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European Union security logics to the east: the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership

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This article argues that the broad security discourse built into the European Union's (EU's) initiatives to the east, and specifically the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) have in practice not yielded the stability, prosperity and security sought after by the EU. Whilst the EU has pursued bilateral and multilateral processes of engagement through the ENP and EaP, the paradox has remained within its double security narrative and has often resulted in minimal change to the east, as well as contestation from eastern partners and regional actors such as Russia. The conclusion suggests that the EU must provide a more pragmatic, differentiated and balanced narrative, and thus process of engagement with the east if it is serious about creating a zone of peace, stability and prosperity.

Keywords: European Union; European Neighbourhood Policy; Eastern Partnership; eastern dimension; security discourse/narratives; Russia

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP 2003) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP 2009) initiatives, constructed for the purpose of ensuring 'security, stability and prosperity' in the European Union's (EU's) neighbourhood through the offer of 'everything but institutions' have been given much scholarly attention in the academic literature in recent years (Albioni 2005, Del Sarto and Schumacher 2005, Pardo and Zemer 2005, Scott 2005, Smith 2005, Dannreuther 2006, Kelley 2006, Browning and Joenniemi 2008, Bosse and Korosteleva-Polglase 2009, Bechev and Nicolaïdes 2010, Browning and Christou 2010). This article will focus specifically on the EU's approach towards the eastern dimension through an exploration of the construction, governance and practice of the ENP/EaP,¹ as policies aimed specifically at 'integrating' the east with the EU.² To this end, it is important to note at the outset what is at stake for the EU in 'security' terms: first, the east is characterised by recurring political instability and economic crisis caused by weak governance; second, and related, this breeds transnational criminal activity, terrorism, corruption and incentivises illegal immigration towards the EU; the numerous, now, seemingly 'unfrozen' conflicts to the east are a source of potential violence that might spillover to the EU and present direct and indirect challenges to the EU's aspirations as a security actor, ultimately impacting on the efficacy of EU's approach to securing the east; finally, and perhaps most significantly, the eastern sphere of influence is contested by another important regional security actor, Russia,

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which adds greater complexity to the EU's actions in attempting to achieve stability in this region.

Of course, much academic work has already analysed the construction of the ENP from a variety of perspectives, including critical security studies (see, for example, Jeandesboz 2007 for an overview), as well as how the EU has projected its external governance in the neighbourhood (Lavenex 2008, Weber *et al.* 2008, Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009). This article, therefore, aims to complement such analyses, but also contribute and move beyond them by avoiding the mapping of EU regulatory standards through governance mechanisms employed to the east. It seeks to provide a more in-depth, contextualised account of the EU's approach to security in the east and its potential for achieving effective change.³ The argument put forth in this context is that the paradox within the ENP/EaP security narratives has led to often ineffective practice, thus constraining the achievement of the main aims of such policies. Thus, despite additionality in terms of transversal governance processes and instruments, the result has not been a more balanced narrative, and thus practice, between the agents within the EU responsible for the policies. More specifically, the result has been a continuation of politicised and securitised logics in policy areas such as visa liberalisation, whilst contradictions between the EU's normative democratic projections and governance practice on the ground, have led to failure in delivering integration without membership. This has, in addition, meant that the insecurity and instability stemming from weak governance and the frozen conflicts to the east, and the associated problems such as illegal migration, terrorism and organised criminal activity, have not been addressed adequately by the EU approach. Through exploring and unpacking ENP/EaP security narratives and the governance and governmentality, which has resulted from these, it becomes obvious that: first, there is a constant tension and trade-off between the EU's normative/duty security narrative and its threat/risk security narrative; second, that there exists an imbalance between these two narratives because of the EU's internal dynamics, with consequences for achieving change; and finally, that the EU's approach has been characterised by contradiction and inconsistency, resulting in a loss of credibility, which diminishes the EU's security governance ambitions to the east.

The EaP, an extension of the ENP to the east, although formative in terms of its practice, raises many important questions about the EU's capability as a security actor. The emphasis in this article is to analyse the evolution of the ENP/EaP security narratives, and importantly, how such narratives and the systems of signification constructed around the ENP/EaP have been performed and interpreted in practice. In this sense then, the article is structured around addressing the central questions of the theoretical framework outlined in Christou *et al.* (2010): How have the security narratives within the eastern dimension been constructed by the EU? How have these narratives played out in terms of possible action and governance? What has been the implication in terms of practice within the eastern dimension?

Methodologically, a meso-level discourse analysis is seen as the most appropriate, as it is less concerned with historical range and philosophical depth and more focused on 'discursive formations and discursive productivity, or how discourse helps produce "common sense" understandings and "pragmatic" storylines that condition and enable routine policy practices' (O'Tuathail 2002, p. 606). In this sense, the analysis in this article on looking for the productive element of discursive statements, will take articulations at face-value and treat them as constitutive actions. Of course,

discourses do not stand alone – ‘out there’ (Malmvig 2006, p. 350) – they are constructed and demarcated within a context and are therefore relatively rule-bound orders (Foucault 1972, 1984, Malmvig 2006) within which although change is possible, it is also very difficult to achieve. In analysing the eastern dimension through discourse analysis then, this article is seeking to unpack the context within which subjects speak, which discourses become meaningful in any political sense, and what kind of effects this has on political (security) action (Wæver 2002, p. 29).

