# Breakdown of EU-Russia Transnational Ties: Causes and Consequences

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**Abstract**
The article aims to explore the causes and consequences of the profound change in transnational ties between Russia and the European Union after February 24, 2022, that is, contacts that bypass official authorities and directly involve Russian and EU citizens (in business, science, education, culture, sports, and non-governmental organizations' activities). The breakdown of ties is unique in speed and scale. Five causes of the breakdown of transnational ties have been identified: the position of EU officials towards Russian society; the rise of the war paradigm in the West and its pluralization (that is, its implementation on different tracks); reputational

aspects; the perception of Russian society as homogeneous in supporting the operation in Ukraine; and pressure from Ukraine itself. As a result, relations between Russia and the EU have become more politicized and have lost the potential for resilience and mutual socialization. By limiting transnational ties, EU players help Russia's ruling elite consolidate society and limit alternative thinking; they also change the vector of EU civilian power. At the same time, the rupture of transnational ties delivers a major blow to the universality of Western institutions, which will determine the pace of recovery both for Russian supporters of close relations with the West and for their opponents. The article also pinpoints certain mechanisms for rebuilding transnational ties in the medium term.

***Keywords:*** Russia-EU relations, transnational ties, business, civil society, cultural ties, scientific ties, educational cooperation, epistemic communities.

Since the 1970s, international relations (IR) studies have distinguished three institutional levels of interaction: interstate, transgovernmental, and transnational. The first involves senior officials, the second implies cooperation between middle- and low-level officials, and the third one means interaction between citizens (business relations, dialogue between non-governmental organizations, educational and scientific cooperation, cultural and sports contacts). Analysts usually focus on the interstate level, while transgovernmental and transnational ties that shape interstate solutions and ensure their subsequent implementation often slip out of sight. However, these ties have certain autonomy from interstate relations as they depoliticize the dialogue and ensure its resilience.

Interstate (in this case, between the official bodies of Russia and the European Union), transgovernmental, and transnational levels have been developing between Russia and the EU since the early 1990s. The 2014 events damaged the interstate and transgovernmental levels, but the two sides nurtured transnational interaction, albeit in different ways. However, after February 24, 2022, many transgovernmental ties

were also destroyed. What makes this situation so unique is the speed with which contacts are disappearing and the scale of this process, as well as the fact that the initiative comes not so much from above—from the authorities, as from below—from the participants at the transnational level.

In this context, the purpose of this article is to identify the causes and consequences of the profound transformation of transnational relations between Russia and the European Union, which began on February 24, 2022. Three aspects add novelty to the study. Firstly, it focuses on the entire range of transnational interaction, not just business ties, the severance of which is often and thoroughly investigated in the context of sanctions. Secondly, it identifies the causes of the collapse of transnational ties, whereas existing studies of transgovernmental and transnational relations focus mainly on their development and functioning. Thirdly, the article explores the consequences of the breakdown of transnational ties between Russia and the EU.

## INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS IN THE IR THEORY

In IR studies, the debate has long been revolving around different levels of relations distinguished by thematic, structural or institutional principles (Romanova, 2017). This article discusses the latter, which essentially states that contacts are not limited to meetings of senior officials but develop at lower levels. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye coined the term 'transnational' to refer to ties that are not controlled by the central authorities of a country (Nye and Keohane, 1971). This referred specifically to non-hierarchical, network interaction, flexible and quick exchanges of information, socialization, and non-transparent interaction (Börzel, 1998; Slaughter, 2004). In 1974, Keohane and Nye divided all contacts into transgovernmental and transnational and defined transgovernmentalism as "sets of direct interaction among sub-units of different governments that are not controlled or closely guided by the policies of the cabinets or the chief executives of those governments" (Keohane and Nye, 1974, p. 43). Transnational interaction is the result of the growing influence of non-state participants in international relations.

Business was the first transnational object of study. Business activities facilitate the creation of networks acting parallel to the state. In the 1980s, more attention was paid to non-governmental organizations and dialogue between civil societies. They provide information, often alternative to official reports, carry out expertise, create a development agenda and advance it (Keck and Sikkink, 1999). Epistemic (expert, scientific) communities are considered another transnational group. They are focused on advancing their vision, including by forming a cognitive framework for the interstate level (Haas, 1992). Educational contacts, including exchange programs and co-education, make up another block of transnational relations. Finally, a particular type of transnational relationship comprises cultural and sports ties.

