

The European Parliament as Transformational Actor toward the Reconsideration of the EU Eastern Policy

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Abstract: *The main purpose of the paper is to analyse the role of the European Parliament (EP) in the reconsideration of the EU eastern policy in the light of Russian full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. With the view to reaching the stated objective, the following research tasks are taken into consideration. First, particular attention is paid to the change of the EP approach toward the issue of eastern policy building in the aftermath of the 2019 elections and after the 24 February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. In order to define the transformative potential of the EP in the institutional system of the European Union (EU) as regards the eastern dimension of its neighbourhood policy, the analysis covers selected resolutions and recommendations as well as key political addresses delivered by leaders of the EP, European Council and European Commission. Second, the study presents the context of the foreign policy structural competition between the EU and Russia putting particular emphasis on the role of institutions mentioned above in the process of foreign policy-making and on the nature of the EU support for the democratisation processes in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region before the 24 February 2022. Finally, there is made an attempt to evaluate the steps undertaken by the EP in order to reform the EU eastern policy and enhance support for the Europeanisation processes in partner states aimed at democratic transformation of the region.*

Key words: *European Parliament, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, EU eastern policy, Eastern Partnership.*

I. Introduction

The unanimous decision of the European Council to grant Ukraine the candidate status of the European Union (EU) has been a clear political signal and a response to appeals of the Associated Trio (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) to the EU policy-makers to reconsider the concept of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and provide a clear declaration on membership perspectives for the EaP countries. In light of current geopolitical challenges and democracy threats faced by these countries, the discussion on the possible change in the eastern dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy is topical and necessary. Such discussion should raise the issue of a new tailor-made approach to be applied in a non-uniform manner which takes into consideration existing threats and challenges for the democratisation processes in the associated candidate (Ukraine, Moldova) or potential candidate (Georgia) states. Meanwhile, debates in terms of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) devoted to the future role of the EU institutions in building relations with the governments of the member and non-member states have illustrated the complexity of the subject and argued for the solutions relevant to the existing geopolitical realities caused by such crises as the COVID-19 pandemic or Russia's illegal military aggression against Ukraine. It is particularly the latter that has triggered the discussion on the need of reconsideration of the EU position in the EaP region.

In fact, it is the EP that has become a platform for discussions on the nature of relations with the EaP states and has proved to be an important institutional actor directly influencing the EU eastern policy. Meantime, Russia's illegal full-scale military attack on Ukraine became a trigger for the reconsideration not only of EU-Ukraine relations but, more broadly, for the reconsideration of the EU structural foreign policy in the EaP region. To do so, the analysis of the bilateral relations between the EU and EaP states should take into account such factors as the aggressive Russian position in response to closer ties between the EU and the Associated trio: Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova; the state of implementation of the association agreements; the political support for the European membership perspectives for the new candidate states (Ukraine and Moldova) or potential candidate state (Georgia) among the decision-makers in the EU and EaP countries. Therefore, the goal of the article is twofold:

- 1) to analyse the response of the EP to major (un)democratic developments in the EaP region in the aftermath of the 2019 EP elections before Russia's 24. 02. 2022 attack on Ukraine;
- 2) to critically assess the steps undertaken by the EP and the EaP leadership regarding the reconsideration of eastern policy-making in context of the Russia's illegal military invasion of Ukraine.

Such chronological and subject limitations create a favourable ground for an in-depth study of the EP position in the institutional system of the EU and its impact on the transformation of the EU foreign policy in the eastern neighbourhood.

The article puts forward the hypothesis arguing that the EP's transformational impact on strengthening the position of the EU as a structural power in the EaP region is defined by such factors as its peculiar position in the institutional system of the EU, dominant type of political leadership and approach to new eastern policy-making through deliberating and promoting new formats of cooperation with associated states in the eastern neighbourhood in light of geopolitical threats caused by aggressive Russian politics.