Constructing the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership

That there was an overarching security logic underpinning the ENP (and now EaP) is accepted in the now vast literature on the topic. This framing, it can be argued, was a consequence of a set of sub-narratives and logics formed around the idea of ‘neighbourhood’ within the EU political exchange⁴ (Fouilleux 2004, p. 236), which evoked normative/duty, as well as threat/risk-bound, reasoning for engagement with both the east and south. There is also considerable evidence to suggest that the threat/risk narrative has become increasingly dominant within the ENP logic with the consequences that this brings for governing security (Jeandesboz 2007). The initial context within which this thinking became significant was that of the enlargement process and the prospect of its completion in May 2004. In the words of the EU architects of the ENP, ‘while there are important opportunities to explore...there are also challenges in areas like illegal migration, trafficking and spillover from local or regional crises’ (Patten and Solana 2002). The result in governance terms was a bilateral approach in the form of the ENP, which was underpinned by the principles of partnership and differentiation, with the main tool for transforming the east that of conditionality (lite). The EaP was a direct product not just of the EU’s internal inability to form a consensus on any ‘single’ way forward for the neighbours in the post-enlargement context (thus, also the Union of the Mediterranean for the south), but also of the increased perception of insecurity, threat and risk resulting from events such as the Russia–Georgia war in August 2008, the violence in the Moldovan elections (2009) and the Ukraine–Russia gas crisis (2009).⁵ The EaP added a multilateral dimension for ensuring security to the east, but essentially retained a very similar macro-framework and method for engagement (Hillion and Mayhew 2009, p. 22, Christou 2010), and importantly for the argument here, the same tensions and trade-offs between the normative/duty and risk–threat narratives.

The normative/duty narrative

Within the normative/duty security narrative (Malmvig 2006, Jeandesboz 2007, Browning and Joenniemi 2008), the EU emphasised ‘nearness’, ‘cooperation’ and ‘friendship’ with the neighbours in the pursuit of extending the European peace project for the purpose of avoiding the creation of new dividing lines in Europe. This was especially true of the original European Commission ‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood’ communication which emphasised ‘a new vision of an enlarged area of peace, stability and prosperity encompassing the wider neighbourhood of the EU, a “circle of friends”, a shared neighbourhood founded on common values and deeper integration’ (Wissels 2006, p. 1). Indeed the central aim of the policy was to

ensure ‘stability, prosperity, shared values and the rule of law’ (Patten and Solana 2002) along EU borders through exporting the EU’s ‘normative’ model because *it had a duty* to do so, not only for the EU and its Member States, but also its neighbours (European Commission 2003, p. 3). This narrative can be traced throughout the Commission Strategy paper (European Commission 2004) and Strengthening documents (European Commission 2006, 2007b). In the latter, for instance, the EU emphasised that it ‘was in the best mutual interest of both the EU and its neighbours to build a much stronger and deeper relationship [through] enhanced cooperation’ (European Commission 2006, p. 1) and is at pains to highlight that the key strength of the ENP is the principle of joint ownership ‘where the ENP action plan – is fully negotiated and mutually agreed at political level’ and it ‘is not an imposition by either side but an agenda for common work’ (p. 2). Furthermore, it states that ‘it is important that both the ENP partner country and the EU can hold each other accountable for living up to their mutual commitments’ (European Commission 2007a, 2007b, p. 3). This is reinforced in the official EaP documentation in particular in Benita Ferrero-Waldner’s assertions that ‘I am convinced that the Eastern Partnership will bring stability and prosperity dividends to European citizens for generations to come’ and that ‘the Eastern partnership . . . serves the shared commitment to stability, security and prosperity of the European Union, the partner countries and indeed the entire European continent’ (Council of the European Union 2009, 8435/09, p. 6).

The underlying rationale for this narrative was the projection and preservation of the European project – in this case to the east, and with one significant difference – the enlargement towards Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), as well as Cyprus and Malta, had transformed the context within which the traditional tool of the power of attraction could be used to achieve the EU’s goals. Indeed the debates about absorption capacity meant that peace and stability to the east had to be achieved within a new logic of ‘more than partnership but less than membership’ (Prodi 2002), whilst avoiding the negative ‘othering’ of neighbouring countries and alienated borderlands (Comelli *et al.* 2006, p. 11). In this sense, the EU had to construct a policy that ensured the security, stability and prosperity of the eastern neighbourhood in order to guarantee the continuity and dynamism of the EU normative project. The ENP was thus conceived as policy of ‘everything but institutions’ (Prodi 2002) and sharing EU norms and values, defined specifically within the parameters of the ‘Internal market’ and the potential benefits of the four freedoms.