The density of transnational relations is determined by the characteristics of international actors. These include the economic system, the state of the non-profit sector, the engagement of scientists in international cooperation and the harmonization of education systems, as well as the internationalization of cultural and sports spheres. Closeness of contacts in all types of transnational relations can be justified both by rational considerations (for example, mutually beneficial economic cooperation, resolution of common environmental problems, dialogue through sports), and by the dissemination of ideas and gradual mutual socialization of citizens.

The interstate level sets the legal and political basis for transgovernmental and transnational ties. But these ties develop on their own. On the one hand, they restrict the activities of state leaders and create demand for certain policy decisions, and on the other hand, they contribute to the implementation of decisions made. States have also learned to use the transnational level to their advantage to promote certain ideas, strengthen the economic basis of interaction or manipulate it. The transnational and transgovernmental levels also determine the resilience of relations. If we assume that relations are a system and the ties we describe are its elements, then the violation of contacts in one area can be compensated for by more active interaction in other areas, which stabilizes dialogue.

Institutional levels are also associated with the degree of politicization of relationships. In this case it can be defined using Carl Schmitt's concept of the political, as a "friend or foe" division, denoting the highest intensity of connection and separation (1992, pp. 38-39). The transgovernmental level that is not dense enough facilitates politicization, because relations are shifted completely to the interstate level, their technical examination is reduced, and conceptual differences come to the fore. The influence of transnational relations is multidimensional: business, epistemic communities, scientific and educational contacts ensure pragmatization and depoliticization, but the activity of non-governmental organizations can either depoliticize interaction (for example, in the field of social welfare or environmental protection) or politicize it (for example, in the field of democracy and human rights).

## INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS IN RUSSIA-EU RELATIONS

Studies exploring relations between Russia and the EU have most often focused on the highest level of interaction. This is justified by publicity accompanying summits, the importance of the decisions adopted there, and the relative ease of research. Much less attention has been paid to daily contacts between bureaucrats of the sides; and to how joint and unilateral institutions shape their preferences, outline their agendas, and implement their decisions. Bursts of interest in this topic can be attributed to negotiations on common spaces (Bordachev and Romanova, 2003) and the functioning of the so-called Russia-EU dialogues (Romanova, 2014). Studies have also examined how the interstate level has contributed to transnational contacts. Of particular importance was the so-called Simutenkov case, which guaranteed a number of rights to citizens of Russia and the EU (Chetverikov, 2019).

Much less attention was paid to transnational relations proper. Emphasis was placed on lobbying (Levy, 2005), the role of political networks in the transfer of norms (Turkina and Postnikov, 2012, 2014), the exchange of information, and the harmonization of positions (Feigin and Gromov, 2014; Kazantsev, 2012; Romanova, 2014). Business contacts were investigated in detail (Connolly and Deak, 2021), the idea

of a Russia-EU transnational space was explored (Strezhneva, 2010), and attention was drawn to educational and scientific cooperation (Deriglazova and Makinen, 2019, 2021), cultural interaction (Fadeeva, 2021), civil society dialogue (Belokurova and Demidov, 2019), and the development of expert ties (Fischer, 2021).

Several periods can be distinguished in the development of transgovernmenal and transnational relations between Russia and the EU. Transgovernmenal relations boomed at the beginning of this century, when the two sides proposed creating four spaces, began dialogues in various areas, and launched the Partnership for Modernization program. Russia was open for the closest possible interaction with the EU and ready to use various formats. The 2008 crisis caused by events in Georgia was passed relatively smoothly precisely due to the transgovernmenal and transnational levels of relations between Russia and the EU, which compensated for a brief failure of interstate contacts.

The 2014 crisis produced a different result: sanctions imposed by Brussels and the self-restraint of EU institutions brought most dialogues between Russia and the EU to a halt (Romanova, 2015). Understandable and permanent bodies were replaced with ad hoc institutions to resolve crises (for example, in the energy sector). As a result, the biggest part of transgovernmenal relations was put on hold. Transnational relations continued, but the parties encouraged them differently. Russia was keen to maintain business contacts, emphasizing the economic pragmatism of interaction with the EU. At the same time, Moscow tried to control contacts between civil societies, supporting interaction between the Civic Chamber—the European Economic and Social Committee but criticizing other transnational contacts (Putin, 2020). The EU, however, supported decentralized interaction between societies, as well as the Russia-EU Civil Society Forum, which united various non-governmental organizations, apparently hoping for political modernization of Russia through socialization. One of the five principles proclaimed by Federica Mogherini in 2016 was devoted precisely to citizens' dialogue (Mogherini, 2016). Both sides also promoted scientific, educational, and cultural ties as they

matched both Russia's tilt towards pragmatic cooperation and the EU's desire to expand the channels of mutual socialization. So, all types of transnational relations developed after 2014.