The article is structured as follows: the following section briefly explains the methodology and research framework of the article. Then, the focus is put on the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and the role of key EU institutions in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the analysis covers the selected EP resolutions and political addresses devoted to the eastern dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in order to compare and assess the transformational potential of the EP as an actor of the EU institutional system. Based on the given empirical analysis the paper makes an attempt to define the major directions of further action posing a question whether the EP might become a transformative structural power as far as the eastern policy-making of the EU is concerned and how successful it has been in conducting the eastern dimension of its structural foreign policy since the 2019 EP elections.

II. Methodology and Research Framework

Due to the dynamic and complex character of the Europeanisation processes and significant role of particular political and social actors on this process, the research methodology is based primarily on the following: 1) the process tracing, and 2) the content analysis that is used in order to critically analyse the selected political speeches, declarations and resolutions of both, individual and collective actors having an impact on the EU-EaP relations. On the one hand, the methodology of process tracing is employed in order to conduct a qualitative analysis of causes that led to key political developments in the EaP region since 2019 such as EP resolutions on the EaP (Ukraine, in particular), the implementation stage of association agreements (AA) in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, factors framing the democratisation processes in the EaP region and the impact of EP engagement on the Europeanisation processes. On the other hand, the content analysis was based on a qualitative study of such primary sources as political debates in the EP and its resolutions on matters directly related to the EaP countries, as well as speeches, statements and declarations

on the given topic delivered by the EP leadership. Particular attention is paid to the EP response to major developments in the Association Trio (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) in context of the current state of the democratisation processes after Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

The analysis of the selected documents adopted by the EP that are centred on the existing state of bilateral cooperation and prospects of future developments makes it possible to define its transformational potential in reference to the war in Ukraine and EU engagement into the political and military support for Ukraine. That, in turn, creates ground for the reflection on the transformative potential of the EU in regard to its eastern policy and structural potential in the EaP region.

Furthermore, it is necessary to define the meanings of two essential terms that are used in the research framework such as structural power and transforming (transformational) leadership. Conceptually, the paper uses the classification of political leadership defined by James MacGregor Burns (1978) who underlined the moral constituent and complex long-term goals as specific features of transformational leadership. In the meantime, I argue that before 24 February 2022, the EU structural foreign policy in the EaP region was based on the transactional approach aimed at short-term needs and maintaining status quo with Russia. In fact, the article focuses on the Ukrainian case as a trigger of the EU eastern policy change and the transformation of the EU leadership (from transactional to transformational) in light of a full-scale Russian invasion. Such focus gives ground to reflect on whether the EP might become a transformative structural power as far as the EU eastern policy-making is concerned and how successful the EU structural foreign policy has been in supporting the democratisation in Ukraine since full-scale Russian invasion.

According to Burns (1978: 4), 'the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.' In this regard, transformational leaders are likely to use their leadership to establish their long-term vision through challenging the prevailing culture and encouraging their followers to transform their capabilities. In other words, the transformational leadership involves structural shifts in the beliefs, needs and values of followers. To do so, the transformational leaders appeal to both rational and emotional arguments in order to win the hearts and minds of their followers. Therefore, the article focuses on the actions taken by the EP as a collective institutional leading actor of the EU and on the effects these actions (i.e. adopting particular resolutions) have had on other political and social actors.

Even though the article uses Burns' concept of transformational leadership as a basis for its research, it is important to add that his ideas were further developed by Bernard Bass, who made an attempt to introduce the questionnaire to measure the components of the transformational leadership. As a matter of

fact, both Burns (1978; 2003) and Bass (1985) agree that the transformational potential of a leader may be measured by results and influence on the followers. In accordance with Bass classification (1985: 7), there are four roles for transformational leadership: 1) inspirational motivation – or an ability to encourage followers to believe in a leader's vision and the need of fundamental transformation; 2) idealised influence meaning that a leader is presented as a role model for other followers; 3) individualised consideration of needs and expectations of particular followers or group of followers; 4) intellectual stimulation that is expected to motivate followers to create new ways of thinking about a particular situation or about a particular actor (individual or collective). As for the definition of the structural power in context of foreign policy, the paper uses the definition of the 'structural' offered by Keukeleire and Delreux (2015: 44) who point to two major dimensions in this regard. First, to have structural power means to be able to shape the structures in a particular area. In terms of the article, such an area refers to both selected states of the EaP and to the region of the EaP as a whole. Second, it is sustainability effect that is seen as a key feature of the structural power. As far as the structural power of the EP in the EaP region is concerned, the sustainability effect is analysed in context of the external Europeanisation impact on the ability of newly established institutions to function in accordance with the EU norms and principles and become a legitimate part of the partner state.