Beyond this, the normative or duty narrative has implications for governance and institutional responsibility within the EU in managing security to the east. In governance terms the security referent within such a narrative is both the EU and the partner countries, and thus the security of those belonging to the community in the common European space will benefit through cooperative arrangements across different dimensions of interaction. This implies equality between the referents of security – and indeed a common or shared interest and commitment to ensure that security challenges such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), illegal immigration, organised crime, energy, etc., are adequately addressed. In turn, the power and responsibility implication is that of symmetry – the EU and the eastern partners must work in a ‘new and innovative style of partnership’ (Ferrero-Waldner 2009) in the context of the security objectives identified by both sides, in order to

secure the common European space: in security terms, the line between inside and outside is blurred, and in its place is a new shared security agenda to the extent that effective partnership and cooperation can be a combatant of any security issue. Thus the Joint Declaration of the Prague EaP Summit, emphasised the EaP ‘as a common endeavour of the Member States of the European Union and their Eastern European partners, founded on mutual interests and commitments as well as on shared ownership and responsibility. It will be developed jointly, in a fully transparent manner’ (Council of the European Union 2009, 8435/09, p. 5). This is not to suggest that such a narrative leads, in identity terms, to any simple or binary Self–Other relationship between the EU and the eastern partners. Indeed, quite the opposite – it implies that difference is embraced, and that whilst the eastern partner countries are not seen as European ‘with us’, this does not necessarily mean that they are an unfriendly or threatening Other. Rather, the normative/duty narrative implies an equal Other with which the EU can coexist through tolerance and respect for diversity and values (see Malmvig 2006, pp. 355–356, for the Mediterranean; for the eastern dimension see Browning and Christou 2010).

In institutional terms it places the European Commission at the helm of policy design, management and projection, and thus the external relations of the community and the various instruments that are connected to that at the forefront of policy practice. This can be traced right at the outset where, for Prodi (2002, p. 2), the normative or duty narrative meant that it was ‘the Commission’s responsibility to find a comprehensive solution to the question of the Union’s relations with its neighbours’ (see Jeandesboz 2007, pp. 396–397). Indeed, the Commission has been at the forefront of policy (governance) innovation for the ENP (European Commission 2006, 2007b) and Black Sea Synergy (BSS; European Commission 2007b), and indeed was also pivotal in constructing the proposal of the EaP (European Commission 2008), albeit at the behest of those Member States within the EU (Poland, Sweden) that advocated a specific eastern dimension to the ENP.

The threat/risk security narrative

The threat/risk security narrative that pervades the ENP/EaP and European Security Strategy (ESS 2003, 2008) documents provides for an engagement logic that is fundamentally different to that of the normative/duty narrative. Indeed, the emphasis is not on simply developing the ENP/EaP for the good of the European peace project through *cooperative* security arrangements, but on its evolution for the purpose of managing the risks, threats and potential security problems prevalent within the poorly governed neighbourhood. In such a narrative, enlargement brings the security challenges of the neighbourhood closer to the EU, with increased fear that the problems associated with weak states, such as organised crime, violent conflict, illegal immigration and terrorism will spillover into the EU. Examples of such a narrative can be found in both the original ESS document (2003, p. 8) and the Report on the implementation of the ESS (2008, p. 6), which emphasise that ‘it is in our [the European] interest that the countries on our borders are well-governed’ and that ‘preventing threats... early on must be at the heart of our approach’ (p. 9).

Thus in terms of action, the threat/risk narrative, and in particular that inscribed within the ESS (2003), served to reconfigure and reconstitute the offerings of the ENP through the Wider Europe document (European Commission 2003), which was

based much more on the normative/duty narrative (Jeandesboz 2007, p. 399). For example, the Commission's Strategy Paper (European Commission 2004) omitted the possibility of partner countries being integrated fully into the EU's four freedoms of capital, goods, services and people, which was offered in the initial Wider Europe communication (European Commission 2003). Indeed, the reference to movement of people was removed and the language that replaced this was rather vague, promising only 'a stake in the EU's Internal Market' without specification of what this might entail. The infusion of the threat/risk narrative can be traced throughout the subsequent evolution and development of the ENP. The Commission Strengthening documents (European Commission 2006, 2007b), for instance, offered the prospect of visa-free travel for advanced ENP countries such as the Ukraine, only for it to be limited to certain categories of citizen. Thus, this supposed renewed incentive was purely symbolic in nature, with governance and practice clearly being hampered by representations and understandings of immigration as risk and danger within the EU political exchange (see Dannreuther 2006). At the same time, we can detect how the threat/risk narrative has continued to shape the (re) construction of the policy towards the eastern dimension through the EaP. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, for example, began her speech on the EaP in February 2009 emphasising that 'When Russia cuts gas supplies to Ukraine...EU households suffered. The EU found its quality of life directly affected...by the political and commercial landscape in its eastern neighbourhood', going on to project that in this context, 'it is important...we have partners whose governance provides respect for the rule of law'.