## BREAKDOWN OF TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS IN 2022

Since February 24, 2022, transnational relations have been changing at a kaleidoscopic rate. The first impulse was to preserve the existing interaction. Businesses froze for a few days in anticipation. Western scientists came up with an open letter, speaking against breaking scientific and technical cooperation with Russia (Holdren et al., 2022). EU universities held discussions on how to interact with Russian colleagues and students. The newspapers *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Dagens Nyheter,* and *Politiken* offered to translate some of their articles into Russian in order to create an alternative information channel for Russian people.

However, these attempts were quickly replaced by a diametrically opposite approach. EU and U.S. companies—from Zara to Ernst & Young—rushed to (temporarily) close their offices in Russia, limit operations, sell their assets in the country or transfer them to Russian persons (Yale School of Management, 2022). The decision of MasterCard and Visa to disconnect Russian users from their systems rattled the internationalized part of Russian society. Russians abroad were cut off from their funds at home, and those at home could no longer use most foreign services. Businesses became hostage to exponentially multiplying restrictions, ruptured supply chains, and financial settlement problems.

Non-governmental organizations complained about a sharp decline in funding from abroad. This is partly explained by restrictive measures. It is no coincidence that the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control issued a general license allowing money transfers to non-governmental organizations in Russia and Ukraine. However, Western participants remained cautious. Scientific and educational interaction was seriously affected. Joint research was stopped, the participation of Russian universities in international associations was suspended, and some EU countries directly prohibited their residents from interacting

with Russian colleagues. Some databases of scientific articles (for example, Taylor and Francis) blocked access to their resources for Russian institutions. Students studying in Russia on exchange programs were urged to return home. Double diploma programs between universities of Russia and Europe were put on hold.

Problems arose in the cultural and sports spheres. The concerts of Russian performers were canceled if they had not publicly condemned the Russian government's actions against Ukraine. Russian classical works were (temporality) removed from the repertoire of theaters in Europe, and the Tchaikovsky contest disappeared from the World Federation of International Music Competitions. Ridiculous stories about banned lectures on Russian cultural figures of past centuries were widely circulated in the Russian media. Russian athletes could not take part in many international competitions. The membership of most Russian sports federations in international associations was suspended.

Some of the ties have been preserved. Some businesses are trying to operate in the new environment. In science, dialogue is maintained through personal (but not institutional) contacts. A number of Western journals continue to accept Russian researchers' articles for publication. Interestingly, the ATP and WTA associations have supported the right of Russian tennis players to continue participating in their competitions. Some EU countries have launched specialized programs to support Russian scientists and journalists who have ended up outside Russia due to their political choice. Psychological support programs have been set up for Russian students studying in the EU. However, all these examples do not change the overall trend towards severing transnational ties. Moreover, assistance to Russians in the EU cannot be considered transnational ties proper (at least for the time being) because they do not imply border crossing.

In line with the latest Western fashion, the break of transnational contacts has been dubbed in Russia 'cancel culture', understood as actions limiting the ability of individual participants to function normally because of the reaction to their position. In our case, however, the point at issue is the refusal to cooperate with the Russian partner in principle as a response to disagreement with the actions

of official Moscow in Ukraine. At the same time, the position of a particular athlete, scientist or buyer often makes no difference. What is important is his/her citizenship, which has become toxic in the eyes of EU participants in transnational relations. Most contacts between Russia and the EU, which have been built for more than thirty years, have probably not been ruined but have certainly been frozen. None of the types of transnational relations is an exception. The differentiation between the state and the citizens of Russia, which the EU tried to pursue for a long time, has been reduced to a minimum. But what is most surprising is that the traditionally inert transnational level is acting on its own to break ties.

## CAUSES OF THE BREAKDOWN OF TRANSNATIONAL TIES

It is possible to discern five mutually corroborating causes of the breakdown of transnational ties.

