'. In *Eastern Journal of European Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 2013, pp. 11–36. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ejes.uaic.ro/articles/EJES2013_0402_KOR.pdf.

7 DABROWSKI, Marek – 'The European Union's geopolitical ambitions: enlargement, neighbourhood and necessary institutional changes'. In *Intereconomics*. Vol. 59, No. 6, 2024, p. 327.

8 See notes 53 and 54.

9 *A STRATEGIC COMPASS for Security and Defence for a European Union that Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf.

10 *SHARED VISION, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Brussels. EUGS. European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. June 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

11 BIERSACK, John; O'LEAR, Shannon – 'The geopolitics of Russia's annexation of Crimea: narratives, identity, silences, and energy'. In *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Vol. 55, No. 3, 2014, pp. 247–69. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2014.985241.

12 FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Power and security in the Mediterranean Global South and at the eastern EU borders: Russia in Syria and Ukraine'. In *Border Crises and Human Mobility in the Mediterranean Global South*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 67–89.

13 The Eastern Partnership, established in 2009, includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Belarus has maintained a limited cooperative stance in this format. The EU did not recognise the results of the August 2020 presidential elections, and relations deteriorated with the imposition of sanctions on the Lukashenko regime, which has supported Russia since the start of the war in Ukraine. Belarus suspended its participation in June 2021.

14 SENDHARDT, Bastian – 'Border types and bordering processes a theoretical approach to the EU/Polish-Ukrainian border as a multidimensional phenomenon'. In *Borders and Border Regions in Europe. Changes, Challenges and Chances*. Transcript Verlag, 2013, p. 25. KOLOSSOV, Vladimir; SCOTT, James – 'Selected conceptual issues in border studies'. In *Belgeo*. No. 1, 2013, p. 1.

15 SENDHARDT, Bastian – 'Border types and bordering processes...', p. 25; JACOBS, Joren; VAN ASSCHE, Kristof – 'Understanding empirical boundaries: a systems-theoretical avenue in border studies'. In *Geopolitics*. Vol. 19, No. 1, 2014, p. 183.

16 SENDHARDT, Bastian – 'Border types and bordering processes...', p. 29.

17 EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Statement by President von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine'. 27 February 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/%20en/statement_22_1441/.

18 DIAS, Vanda Amaro; FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Insecurities in eu border management: the unintended consequences of securitization processes in the Mediterranean'. In *methaodos.revista de ciências sociales*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 2022, pp. 297–311.

19 DIEZ, Thomas – 'Europe's others and the return of geopolitics'. In *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. Vol. 17, No. 2, 2004, pp. 319–35.

20 OHMAE, Kenichi – *The Borderless World*. London: Profile Books, 1994.

21 KOLOSSOV, Vladimir; SCOTT, James – 'Selected conceptual issues in border studies', p. 4.

22 NEUMANN, Iver B.; WELSH, Jennifer M. – 'The other in European self-definition: an addendum to the literature on international society'. In *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 17, No. 4, 1991, p. 347.

23 ZOURABICHVILI, Salome – 'Georgian President addresses European Parliament [full speech]'. Georgian Public Broadcasting. 31 May 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://1tv.ge/lang/en/news/georgian-president-addresses-european-parliament-full-speech/.

24 ADLER-NISSEN, Rebecca – 'The social self in International Relations'. In *European Review of International Studies*. Vol. 3, No. 3, 2016, p. 36.

25 'ZELENSKY REFUSES US offer to evacuate, saying "I need ammunition, not a ride"'. CNN. 26 February 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/26/europe/ukraine-zelensky-evacuation-intl/index.html.

26 FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Reconfiguring dynamics of bordering/debordering in EU-Eastern neighbours' relations: the EU as locus of resistance'. In *New Perspectives*. Vol. 32, No. 3, 2024, pp. 240–56.

27 CROMBOIS, Jean F. – 'Which geo-politics for the European Union? The EU's Eastern Partnership». In *International Relations and Diplomacy*. Vol. 3, No. 7, 2015, pp. 480–86.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 483.

29 LEHNE, Stefan – 'How the EU can survive in a geopolitical age'. Carnegie Europe. 25 February 2020, pp. 1–2. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2020/02/how-the-eu-can-survive-in-a-geopolitical-age?lang=en&center=europe.