This is important in governance terms and is very different to the prescription offered by the normative/duty narrative. Indeed, within such a narrative, rather than an open border and a common European security space, the inside (EU) and outside is more clearly defined (the line between Self and Other stricter), with the underlying challenges to the EU stemming from the socio-economic underdevelopment of and ethnic conflicts and political instability (weak governance) within the partner countries (European Commission 2007b, Popescu and Wilson 2009). The emphasis from an EU perspective then becomes mitigating 'economic and social disparities' and 'ironing out differences in the region' (Ferrero-Waldner 2009) through upgrading the political, economic and social status of the eastern partners (ESS 2003). Thus, the region and the partners within the region are the root cause of the problem and the EU is the provider of security through exporting its own norms and values to iron out the main problems 'as we have tried to do within the EU' (Ferrero-Waldner 2009).

Moreover, through such a narrative the emphasis is no longer on any understandings of common security challenges or cooperative partnership implying an equal and symmetrical relationship. Rather it is more about an asymmetrical relationship and the imposition of the EU's norms and values through the EU's hierarchical development model in order to address what it has identified as the main threat to itself. Thus, there exists a heavy dose of self-interest through the projection of such a narrative, and the tolerance of other cultures and values is only secondary to the achievement of security for the EU space rather than any broadly conceived European continent or community. Moreover, the infusion of such a discourse by certain security professionals within the ENP/EaP constellation, results in a policy that cannot often be fulfilled in practice due to the constraints imposed internally on effective action.

In identity terms, the threat/risk security narrative certainly does not imply an equal Other, but it is neither the case that it simply implies negative or antagonistic Others across the spectrum of eastern partner states. Of course, for a long time, Belarus was perceived in these terms, with Azerbaijan and Armenia seen as reluctant or passive (Emerson *et al.* 2007). Even though these countries have not projected any desire to join the EU club, however, they are still seen as potential ‘Europeans’ that could be ‘like us’ if not ‘with us’ by the EU. On the other hand, you also have countries such as the Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to the east, which are perceived as willing or positive others, not least due to their own identity projections as ‘Europeans’ ‘with us’. They are seen to have greater potential for transformation and approximation with EU norms and values, that is, being ‘like us’, by the EU. Indeed, this is reflected in the advanced state of negotiations with the Ukraine over the new Association Agreement, with a Memorandum of Understanding already in place (see Browning and Christou 2010).

Practicing European security governance to the east

In analysing the evolution of the ENP and now EaP narrative then, we can detect throughout its short history how the interplay of the normative/duty narrative and the threat/risk security narrative have served to signify what is possible in terms of the practice of policy towards the eastern dimension. As pointed out by Jeandesboz (2007, p. 399), ‘the neighbourhood can be conceived, at least from a discursive point of view, as complex set of textual interplays, in which the issue of security stands as a pivot’. Both the duty/normative and risk/threat narratives are imbued with the discourse of security but with very different meanings and implications in terms of the politics of governance towards the east. The main implication, of course, is with regard to the efficacy of the policy, and in turn, the EU’s credibility as a security actor to the east. Moreover, the dynamic contextual dimension in the east, and EU internal tensions, have resulted in a trade-off between the EU’s two dominant narratives where the threat/risk narrative has often dominated, with consequences for how the EU can ‘act’ to the east.

In terms of the failure of the ENP, the deficiencies are well-documented with reference to governance, process and practice (see Weber *et al.* 2008, Popescu and Wilson 2009). Contrary to the evolution of the southern dimension (see Pace 2010) the EU’s governance approach to the east has moved from bilateralism to multilateralism in the EaP, precisely because the EU wanted to inject a more political dimension into the process of transformation. However, the EU’s overarching logic, and the underlying principles of differentiation and partnership found in the EU’s approach, have been severely undermined by its practice through bilateral and multilateral processes on issues such as visa policy, democracy, energy and conflict resolution. This has meant that the governance and governmentality of the east has more often than not been characterised by imbalance, and has thus been far from adequate in addressing the threats stemming from weak governance, political instability and the frozen conflicts, not to mention the competition faced by Russia in its own attempts to reassert control over what it constructs as its own sphere of influence.

Such logic has been reinforced by EU security actors that prioritise and project a threat/risk narrative in dealing with the ‘insecurity’ to the east – and has also

remained dominant because of the competitive jostling within the Commission for the responsibility of the ENP and its programmes.⁶ The central actors involved in the construction of the ENP/EaP internally, have been the European Commission, and especially directorate generals' external Relations (DG Relex) and Enlargement, as well as the EU High Representative, Member States within the Council and foreign policy officials within the Council Secretariat. This is not to argue that there were/are not other actor influences in the evolution of the policy, but that internally and institutionally, the Council and especially the Commission are the most critical. Important in the ENP/EaP context is that there is no simple dichotomy between Council and Commission as portrayed by certain commentators (see Jones and Clarke 2008) in relation to the construction and projection of the narratives already identified. Indeed, tensions have been inter-institutional and intra-institutional, leading to a more complex configuration of ENP/EaP actors and networks, and a multitude of platforms and contexts for the possible interplay of narratives, and reconfiguration of the ENP/EaP because of these narratives.