***The first cause*** is the position of the official authorities. Classical interstate ties are critically important for transnational ties because official documents create the required legal, political and economic prerequisites for them. The EU has traditionally distinguished between the state and society in Russia. The EU tried to steer this course after February 24, 2022. In fact, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, for example, repeatedly emphasized that the EU drew a line between "Russian citizens and the Russian regime" (Borrell, 2022c), and also appealed directly to the citizens of Russia (Borrell, 2020b). The EU also suspended the agreement facilitating visa procedures for civil servants (including diplomats), but not for ordinary citizens (EU Representative Office in Moscow, 2022).

At the same time, many EU sanctions have hurt transnational relations. For example, the ban on Russian flights in EU airspace and the termination of leasing agreements with Russian air carriers have limited everybody's freedom of movement between the EU and Russia and direct contacts. Finland's decision to stop railway service with Russia falls in the same category. Another example is the EU's refusal to finance scientific and educational cooperation with Russia under the fourth package of sanctions (European Commission, 2022). As a result,

hundreds of established networks have been jeopardized. Another illustration is the restrictions on Russian deposits in EU banks, which entailed total fund surveillance in many banks, as well as manual control of money transfers to Russia, which has almost paralyzed all interaction. So the sanctions frenzy has killed all of Brussels' declared attempts to keep the previous pattern (freezing the interstate and transgovernmental levels while maintaining transnational contacts).

Measures adopted by the Russian government have also contributed significantly to the collapse of transnational ties. These include increased suspicions about any civic activities, especially those involving foreign funding; broader use of the status of "international agent"; and introduction of legislation that can be invoked for punishing any form of international cooperation. The decision of the Russian Justice Ministry of April 8, 2022, to cancel the registration of fifteen organizations (including German political parties' funds, the Carnegie Endowment, and Amnesty International) added fuel to the fire of transnational ties. At the same time, the Russian leadership's steps were rather consistent and in line with its long-standing conviction that civil society should not be "the product of an abstract transnational mind behind which other people's interests are hidden" (Putin, 2020). But the EU's approach has evolved further since 24 February 2022.

***The second cause*** of the breakdown of transnational ties is the war paradigm that reigns supreme in relations between Russia and the EU. Brussels took Russia's actions as an irreconcilable challenge to the European Union and the rules-based order it promotes (European Council, 2022). This changes the modus operandi to a military one for both EU/Western politicians and ordinary participants in transnational relations. Earlier, the EU was in opposition to Europe's dark past and previous wars that had been overcome through integration. Now Russia has finally emerged as an antagonist, in opposition to which the EU is asserting its identity. In this scheme, any ties become unnecessary because the dominant factor is delimitation along the "friend of foe" lines.

At the same time, the concept of war is being pluralized: there are hostilities in Ukraine, and there is an "all-out economic and financial

war" of the West against Russia, with no holds barred to minimize Moscow's ability to continue the conflict (Reuters, 2022). There is a "hybrid, total war," the goal of which is "to destroy, break, wipe out and strangle the Russian economy and Russia as a whole" (Lavrov, 2022). Such pluralization of war creates opportunities for flexible and broad participation in the confrontation: on the battlefield by supplying weapons or mercenaries; in the economic sphere by breaking ties; or in any other area by severing contacts with partners from Russia. The cruelty of scenes broadcast from Ukraine is driving everyone to get involved. Also, such pluralization allows EU players to get Russian citizens engrossed in it, try to reach out to them through transnational ties and de-virtualize the special operation for them.

***The third cause*** of the severance of ties is the perception of Russian society as homogeneous and generally supporting Russia's operation in Ukraine. To prove its point, EU actors cite public opinion polls, conducted by both the pro-government VTsIOM and FOM services, and the more critically minded Levada Center (designated as a foreign agent in Russia). These surveys indicate that from 65% (FOM, 2022; VTsIOM, 2022) to 89% (Levada, 2022) of respondents support the special operation. Changing the wording of the questions and allowing respondents not to answer them provides a more nuanced picture based on age, occupation or income (Extremescan, 2022a, 2022b), but this does not change the main conclusion: there is the core of people who support the special operation and there is a silent periphery that sides with the official policy.