Structural power may well be analysed in the context of the transformative power. In fact, Mark Leonard (2005) uses the very same criteria for the definition of transformative power as Keukeleire and Delreux did in the case of structural power. In accordance with Leonard (2005), the effects of the transformative power must be long-lasting and caused by substantial changes of legal and political systems. Interestingly enough, the Keukeleire and Delreux duet as well as Leonard give the example of the 2004 EU enlargement as a success of the EU structural power in the neighbourhood policy. Furthermore, if in 2005 Leonard (2005) pointed out that the transformative power of the EU in its immediate neighbourhood was expected to create a substantial change in political status quo in the given region, in 2015 Keukeleire and Delreux (2015: 46) argued that the EU lost the structural foreign policy competition with Russia in the region of the EaP. Having said that, the most recent observations argue that the EU engagement into geopolitical competition with Russia has stopped the deterioration of the situation in countries such as Georgia and Ukraine (Kakachia et al. 2021: 1348).

Monika Sus (2014: 91) summarises the scholarly research on the transformative potential of the EU by defining five factors determining its power: 1) coherence of the particular EU policy; 2) principle of conditionality as the main instrument of EU pressure on the third countries in context of legal and axiological adaptation; 3) a particular country's willingness to implement ex-

pected changes; 4) pro-EU aspirations in a particular country; 5) geopolitical factors influencing the position of a particular country.

In this regard, the article poses a question whether the current geopolitical situation caused by the illegal Russian military invasion of Ukraine may become a factor leading to the transformative potential of the EP and, more broadly, to the EU transformative power growth in the EaP, and thus to winning the structural foreign policy competition with Russia in the upcoming years.

III. Role of Key EU Institutions in the Decision-Making Process on the Common Foreign and Security Policy

To answer the question whether the EU might win the structural foreign policy competition with Russia and become a transformative power in the eastern neighbourhood, it is necessary to critically evaluate the role of particular EU institutions taking part in the development of the foreign policy of the EU.

It is the Treaty of Lisbon that defines the nature of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and introduces the combination of the intergovernmentalism and supranationalism in the decision-making process. The provisions regarding the CFSP were aimed at improving the democratic legitimacy of the EU and introducing coherence and consistency to its external policies. In order to increase the international role of the EU, two new positions were established. First, it is the position of the president of the European Council with a maximum of two two-and-a-half-year terms in office. Second, it is the position of the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) who simultaneously serves as the vice-president of the European Commission. What is more, the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) was seen as a clear sign of the increase of the EU international representation. As one might recall, the given body consists of staff from both intergovernmental and supranational institutions such as the general secretariat of the Council and diplomatic services of the EU member states or the European Commission.

It is important to point out that holders of both new positions, the president of the European Council and the HR, represent the EU on the international arena. However, the Treaty of Lisbon (2009: art. 15) gives a field for interpretation as regards their level of engagement stating that 'The President of the European Council shall, at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.' Such formulation may raise questions on the potential of the EU to speak with one voice on the international arena in case the president of the European Council and the HR represent different positions on particular matter.

It is, in fact, the nature of position of the HR that might create a range of other difficulties in the interpretations. Being a vice-president of the European Commission on the one hand, and a chair of the Foreign Affairs Council on the other, the HR represents both institutions. As a representative of the European Commission, the HR is responsible for ensuring the consistency and coherence of the EU's external action in relations with the third parties. In the meantime, as a representative of the Council, the HR is engaged with CFSP and responsible for ensuring the implementation of the decisions adopted by the European Council and the Council. As for the Foreign Affairs Council, its role is to 'elaborate the Union's external action on the basis of strategic guidelines laid down by the European Council and ensure that the Union's action is consistent' (Treaty of Lisbon 2009: art.16).