This is demonstrable, for example, within specific policy areas such as immigration and readmission, where conflict has arisen not just between Member States, or Member States and Commission officials in DG Relex, but also between DG Relex and DG Justice, Liberty and Security (DG JLS), the latter of which has had a much closer relationship with national Ministers of the Interior, and has effectively been allowed by Member States to do within the EU space what they have been constrained in doing domestically (see Jeandesboz 2007, p. 407; also Lavenex 2006). Similar intra-Commission tensions can also be seen between DG Relex and other sectoral DG that have become more involved through the EaP. The EaP, for example, has a more explicit regional (cohesion) policy dimension within it, with the increased involvement for DG Regional Policy (Regio). However, evidence suggests that there is a tension between DG Relex/AIDCO responsible for releasing the funding for such initiatives and DG Regio, which is supposed to implement policies in the EaP partner countries (informal discussion, European Commission official 2009). DG Relex here, then, has been engaged in a logic of 'competition' with other Commission DG with the consequence, however, that this leaves a substantive gap between their own projected normative/duty narrative and the ability of the Commission to deliver in practice.

ENP/EaP security narratives have thus been constructed within a complex institutional web, and amongst a diverse range of actors and (in) security 'professionals' (Bigo 2006a, 2006b) within the EU. Indeed, the blurring of the line between external and internal security, created an opportunity for EU actors and European agencies, within the umbrella of security, to influence and shape the context within which the eastern dimension of the neighbourhood policy has evolved. This interplay of actors and narratives has clearly defined the possible parameters for EU action in the eastern neighbourhood. Early on (European Commission 2003), the normative/duty narrative emanating from the Commission allowed a more ambitious and indeed symmetrical agenda for action, but this was soon watered down when actors from within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and foreign policy machinery intervened (The EU High representative, Council Secretariat, COREPER) and became increasingly involved in discussions with the Wider Europe Task Force (officials from DG Relex and Enlargement) across the thematic platforms and issues which the ENP aimed to address (see Jeandesboz 2007, pp. 400–407 for

details). Such a pattern has continued through the evolution of the policy as already indicated above, and can clearly be observed in the EaP, where Commission officials have emphasised its ambition but also the fact that it is under-resourced with a lack of real political interest within the Council ‘when it comes to key issues’ (interview, Commission official 2009; informal discussion, European Commission official 2009). Moreover, it has been stressed by other commentators that whilst the Commission’s original proposals for the EaP were quite grand, this was soon diluted and changed when actors within the Council and EU foreign policy establishment intervened (Hillion and Mayhew 2009).

As an European Commission has noted on this state of affairs, as long as it continues, ‘the publication of documents such as this on Eastern Partnerships will be seen as a cynical provocation by the Countries concerned’ (informal discussion, European Commission official 2009). Indeed, the ENP and its new eastern dimension (EaP) have received mixed reception among policy elites in the partner countries. Many have paid lip-service to the EU’s offerings within the EaP, former President of Moldova, Voronin, describing them as ‘candies’, and former Ukrainian foreign minister Boris Tarasyuk complaining about the ‘politically indecisive and contradictory’ nature of the EU (cited in Popescu and Wilson 2009, p. 20). Thus, precisely because of the paradox inherent within the ENP/EaP narratives projected, there has been a realisation among eastern partners that they will only receive the benefits they actually deem as important in the short and medium term for addressing their ‘security’ challenges, *if* they diffuse and internalise the EU’s universal norms and values. Furthermore, if for the EU economic liberalisation and democratisation is the best policy for ‘security’, for (willing) EaP states, achieving security is their primary aim and a prerequisite for modernisation, democratisation and stability. For those in the neighbourhood that do not value the EU’s democratic values, it is only the EU’s ‘prosperity’ speak through access to the EU’s internal market, or its energy speak in terms of cooperation that appeals, making the ENP/EaP even more problematic in terms of its overall security impact. Thus, within the constellation of EU actors, the interplay of security narratives is problematic if the EU is to achieve its stated aims, not least because the inconsistencies in how these are practiced limits what is actually possible – the consequence, is re-securitisation within the themes targeted (although this is not all-pervading across the EaP thematic platforms) rather than de-securitisation (Joenniemi 2009, p. 7) of the east.

A good example to illustrate the points being made above is that of visa liberalisation. Within the ENP the main incentives on offer were: enhancing the economic and trade component; enhancing the mobility and migration component; strengthening political cooperation; enhancing regional cooperation; and strengthening financial cooperation.⁷ The EaP was officially launched in Prague on 7 May 2009 with the aim of effecting transformation across a number of governance levels and thematic platforms of engagement, which included: Democracy, Good Governance and Stability; Energy Security; Economic integration and convergence; and Contacts between people (European Commission 2008). However, whilst the transversal governance processes for engagement were extended, the underlying tensions between the EU’s narratives remained the same, which meant that the initiatives that the eastern partners considered as most important for their security were significantly watered down. Thus, although for Moldovan political elites, and

indeed Moldova's Foreign Minister, 'the most important element of the Partnership is the continued strengthening of relations with the EU, the opportunities for an Association Agreement, a free trade agreement and *visa liberalisation*' (Swedish Presidency of the European Union 2009, my emphasis), the EaP promotes visa facilitation and readmission agreements, but only offers the possibility of *visa liberalisation as a long-term goal* 'for individual countries on a case-by-case basis provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility are in place' (Council of the European Union 2009, 8435/09, p. 5).