As a result, Western organizations and citizens stop to differentiate between citizens and the state in Russia. In Western discourse, the term 'Putin's war' is gradually being supplanted by the term 'Russia's war.' This view is further strengthened by the activities of various Russian legal entities and individuals, such as the public display of the symbols Z and V or an open letter in support of the operation written in March of this year by university rectors (Agranovich, 2022). At the same time, protest actions in Russia have been minimized and squeezed out of public space by police and the Russian Guard, as well as new legislation adopted in 2022. This justifies the broad enforcement measures taken

in response, and "collective non-discriminatory punishment of the entire biological community" (Alekseeva-Karnevali, 2022).

***The fourth*** cause can be called "long-term, reputational pragmatism." At the initial stage of the conflict, many Russian politicians and experts were confident that most of the economic, cultural, educational, and scientific ties could be preserved in the spirit of pragmatism. However, the very concept of pragmatism is relative and depends on the worldview. Economic benefits and the advantages of scientific and educational cooperation that enriches cultural dialogue are important, of course. But even more important in the modern world are reputation and the brand (personal or corporate). If one takes this resource into account, economic calculations become more complex, and considerations of pragmatism become more nuanced.

How much can one earn in Russia in comparison with the EU and U.S. markets, where consumers refuse to buy the products of a company that continues its business in Russia? For example, Uniqlo faced civil resistance when it tried to keep its stores open in Russia. What damage will be done to reputation if it becomes known that a company has provided assistance to a Russian organization, albeit a charitable one? Is it possible to guarantee that these funds will not be used for activities related to the special operation (with such a relation being interpreted most broadly)? What kind of reputation will an institute have if they say that it helps Russian science and education, the results of which can be used by the army?

There is more. What does the (temporary) severance of ties with Russia mean if their preservation prolongs the conflict, and with it financial costs for everybody and human casualties? Moreover, the longer the conflict, the more and the longer Ukrainian refugees stay in the EU and need to be helped at the expense of its budget. How can one make any business plans if the political context is constantly changing? Finally, disruption of supply chains and financial problems simply make it impossible to continue doing business.

So this is not about the lack of pragmatism on the part of EU participants in transnational relations, but about their pragmatism of a different kind. At the same time, the costs noted by Russian observers

exist, but they are smaller than the damage companies may sustain in the EU/West if they continue their operations in Russia. Moreover, time, and human and financial resources thus saved can be directed to where they will yield short-term results, such as the employment of Ukrainian refugees, including as part of scientific, educational, and cultural projects. Perhaps they will not be perfect partners, sometimes not as good as their Russian colleagues in some ways, but this will solve wider social problems.

Finally, ***the fifth cause*** is external pressure on the system of Russia-EU transnational relations. Traditionally, this is understood as the extraterritorial impact of U.S. sanctions that forces commercial players in most countries to refrain from violating Washington's restrictions. However, in the case of transnational relations, Ukraine has played a no less important role at the level of both the state and civil society. This pressure has changed since February 24 of this year. In the beginning, there were attempts to appeal directly to Russian society to protest against the special operation. President Zelensky recorded several such appeals. Similar videos also featured prominent Ukrainian actors, presenters, and bloggers in Russia. However, they did not bring about any change in Russia's actions. Then Ukraine focused its pressure on the destruction of transnational ties between Russia and the EU. The most obvious vector is official Kiev's demands urging economic sanctions. Another example is calls for banning the performances of Russian actors and singers who supported the special operation. Ukrainian civil society actions were no less vivid. For example, Ukrainian scientists refused to participate in scientific events and publications if their Russian colleagues were involved; and a group of Ukrainian scientists even urged the world to limit all scientific interaction with Russian scholars (Chumachenko et al., 2022).

So, a combination of the above five factors have dramatically weakened transnational ties between Russia and the EU. These are a change in the EU's official position and Russia's legislative novelties; the conceptualization by the EU of what is happening as war and the pluralization of this concept; reputational and economic pragmatism; the confidence of EU players that the Russian state and citizens are

united in their support of the special operation; and, finally, external pressure on relations between Russia and the EU, primarily from Ukraine.

## CONSEQUENCES OF THE BREAKDOWN OF TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE EU

***First.*** The disappearance of transnational ties will emasculate the professional and personal life of Russian people. Essentially, the crisis of transnational relations has exposed the degree of interdependence between Russia and the EU/West. Residents of large cities who are accustomed to using modern services (from ApplePay/GooglePay and credit cards to Western clothing brands and Netflix) will feel the impact more than others. The entire business community will be deeply affected due to the rearrangement of supply chains, complicated settlements, the loss of imports, and contracting export markets. Significant changes will occur in the educational and scientific sphere that has been built for years (quite legitimately) as part of a single internationalized space that functions according to unified rules.