Having said that, the balance of the EU-Russia structural foreign policy competition in the Eastern partnership region before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has illustrated the dominance of the transactional approach of the EU institutions aimed at keeping status quo in given bilateral relations. In fact, when it comes to the EaP initiative one could have noticed both the successes and failures of the Europeanisation efforts in the region that led to such opposite outcomes. On the one hand, three EaP states (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) signed the AA with the EU while another two of them (Armenia and Azerbaijan) stopped the association process, and one (Belarus) announced the unprecedented case of its suspension of participation in the initiative (EaP 2022).

Unsurprisingly, on a number of occasions since 2019 political leadership in associated states came forward with the initiative of reconsideration of the EU approach to the concept of the EaP and establishment of the individual approach to each partner state with a clear prospect of the EU membership for the associated states. In fact, it is the 2021 Batumi summit declaration of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (2021) that reflects previous statements addressed to the EU policy-makers on the need to reconsider the concept of the EaP and provide a declaration on membership perspectives for EaP countries. The Batumi declaration itself appealed to the EU and argued for the need to guarantee the membership perspective to the associated states. One might recall that the 1200-page AA with Ukraine includes only a vague message on welcoming the EU aspirations of Ukraine, which reflected a lack of consensus on the given issue among the twenty-seven member states. It was the wording of the prospective form of the EU-Ukraine relations that became one of the major controversies among the EU governments and led to the significant delay in the ratification process of the document (Zheltovskyy 2020: 79).

The condition of not reacting to the Association Trio appeal resulted in encouraging their political elites to search for an alternative geopolitical alliance. In this regard, Ukraine serves as a bright example. Since the 2019 elections Ukrainian authorities have argued for the need to create regional formats and

alliances in order to improve the integration prospects for Ukraine. The newly established formats such as the Lublin Triangle, Associated Trio, Ukrainian-Turkish Quadriga and the Crimea Platform illustrated both positive dynamics in closer cooperation with certain EU and non-EU states as well as growing appeals toward the clear membership perspective for associated states. Another example is the declaration on the establishment of the trilateral alliance between Ukraine, Great Britain and Poland aimed at strengthening the regional security. The fact that Ukraine was more successful in finding support among Eurosceptical governments than among such influential EU decision-makers as Germany or France vividly illustrated the lack of unanimous approach inside the EU and argued for the need of transformational leadership that would be able to reach sustainability effects of the Europeanisation processes in the associated states of the EU.

What is more, a lack of clear response to the 2021 Batumi declaration from the EU institutions and the EU Parliament has been regularly used by the Russian policy-makers in order to promote narration that the West implemented the external control in the associated states of the EaP and that the main task of the collective West in this region is to control political elites in order to create security threats for Russia. Similar messages were repeatedly used by pro-Russian politicians inside and outside the EU and created favourable grounds for decreasing the pro-European support among citizens of the EaP states.

In the meantime, there has been a significant increase in the transformational leadership style implementation in the approach of the EU institutions toward their response to growing Russian aggression. The following part of the article analyses the position of the EP before and in the aftermath of Russian full-scale invasion and its attempts to promote the transformative vision among key institutional players responsible for the EU foreign policy.

IV. The Evolution of the EP Approach toward the Eastern Policy-Making Process

The 2019 EP elections were characterised by the highest voter turnout in the past 20 years – 50.7% – which increased significantly from 42.6% in 2014. Such positive dynamics was primarily influenced by the intense debate on the future form of European integration and the future form of the cooperation between the European institutions and member states' governments. Among other mobilising issues were climate change, economy and immigration, all of which became highly politicised and thus led to the increase of the turnout (Braun and Schafer 2022: 123). The European debate on the future shape of the integration process between supporters of deeper integration aimed at the federalist vision of the EU and their opponents advocating the idea of Europe of nations based

on the narrow and subsidiary nature of the integration process led to rising polarisation among the EU voters (Domaradzki – Zheltovskyy 2020: 16).