The failure to offer visa liberalisation to those in the eastern neighbourhood continues to be one of the most problematic aspects of the ENP/EaP (and indeed the EU's relations with Russia) and has undermined the credibility of the EU as a security actor in the east. Instead, EU action, in this issue area at least, is increasing the gap between the EU and the eastern Other because of the fears of certain Member States on the flow of poorer migrants, as well as increased illegal immigration and organised crime from the east if this was granted. The contradictions in practice resulting from the EU's, essentially securitised approach, have been criticised by those in the east. In Ukraine, for example, the Parliament called on the government to consider reintroducing 'visas for EU citizens because some Member States were not respecting commitments they had made in January 2008 to simplify the issuing of visas for specific categories of citizens, such as journalists or businessmen' (Popescu and Wilson 2009, pp. 33–34). Beyond this, the EU's only offer to the east is for citizens to travel within the EU: the right to seek employment within the EU for citizens from the east is a topic that Member States refuse to discuss.

Beyond visa liberalisation, the EU's competing security narratives have led to contradictions in terms of pursuing its other projected objectives in the neighbourhood. As pointed out by Pace (2010) in relation to the southern dimension, this has often led to a policy of supporting and often reinforcing the status quo. This is also true of the eastern neighbourhood where issues of democracy and human rights have often played second fiddle to the objective of stability and prosperity. In Moldova, for instance, civil society activists and NGOs have criticised the EU's ability through the ENP/EaP to promote effective practice for promoting democratisation. A good example here is the lack of EU action and rewards offered to Moldova in the Voronin era, despite the fact that democratic transformation was minimal on the ground. The ENP only served to reinforce Voronin's authoritarianism through allowing selective appropriation of EU norms. Indeed, for some (see Minzarari 2008), the EU's inaction beyond encouraging dialogue, grounded in the belief that economic liberalisation would lead to democratisation, provided a platform for the regime in Moldova to move to a more obvious hierarchical form of direct rule. Whilst the situation in Moldova is far from stable after the elections in 2009 brought to power a four-party Alliance for European Integration (see Popescu 2009) – the failure in September 2010 of the referendum on constitutional reform to yield any result because of low voter turnout demonstrated this most aptly – it remains to be seen whether the EU can exploit such an opportunity by offering concrete incentives through the EaP within its democracy and people-to-people dimension, for the purpose of facilitating further *real democratic* transition, rather than reinforcing the status quo through the management of insecurity in the short term.

In Belarus the inconsistencies in the ENP/EaP security narratives have allowed conservative elites within the Belarusian leadership circle to selectively exploit EU

offerings in terms of 'fit' with the regime's own constructed identity and practice. President Lukashenka has been able to use these inconsistencies in conditionality in order to construct an argument for the protection of the Belarusian model against western (EU) intentions and the hierarchical development model that aims to replace 'progressive' Belarusian norms with those of the EU. Moreover, it only serves to reinforce and vindicate the projections of the Lukashenka regime with regard to the interference of 'foreign' powers within its sovereign domain domestically for the EU's own interests rather than that of the prosperity, stability and security of the Belarusian people. Furthermore, Lukashenka, especially given the often tense and erratic relations with Russia, has been able to manipulate the normative/duty narrative in order to selectively gain economic and mobility benefits from the EU – in this sense, projecting his own 'threat/risk' security narrative – not for the purpose of transforming the European or even regional space, but for extending Belarus' economic prosperity and sustaining its authoritarian regime and model.

Thus, whilst the ENP/EaP have been supported and manipulated to uphold the Lukashenka regime, it has been criticised by opposition parties, activists and groups within Belarus, precisely because of its lack of balance and more precisely, paying insufficient attention to the promotion of the democratic norm (e.g. not linking this to the easing of sanctions on Belarus elites). The EU's approach might thus serve to facilitate stability – but only in the sense that it provides the flexibility in its interpretation to reinforce authoritarianism, rather than promote democracy and long-term security. This is no better exemplified (in February 2010) by the detention of television journalist, Iwana Szulhy, by the Belarusian police in Minsk under a false pretext, and the arrests of more than 40 members of the Union of Poles and other civil society representatives in Belarus, including that of the democratically elected chairperson of the Union of Poles, Ms Angelika Borys (European Union Press release 2010).

Overall, the paradox at the centre of the EU's security narratives to the east has translated itself into asymmetrical impact in its approach to democracy promotion. Even though within the ENP it is built into Action Plans agreed with the partner states, the EU's objective of engaging with all of its neighbours has meant that the actions of 'autocrats' in Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan have often been ignored or insufficiently addressed due to an unwillingness among EU actors (especially certain Member States) to use exceptional means,⁸ despite the clear violation of human and democratic rights of its citizens.