30 LAÏDI, Zaki – 'The meaning of geopolitical Europe: a response to Hans Kundnani'. In *Internationale Politik Quarterly*. 16 January 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ip-quarterly.com/en/meaning-geopolitical-europe-response-hans-kundnani.

31 EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE – 'Several outlets – Europe must learn quickly to speak the language of power'. 29 October 2020. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/several-outlets-europe-must-learn-quickly-speak-language-power_und_en.

32 LEHNE, Stefan – 'How the EU can survive in a geopolitical age', p. 1.

33 KHASSON, Viktoriya – 'Cross-border cooperation over the eastern EU border: between assistance and partnership under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument'. In *East European Politics*. Vol. 29, No. 3, 2013, pp. 328–43.

34 NITOIU, Cristian; SUS, Monika – 'Introduction: the rise of geopolitics in the EU's approach in its eastern neighbourhood'. In *Geopolitics*. Vol. 24, No. 1, 2018, p. 3.

35 ALEXANDROVA-ARBATOVA, Nadia – 'A Russian view on the Eastern Partnership'. Clingendael. 23 March 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.clingendael.org/publication/russian-view-eastern-partnership.

36 CADIER, David – *The Geopolitics of Eurasian Economic Integration*. London: LSE IDEAS, 2014. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-Geopolitics-of-Eurasian-Economic-Intergration.pdf. In this regard, the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement signed in 2017 is interesting, given that Armenia is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union and a compatible formula has been found that does not imply an exclusive dynamic.

37 NITOIU, Cristian; SUS, Monika – 'Introduction...', p. 9.

38 BECHEV, Dimitar – 'Can EU enlargement work?'.

39 *Ibidem*.

40 FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Reinforcing EU's actorness? A look at EU's reshaping of security'. In *EU Geopolitical Actorness in a Changing World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025, pp. 29–53.

41 *A STRATEGIC COMPASS for Security and Defence for a European Union that Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*, p. 5.

42 *Ibidem*, p. 15.

43 BISCOP, Sven – 'The EU global strategy: *Realpolitik* with European characteristics'. Egmont Institute. 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep06638.

44 LEHNE, Stefan – 'How the EU can survive in a geopolitical age', p. 3.

45 See, for instance, SASSE, Gwendolyn – 'The European Neighbourhood Policy: conditionality revisited for the EU's eastern neighbours». In *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 60, No. 2, 2008, pp. 295–316; HAUKKALA, Hiski – 'The EU's regional normative hegemony encounters hard realities: the revised European Neighbourhood Policy and the Ring of Fire'. In *The Revised European Neighbourhood Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 77–94.

46 AKHVLEDIANI, Tinatin – 'Geopolitical and security concerns of the EU's enlargement to the East: the case of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia'. In *Intereconomic*s.Vol. 57, No. 4, 2022, pp. 226–27.

47 EUROPEAN UNION – 'EU support for Ukraine'. 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-support-ukraine_en.

48 PUTIN, Vladimir – 'Presidential Address to Federal Assembly. President of Russia official website'. The Kremlin. 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70565.

49 EUROPEAN COMMISSION – '2023 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen'. 13 September 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https ://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_4426.

50 EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the need for unwavering EU support for Ukraine, after two years of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine'. 6 February 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/speech-president-von-der-leyen-european-parliament-plenary-need-unwavering-eu-support-ukraine-after-2024-02-06_en.

51 ZELENSKY, Volodymyr – 'Europe and other parts of the world should not be a place where the ambitions of tyrants destroy the lives of nations. Speech by President of Ukraine at the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen award ceremony'. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy official website. 14 May 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/yevropa-ta-inshi-chastini-zemli-ne-mayut-buti-miscem-de-ambi-82901.

52 SANDU, Maia – 'Statement by H.E. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova. Delivered at the General Debate of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly'. Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. 21 September 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://presedinte.md/eng/discursuri/declaratia-es-maia-sandu-presedinta-republicii-moldova-la-dezbaterea-generala-din-cadrul-celei-de-a-77-a-sesiuni-a-adunarii-generale-a-onu.

53 EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Georgia 2024 Report accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions 2024", Communication on EU enlargement policy'. SWD(2024) 697 final. Brussels. 30 October 2024.

54 EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Statement by the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission Kaja Kallas and Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos on Georgia'. 1 December 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_6161.