As for the 2019 EP electoral results, a number of observations need to be underlined. Overall, the liberal euro optimists' parties turned out to win the majority of the seats despite active anti-EU campaigns conducted by Eurosceptical parties (Nai et al. 2022: 23). The 'pro-EU' political groups consisting of the EPP, S&D, RE and Greens-EFA obtained 518 seats or 69% of the seats in the EP. At the same time, as experts predicted, the coalition of the two biggest groups, European People's Party and Socialists and Democrats, lost its majority (Hix – Frantescu 2019: 1). If after the 2014 EP elections, the EPP group obtained 216 seats and S&D group – 185, the 2019 elections results gave them only 182 and 153 seats respectively.

The 335 votes were not enough to form a coalition and meant that these groups would need to cooperate with other groups in the EP in order to form a majority. Interestingly enough, in all previous EP elections these two groups managed to get enough votes necessary to form an absolute majority that gave them control over the agenda-setting process. In their turn, representatives of Eurosceptic groups comprising the ID Group and other potential allies including Hungarian *Fidesz* that previously belonged to the EPP group, and populist parties in the European Conservatives and Reformists group (mainly consisting of representatives from the Polish ruling PiS party), the Sweden Democrats and Dutch Forum for Democracy received around 23% of seats (Fella et al. 2019). The upshot of the election is the political fragmentation of the EP that argues for the need of consensus among different political groups.

In order to understand the impact of the above-mentioned changes on the position of the EP concerning the issue of the EaP and EU-Russian relations, the following section of the article takes into account selected resolutions adopted by the EP since 2019 with particular focus on those adopted after 24 February 2022. Such a selection gives opportunity to follow the ability of reaching compromise in times of geopolitical crisis and define the changes of the EP position on the prospects of the eastern dimension of the EU foreign policy-building in context of the EU institutional system.

As a reminder, however, it is important to start with the resolution adopted by the EP on 24 October 2013 on the Annual Report from the Council to the EP on the Common Foreign and Security Policy in order to follow the efficiency of its impact on EU policy-making and underline the changes in political groups' approach toward the eastern dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy. As for the structural power of the EU in the EaP neighbourhood and its transformative potential, the above-mentioned resolution stated that the EP '... recalls that the Eastern Neighbourhood is of strategic importance and recalls the European perspective of the countries concerned, which remains a key incentive for these countries to deliver on reforms; emphasises that the EU has real leverage in

this area and should fully assert its transformative power; considers that it is high time for intensified efforts, coupled with greater political commitment, to achieve the objectives of the EaP, including the need to establish a closer link between the CFSP and the ENP... ‘ (EP Resolution 2013).

In the meantime, since the resolution mentioned above, one could have observed the growing politicisation of the enlargement policy (Schimmelfennig – Bélanger 2021; Góra, 2021). On the basis of the EP debates analysis, Schimmelfennig – Bélanger (2021) emphasise two significant observations. First, it is the growing polarisation and politicisation of the enlargement issue since 2014. Second, it is the fact that despite the process of politicisation, the EP enlargement discourse could be characterised as positive and open framing. In her turn, Góra (2021) points to the fact that even though the security issues had a significant impact on the EP debates regarding the enlargement process, the policy evaluation was predominantly analysed from the perspective of the social and institutional implications that might be caused by potential enlargements.