This scenario does not only apply to democracy promotion. Indeed, it is also evident in the EU's approach to conflict prevention through the ENP. The war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 demonstrated the limitations of the EU's governance of the eastern neighbourhood through the ENP, and the EaP has not changed this situation. Whilst the threat/risk narrative is certainly dominant in the ENP/EaP, the EU has been unsuccessful in ameliorating conflict because of tensions internally on how to engage. In the Russia–Georgia war this was most obvious in the disagreements between Member States in terms of which security logic should be operationalised; some Member States clearly believing in exceptional measures, whilst others, because of the fear of antagonising Russia, called for more engagement through normal and technocratic processes (e.g. economic aid). Whilst such technocratic and functional governance has borne some success in Transnistria through the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), the EU's failure or

reluctance to at least ‘politicise’ its approach to the Transnistria question has meant it has been ineffective in addressing the key issue of Russian withdrawal (de-securitisation) within the bilateral negotiations and the multilateral framework (5 + 2 format)⁹ within which it has been engaged. Indeed, this disinclination to engage beyond a functional approach was compounded by the reluctance of key leaders to elevate the neighbourhood itself on the security agenda: with important leaders of no fewer than ten Member States absent from the launch of the EaP on 7 May 2009.

The points made above become even more problematic for the EU’s attempts to govern security to the east when the broader regional security governance structure within which the ENP/EaP narratives and governance practices play out. Indeed, Russia has been able to offer many of the benefits that the EU has not been able to deliver (e.g. visa liberalisation, financial funding) because of the paradox within the EU’s double narrative approach. Ironically, Russia has been able to offer more of what the ‘east’ has asked for (in the short term, at least), precisely because of the securitisation of what it sees a critical sphere of influence, even though the methods, principles and processes for achieving this have been far from appealing to those eastern partners that value the EU model of governance. Clearly, EU officials recognise that ‘Russia...tends to see the neighbourhood in terms of competition...so we speak of shared interests rather than shared values’ (informal discussion, European Commission official 2009). However, such shared interests are also often imbued with contradictory values, to the extent that the EU’s impact within the ENP/EaP regional security space is frequently constrained by a Russian security narrative that is underpinned by a Westphalian sovereign logic – and governance and governmentality practices that are aimed at retaining the eastern neighbourhood within the Russian ‘sphere of influence’. Such measures have been of an exceptional nature in terms of the military intervention in Georgia, and the more subtle but equally effective utilisation of its energy and economic assets to gain political influence in the eastern neighbourhood. They have also included governmentality measures such as free access to Russia for the citizens of the eastern neighbourhood and manipulation of political technology, media and civil society organisations in order to maintain its influence (Popescu and Wilson 2009). Beyond this, the Russian concept of ‘sovereign democracy’ finds resonance with a number of autocratic regimes to the east, which as noted above, consider the EU’s liberal democratic alternative anathema.

Overall then, the EU’s influence in the eastern neighbourhood is severely constrained by competition from Russia: and indeed, the EU’s credibility and efficacy is frequently undermined not only by the contradictions and inconsistencies in its approach, but also the contestation which it faces from a rival centre of power in the eastern neighbourhood security structure. In addition, an important element of Russia’s policy towards the EU has been its demand for a cooperative security approach – that is, a relationship that is based on symmetry and non-hierarchical interaction, particularly in the sphere of norms and values. Thus, Russia constructs itself as an equal Other in its relationship with the EU, and has operated a policy of self-exclusion from any EU initiative (ENP/EaP) that might suggest it is in any way inferior, opting rather for the evolution of a Strategic Partnership based on four common spaces: Economic, External Security, Freedom, Security and Justice, and Research and Education, including Cultural aspects).

The problems and ineffectiveness of this governance framework for EU–Russia relations aside, the evolution of the ENP and subsequent EaP, and the double security narrative within these policies, has raised suspicions about the motivations of the EU in the eastern neighbourhood, and the nature of its role in securing the post-Soviet-space, to the extent that Russia’s foreign policy elite, and indeed the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, have perceived the EaP as an attempt by the EU to ‘securitise’ and absorb the eastern neighbourhood into its own ‘sphere of influence’, and exclude Russia (see Dzieciolowski 2010). This has several consequences for the efficacy of the EaP within the eastern dimension. Importantly the EaP is unlikely to work if Russia constructs its own position in the east through a security lens which is premised on a sovereign logic – and thus a rejection of the EU’s framework for engagement that is underpinned by a paradoxical double narrative and a multilateral framework that effectively excludes it – or at least only allows third party participation on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis where relevant to meeting the objectives of the EaP. Moreover, given the Russian narrative for a cooperative security model premised on being treated as an equal (as it is in the Northern Dimension and the BSS), the EaP is unlikely to work effectively unless a more innovative and balanced narrative emerges which allows a governance model that automatically includes Russia – on an equal footing – in its framework and activities. Whilst Russia has not self-excluded itself from the EaP, and indeed, has stated that it not entirely opposed to the idea (or at least reserves judgement),¹⁰ it is clear that the EU approach and its consequent governance offerings, will not provide for an optimal context for securing stability, prosperity and security in the neighbourhood if it is fundamentally at odds with the Russian construction and projection of its own normative discourse and more importantly, governance practices to meet its aims in the eastern neighbourhood.