55 NITOIU, Cristian; SUS, Monika – 'Introduction...', p. 3.

56 LAÏDI, Zaki – 'The meaning of geopolitical Europe...'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A STRATEGIC COMPASS for Security and Defence for a European Union that Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security. 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf.

ADLER-NISSEN, Rebecca – 'The social self in International Relations'. In *European Review of International Studies*. Vol. 3, No. 3, 2016, pp. 27–39. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3224/eris.v3i3.27340.

AKHVLEDIANI, Tinatin – 'Geopolitical and security concerns of the EU's enlargement to the East: the case of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia'. In *Intereconomics*. Vol. 57, No. 4, 2022, pp. 225–28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-022-1067-0.

ALEXANDROVA-ARBATOVA, Nadia – 'A Russian view on the Eastern Partnership'. Clingendael. 23 March 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.clingendael.org/publication/russian-view-eastern-partnership.

BECHEV, Dimitar – 'Can EU enlargement work?'. Carnegie Europe. Brussels. 20 June 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/can-eu-enlargement-work?lang=en&center=europe.

BIERSACK, John; O'LEAR, Shannon – 'The geopolitics of Russia's annexation of Crimea: narratives, identity, silences, and energy'. In *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Vol. 55, No. 3, 2014, pp. 247–69. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2014.985241.

BISCOP, Sven – 'The EU global strategy: *Realpolitik* with European characteristics'. Egmont Institute. 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep06638.

CADIER, David – *The Geopolitics of Eurasian Economic Integration*. London: LSE IDEAS, 2014. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-Geopolitics-of-Eurasian-Economic-Intergration.pdf.

CROMBOIS, Jean F. – 'Which geopolitics for the European Union? The EU's Eastern Partnership'. In *International Relations and Diplomacy*. Vol. 3, No. 7, 2015, pp. 480–86. DOI: 10.17265/2328-2134/2015.07.005.

DABROWSKI, Marek – 'The European Union's geopolitical ambitions: enlargement, neighbourhood and necessary institutional changes'. In *Intereconomics*. Vol. 59, No. 6, 2024, pp. 327–31.

DIAS, Vanda Amaro; FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Insecurities in EU border management: the unintended consequences of securitization processes in the Mediterranean'. In *methaodos.revista de ciencias sociales*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 2022, pp. 297–311. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.17502/mrcs.v10i2.561.

DIEZ, Thomas – 'Europe's others and the return of geopolitics'. In *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. Vol. 17, No. 2, 2004, pp. 319–35. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/0957570420002459 24.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Statement by President von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine'. 27 February 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/%20en/statement_22_1441/.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – '2023 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen'. 13 September 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https ://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_4426.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the need for unwavering EU support for Ukraine, after two years of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine'. 6 February 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/speech-president-von-der-leyen-european-parliament-plenary-need-unwavering-eu-support-ukraine-after-2024-02-06_en.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Georgia 2024 Report accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions 2024', Communication on EU enlargement policy'. SWD(2024) 697 final. Brussels. 30 October 2024.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – 'Statement by the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission Kaja Kallas and Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos on Georgia'.

1 December 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_6161.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE – 'Several outlets – Europe must learn quickly to speak the language of power'. 29 October 2020. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/several-outlets-europe-must-learn-quickly-speak-language-power_und_en.

EUROPEAN UNION – 'EU support for Ukraine'. 2024. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-support-ukraine_en.

FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Power and security in the Mediterranean Global South and at the eastern EU borders: Russia in Syria and Ukraine'. In *Border Crises and Human Mobility in the Mediterranean Global South*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 67–89. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90295-7_4.

FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Reconfiguring dynamics of bordering/debordering in EU-eastern neighbours' relations: the EU as locus of resistance'. In *New Perspectives*. Vol. 32, No. 3, 2024, pp. 240–56. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/2336825X2412409.

FREIRE, Maria Raquel – 'Reinforcing EU's actorness? A look at EU's reshaping of security'. In *EU Geopolitical Actorness in a Changing World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025, pp. 29–53. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-81160-9_2.

HAUKKALA, Hiski – 'The EU's regional normative hegemony encounters hard realities: the revised European Neighbourhood Policy and the Ring of Fire'. In *The Revised European Neighbourhood Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 77–94. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47182-6_4.