***Second.*** The nullification of the transnational level of relations following the EU's de facto abandonment of the transgovernmental level in 2014 leads to their institutional politicization, that is, to a deeper "friend or foe" division. Normally, the transgovernmental and transnational ties "split" any agenda into specific and technical aspects. Just insoluble contradictions alone rise to the interstate level, but more often the latter seals agreements that have already been reached at lower levels. Moreover, the transgovernmental and transnational ties facilitate mutual socialization of the parties, and the understanding of their possibilities and limitations. The destruction of the transgovernmental and transnational ties, on the contrary, fuels mutual hostility, obliterates nuanced perception of the counterpart, and eliminates venues for finding joint solutions and parameters, if not of cooperation, then of coexistence.

***Third.*** The resilience of the Russia-EU relationship is decreasing. Previously, it was maintained through rearranging bilateral ties. For example, a lack of transgovernmental ties since 2014 was made up for

by dialogue between experts. Now that most of the ties are broken, there is nothing to rearrange. Some elements become components of other systems, and others are disappearing (for the time being at least). The lack of mutual socialization makes (former) participants in transnational relations easy victims of the official versions of events, propaganda and, ultimately, information warfare. In fact, individual contacts remain the only element of resilience.

***Fourth.*** The refusal of EU participants in transnational relations to differentiate between the state and society corresponds to the long-standing ideas and arguments of the Russian leadership. This refusal helps the latter fight the so-called fifth column, clearly articulated on March 16 of this year (Putin, 2022), and facilitates the Kremlin's long-cherished desire for maximum autonomy of Russian society from the West. The actions of EU participants in transnational relations also paradoxically bear out the Kremlin's thesis about the rejection of all Russian in the West. So the most internationalized part of Russian society will suffer the most as it de facto gets caught in the crossfire (from both the EU and forces within Russia).

***Fifth.*** Today it is customary to talk about the EU as a militarizing actor: the EU is set to increase military spending and is providing military support to Ukraine. Borrell's phrase that "wars are won or lost on the battlefield" is quite noteworthy in this respect (Borrell, 2022a), which is in sharp contrast to the EU's traditional aspirations towards peace. However, the synchronized breakdown of transnational ties with Russia can also be conceptualized as an example of civilian power that makes a radical and overwhelming impact using non-military methods. But it is almost impossible to repeat this under other conditions, since this will require a simultaneous occurrence of the five abovementioned factors. Moreover, this is a non-variable and disposable tool inflicting damage that will take years to remedy.

***Sixth.*** The breakdown of transnational relations is unlikely to change the position of Russian participants affected by the EU decisions. Their reaction is either a confirmation of stereotypes about the EU/West, or bewilderment as to why it targets those whose position differs from that of the government (but who are unable to

change Russia's official policy) and disappointment about the West due to its colonial approach (Bellatriks, 2022). Both groups, however, will obviously agree that in the future new transnational interaction cannot be asymmetrically oriented towards Western institutions that enable the EU/West to instantly block everything from bank cards or credit agency services to ratings that define many processes, high-tech goods or access to various databases. So, while the goal of breaking/freezing transnational ties for most EU/Western players was to protect the existing international order, it is this order that will suffer. After all, a new long-term goal is to build a system that will minimize the possibility of an asymmetric break-up.

***Seventh*** and lastly, the question is how to restore the relationship in the future. Defrosting transnational ties appears to be more complex than lifting sanctions. There is the practice of lifting the latter (Hudáková, Biersteker and Moret, 2021), even though it rather shows the difficulty of overcoming restrictive measures. There are many more questions about how much time the restoration of other transnational contacts will take and what will be the conditions for such recovery. The lack of mutual socialization will complicate the return to cooperation. It is also not obvious who and when should resume these ties, what conditions should be met for that, and what role compatriots outside Russia can play in this process. There can be two mutually supporting tracks. The first one implies an impetus at the interstate level, signaling a change in the dominant of relations, a shift from war, if not to peace, then to more constructive coexistence. The second one calls for resuming and stepping up interaction on an informal and individual basis with the subsequent institutionalization of ties. But this will be painstaking, difficult and time-consuming work.

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