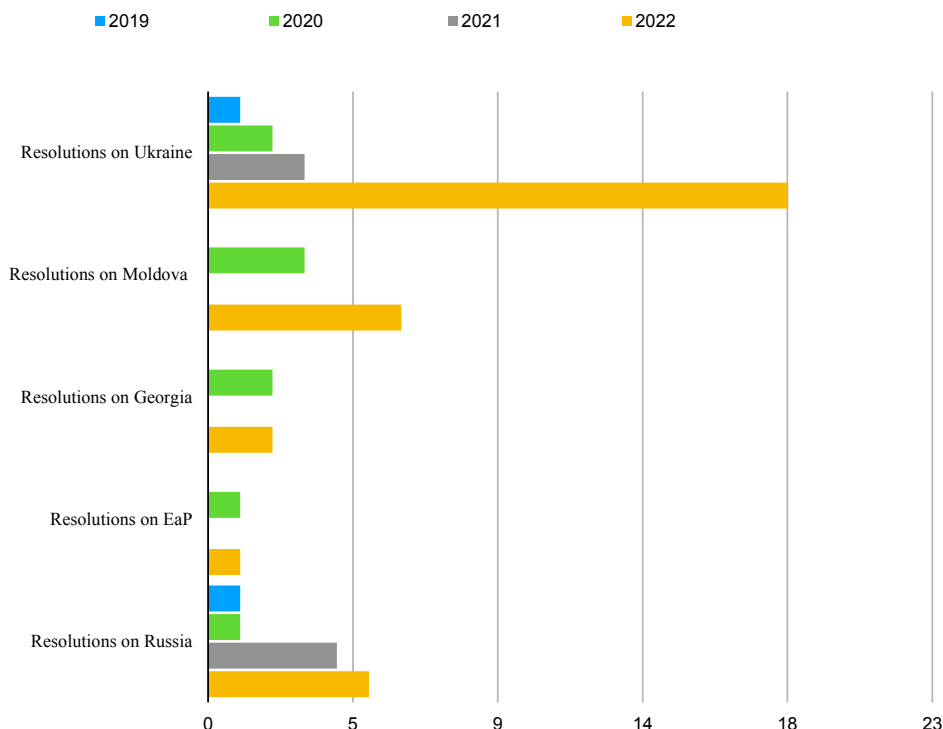
On the other hand, the individual member states veto is seen as a significant challenge for the enlargement process in the EU (Schimmelfennig – Bélanger 2021). The reaction of the EU member states to the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 has illustrated diverse attitudes toward future cooperation with Russia and toward the EU sanction policy in particular. In its turn, Russia invested in supporting pro-Kremlin parties and strengthening bilateral relations with selected member states’ governments in order to split the unity in the European Council and to discourage civic support for continuation of sanctions against Russia (Portela et al. 2020: 684). Simultaneously, Russia widely employed the anti-EU narrative aimed at contesting the European values and identity and presented itself as an alternative power that stands for conservative values (Tyushka 2021: 115).

Regarding the EU institutional discourse on the perspective for the eastern enlargement, previous scientific observations on prospects of EU-Ukraine relations point to the lack of resilience approach in the EU response to the Ukrainian crisis in the years 2014 to 2021 and argue that the resilience theme in the official EU rhetoric on Ukraine was not reflected in the transformation of cooperation in the EaP framework (Natorski 2022: 6). One might recall, the concepts of ‘resilience’ and ‘principled pragmatism’ were put at the core of the EU foreign and security policy in terms of its Global Strategy (Rieke and Riddervold 2021: 460). At the same time, despite moderate successes of EU attempts to strengthen societal resilience in Ukraine before 2022 it has managed to develop the sources of resilience and led to the mitigation of domestic risks (Kakachia et al. 2021: 1348).

Speaking about the role of the EP, the following part of the article centres on the content analysis of resolutions and recommendations on the major developments in the EaP region and Ukraine in particular. The content analysis of the

given documentation gives ground to illustrate the impact of the EP as a collective actor in reference to the EU neighbourhood policy-making. The analysis covers resolutions in the timespan of three years, from July 2019 to July 2022, which makes it possible to evaluate the approach of the EP before and after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Such a selection of primary sources serves as tool for the evaluation of leadership potential of the EP as a collective institutional actor of the EU. As for the aspects taken into account, they cover such issues as: state of AA implementation in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, direction of relations between EU and Russia before 24. 02. 2022, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, the prospects of the EU foreign policy toward the EaP region, etc. The diagram below shows the number of resolutions on given matters adopted by the EP in July 2019–July 2022:

Figure 1: EP Resolutions on the Association Trio, the EaP and Russia in the years 2019–2022



Source: author's own study of resolutions available at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html#sidesForm>

Previous research on the EP enlargement discourse argues that the EP ‘enlargement discourse is an informative indicator of actual EU external bordering’ (Schimmelfennig 2021). As it is clearly shown in the diagram, the Russian invasion became a trigger for the EU attempts to reconsider the eastern dimension of its neighbourhood policy. That resulted in the increasing intensity of the EP enlargement discourse and active position of the EP as a collective institutional actor aimed at the defining key aspects of the prospective policy toward not only Ukraine but toward the EaP and Russia as well.

This state of events poses a question on the essence and nature of the EP leadership in the institutional system of the EU and its impact on the reconsideration of the EU eastern policy. As a matter of fact, the analysis of the vision envisaged in the EP resolutions and recommendations adopted in the timespan from 2019 to February 2022 in the context of transformational versus transactional approach gives ground to formulate a number of observations. First, there was a low intensity of debate on the issue of the EaP in 2019–2020. Second, one could have noticed a visible increase in transformational elements in the documents adopted since September 2021 when the first signs of a potential Russian invasion against Ukraine became known to the general public. That included the appeal to enhance the strategy for the integration of the EaP countries and to prepare sanctions against Russia in case it decides to launch military action against the EaP countries. Finally, whereas the issue of enlargement was not raised, a range of recommendations argued for the urgent need to fundamentally reform the EU foreign policy regarding the direction of the EU-Russia relations in order ‘not to allow Russia to continue the so-called bilateralisation of relations with the EU’ (EP recommendation 2021/2042)

Having said that, the content analysis of resolutions and recommendations adopted since 24 February 2022 has demonstrated a clear shift toward the transformational vision of the prospects of eastern enlargement and makes it possible to define the EP as a transformational actor of the EU institutional system. The table below presents the examples of major elements of transformational leadership included in the EP resolutions adopted in the three month period from 24 February 2022 to 24 July 2022.

The analysis of the EP majority position on the eastern policy has illustrated the evolution of the MEPs’ approach to the analysed issue. Resolutions adopted between 24. 02. 2022–24. 07. 2022 are dominated by the transformative messages aimed at the reconsideration of the EU approach to its structural foreign policy-making process in the EaP region. What is more, there has been a significant increase in the intensity of political debate resulting in undertaken documents. By taking a proactive position, the EP calls on the key European institutions such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the High Representative to resign from a transactional leadership style so that the EU could use its transformative potential in its immediate eastern neighbour-

Table 1. Elements of Transformational Leadership in the EP Resolutions in Context of the EaP, Ukraine and EU-Russia Relations (24.02.2022 – 24.07.2022)

Element of transformational leadership	Examples
Transformational vision	repeated appeals to the European External Action Service (EEAS) to develop a more active role for the EU in the eastern region; calling for the EU institutions 'to work towards granting EU candidate status to Ukraine, in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and on the basis of merit, and, in the meantime, to continue to work towards its integration into the EU single market along the lines of the AA'; calling on the EC, the member states and the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to transform the EaP policy in the light of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; reaffirming the commitment to the EU enlargement as 'a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united EU'; calling for an EU solidarity mechanism aimed at overcoming the economic and social consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine; considering the involvement of the EaP countries in the Three Seas Initiative (3SI).
Purpose of the proposed action	to create grounds for the enlargement process; to develop transformative and meaningful instruments of the EU eastern policy; to increase political engagement of the EU in the EaP region; 'to expand support mechanisms for the further participation of the EaP countries in CSDP civilian and military missions and operations'.
Moral constituent	the repeated appeal to support the democratisation processes in the EaP region; the declaration to support 'like-minded Ukrainian partners who are fighting and sacrificing for European values and principles'.
Timescale of proposed changes	no direct mention about timescale of proposed changes to the eastern policy of the EU vs. immediate sanctions against Russia, i.e. full embargo on imports of energy resources.