'HUNGARY'S VIKTOR Orbán threatens to blow up EU's Ukraine policy'. POLITICO. 22 November 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-viktor-orban-threatens-to-blow-up-eu-ukraine-policy-european-union/.

JACOBS, Joren; VAN ASSCHE, Kristof – 'Understanding empirical boundaries: a systems-theoretical avenue in border studies'. In *Geopolitics*. Vol. 19, No. 1, 2014, pp. 182–205. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2013.830106.

KHASSON, Viktoriya – 'Cross-border cooperation over the eastern EU border: between assistance and partnership under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument'. In *East European Politics*. Vol. 29, No. 3, 2013, pp. 328–43. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2013.807802.

KOLOSSOV, Vladimir; SCOTT, James – 'Selected conceptual issues in border studies'. In *Belgeo*. No. 1, 2013. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.10532.

KOROSTELEVA, Elena A. – 'Evaluating the role of partnership in the European Neighbourhood Policy: the eastern neighbourhood'. In *Eastern Journal of European Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 2013, pp. 11–36. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ejes.uaic.ro/articles/EJES2013_0402_KOR.pdf.

LAÏDI, Zaki – 'The meaning of geopolitical Europe: a response to Hans Kundnani'. In *Internationale Politik Quarterly*. 16 January 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://ip-quarterly.com/en/meaning-geopolitical-europe-response-hans-kundnani.

LEHNE, Stefan – 'How the EU can survive in a geopolitical age'. Carnegie Europe. 25 February 2020, pp. 1–2. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2020/02/how-the-eu-can-survive-in-a-geopolitical-age?lang=en&center=europe.

NEUMANN, Iver B.; WELSH, Jennifer M. – 'The other in European self-definition: an addendum to the literature on international society'. In *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 17, No. 4, 1991, pp. 327–48. DOI: 10.1017/s0260210500112045.

NITOIU, Cristian; SUS, Monika – 'Introduction: the rise of geopolitics in the EU's approach in its eastern neighbourhood'. In *Geopolitics*. Vol. 24, No. 1, 2018, pp. 1–19. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1544396.

OHMAE, Kenichi – *The Borderless World*. London: Profile Books, 1994.

PUTIN, Vladimir – 'Presidential Address to Federal Assembly. President of Russia official website'. The Kremlin. 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70565.

SANDU, Maia – 'Statement by H.E. Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova. Delivered at the General Debate of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly'. Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. 21 September 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://presedinte.md/eng/discursuri/declaratia-es-maia-sandu-presedinta-republicii-moldova-la-dezbaterea-generala-din-cadrul-celei-de-a-77-a-sesiuni-a-adunarii-generale-a-onu.

SASSE, Gwendolyn – 'The European Neighbourhood Policy: conditionality revisited for the EU's eastern neighbours'. In *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 60, No. 2, 2008, pp. 295–316. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130701820150.

SCHIMMELFENNIG, Frank – 'EU political accession conditionality after the 2004 enlargement: consistency and effectiveness'. In *Journal of European Public Policy*. Vol. 15, No. 6, 2008, pp. 918–37. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760802196861.

SENDHARDT, Bastian – 'Border types and bordering processes a theoretical approach to the EU/Polish-Ukrainian border as a multidimensional phenomenon'. In *Borders and Border Regions in Europe. Changes, Challenges and Chances*. Transcript Verlag, 2013, pp. 21–43. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839424421.

SHARED VISION, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. Brussels. EUGS. European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. June 2016. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

ZELENSKY, Volodymyr – 'Europe and other parts of the world should not be a place where the ambitions of tyrants destroy the lives of nations. Speech by President of Ukraine at the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen award ceremony'. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy official website. 14 May 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/yevropa-ta-inshi-chastini-zemli-ne-mayut-buti-miscem-de-ambi-82901.

'ZELENSKY REFUSES US offer to evacuate, saying "I need ammunition, not a ride"'. CNN. 26 February 2022. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/26/europe/ukraine-zelensky-evacuation-intl/index.html.

ZOURABICHVILI, Salome – 'Georgian President addresses European Parliament [full speech]'. Georgian Public Broadcasting. 31 May 2023. Accessed: 30 December 2024. Available at: https://1tv.ge/lang/en/news/georgian-president-addresses-european-parliament-full-speech/.