Conclusion

This article has shown how the paradox at the heart of the EU’s double narrative approach in relation to its policy towards the east is detrimental to the achievement of a secure, stable and prosperous neighbourhood. It leads to a ‘dual’ security language with very different prescriptions in terms of security governance, which in practice results in contradictions and inconsistencies in the EU approach, and has implications and consequences in terms of security governance practice in the eastern neighbourhood. In comparison to the south, such neighbours do not only include the eastern partner states, but also alternative ‘centres’ or regional actors in the neighbourhood, that construct their own logics in relation to securing the eastern neighbourhood, and of which Russia is the most significant (obviously a broader analysis would also need to incorporate the role of other regional and global actors and institutions in the eastern neighbourhood).

The EaP has brought forth the same tensions as the ENP to the extent that achieving the overarching aim of the EaP will be difficult within the EaP political exchange and actor constellation. More broadly, the governance and governmentality changes made to the management and external projection of EU policy in the Lisbon Treaty, have, in the short term at least, not brought any greater clarity as to which professionals in the EU will take responsibility for the ENP/EaP, thus adding to the competitive jostling (intra- and inter-institutional) for control and thus security narrative construction and projection, creating a lack of enthusiasm for such

a policy within the EU space, but also beyond, on the outside, among those that do not see the EaP as a major change of direction in terms of narratives and the resulting resource and approach offered by the EU. Further than this, it has promoted a clash of narratives between the EU and regional actors that construct the eastern neighbourhood through a very different security lens (or lenses), which they also consider to be normatively 'right'.

Thus, the main issue for the EU is how it can project a coherent, nuanced and balanced security logic that at least prescribes a medicine that is consistent and which can earn it some credibility within the eastern dimension. It would be inaccurate to conclude that the ENP/EaP has been completely ineffective – modest changes have clearly been achieved and it might well be that the non-securitised areas of engagement within the EaP in terms of civil society and cultural integration do actually bring benefit and help to build trust in the medium to long term. Overall though, the security narratives embedded within the ENP/EaP have certainly been difficult to change given the increasing prioritisation and seeming dominance of the logic of managing insecurity in the short-term over projecting a narrative that can bring about a secure neighbourhood through innovative integrative measures in the medium to long term. This does not imply that change is impossible. Indeed, the post-Lisbon EU milieu, once constituted, could provide the potential conditions through which a more pragmatic and balanced security narrative for the east can emerge, which delivers a more nuanced and sophisticated security language and that leads to genuinely differentiated and coherent strategy and action across the ENP/EaP space (countries, levels and dimensions), as well as a governance model that is imbued with the flexibility to ensure change is possible through a co-constitutive process. The varied demands, perceptions and interests of the eastern partners, as well as Russia's presence and importance in the eastern regional security space, means that reconfiguring the EU security approach to the east is urgent business. It remains to be seen, however, whether the EU can navigate away from paradox to coherence, and ultimately realise its ambition as a security actor to the east.

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Notes

1. The ENP (to the east)/EaP cover Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus.
2. In contrast to the Black Sea Synergy (2007) which was established to facilitate coordination and cooperation between eastern neighbours.
3. On the Mediterranean, see Malmvig (2006), Jones and Clarke (2008), Pace (2004, 2006, 2009).
4. That is, the continuous, dynamic and complex interaction and relationship between internal and external actors in a given policy area.
5. Indeed, informal discussion with a senior Commission official (December 2009) responsible for the ENP confirmed that the Russia–Georgia war in particular catalysed

- action by the otherwise disinterested European Commission in the form of seeking agreement for the EaP among Member States.
6. This is not to argue that ENP governance was determined solely through path dependence (Kelley 2006), but by a more complex and dynamic system of signification based around the interplay of narratives, actors and practices, which also meant a certain amount of institutional change and adjustment in the construction process. Indeed, this is the central reason for the movement from bilateralism (ENP), to regionalism and multilateralism in the BSS and ENP, respectively.
 7. In addition to this, the Commission introduced a Governance Facility ‘to help reformist governments to strengthen their domestic constituencies for reform’, which was conditional on progress on the governance aspects of the Action Plans. The Neighbourhood European Investment Fund was also introduced, ‘to be used to support IFI lending in ENP partner countries’ (European Commission 2006) and the Commission undertook a detailed review on how ENP partners could participate in Community agencies and programmes, such as the European Environment Agency and the Galileo Supervisory Authority.
 8. Even where the EU has used sanctions such as withdrawal of trade preferences or imposing travel restrictions on certain authoritarian leaders and elites (e.g. Belarus), the EU has not linked such sanctions explicitly to the practices of the regime, and thus in governance terms it has lost both leverage and credibility (see Popescu and Wilson 2009, p. 43).
 9. Which includes: Russia, Ukraine, OSCE, EU, US, Chisinau and Tiraspol.
 10. Indeed, within the more positive climate that exists in EU–Russia relations at the time of writing, all EaP participants have agreed on Russia’s participation in an EaP working group.

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