Source: author's own analysis of EP resolutions available at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html#sidesForm>

hood as part of its strategic responsibility. This proactive stance towards the mobilisation of key institutional actors is aimed at reaching a compromise on giving up the transactional style of leadership in relations with Russia by using the transformational potential of the EU.

The analysis of rhetorical strategies in the context of the individual political leadership of the EU institutions allows for the definition of the main elements of the EU institutional position on its structural foreign policy competition with Russia. It is possible to define four major narratives of transformational leadership in the political discourse of leaders of the European Council, European Commission and EP:

- 1) EU as an independent actor in geopolitical relations;
- 2) EU as a transformational power on the international arena;

- 3) EU as a promotor of European values among member and non-member states;
- 4) 'special responsibility' of the EU toward Ukraine in light of Russia's military aggression.

Furthermore the leaders of three institutions unanimously agree that in order to reach the stated objectives, the EU urgently needs to build its own 'strategic vision' and elaborate a new formula of cooperation with Russia. Another step of equal importance is to develop a long-term strategy for the transformation of the EaP region and to bring the issue of enlargement back to the table.¹

V. Conclusions

The empirical study of the EP resolutions conducted above gives arguments in favour of dominance of the transformative approach instead of the transactional one that has been implemented on a number of occasions before. It has vividly illustrated the evolution of the EP institutional leadership on the issue of EU eastern policy-making. Aggressive Russian policies and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine have become a trigger for the reconsideration of the EU leadership in the EaP region and it is the EP that has demonstrated a clear transformational leadership potential on the given matter.

Based on the analysed examples of EP transformational leadership, it is possible to state that the evolution of the EP leadership approach to such a crucial issue as the eastern dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy has brought moral constituent to the core of the decision-making process on the future of the EU enlargement policy. Overall, the transformational style of the EP response to the existing geopolitical challenges caused by Russian military aggression has led to the following implications:

- a significant increase in the adoption of strong resolutions on the future relations with the associated states, EU-Russia relations and the essence of the EU foreign policy overall has brought the issue of prospective enlargement in the focus of the European debate;
- the transformational nature of the EP position toward the Russian aggression against Ukraine served as a motivation factor leading to the advance to a higher level of morale and motivation among political leaders of the EU institutions such as the European Council or European Commission and played a significant role in formulating the unanimous position of the EU as a structural power in the EaP region;

¹ Based on the author's content analysis of political speeches delivered by the president of the European Council Charles Michel, president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola.

- the change of the EP leadership style regarding the reconsideration of the EU eastern policy may have significant implications for the EP position and role in the functioning of the EU. As one might recall, the CoFoE has started the discussion on the need to revise the treaties in favour of more competences for the EP as the only EU institution that is elected directly by the citizens. In fact, the MEPs adopted a resolution arguing for the need to empower the EP with the direct legal initiative and strengthen the procedure of the EU values protection presented in article 7 of Treaty of the EU (EP resolution 2020/2132). In this regard, the consideration of the EP as the collective institutional actor who has a measurable impact on the functioning of the EU based on the EU values and moral constituent is likely to become a significant consolidating factor among the pro-EU political and social actors and will lead to the increase of public trust among the EU citizens.

It remains to be seen whether the change of the EP discourse on the issue of enlargement and reconsideration of the eastern policy of the EU will further impact the official position of other key EU institutions such as the European Council or the European Commission on the given matter. In the meantime, the tendency of building alliances aimed at helping Ukraine may lead to the creation of multiple centres for solving common problems in Europe and thus may result in individual action and lack of coordination with the EU institutions. Such a scenario is exactly opposite to the mainstream vision of the EU that is able to speak with one voice on crucial foreign policy matters. In this case, the EU inability to become a proactive actor in the region and a transformative power toward the associated states will put at risk the future of integration policies there and lead to the growing structural influence of Russia.

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