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Geopolitics and Sovereignty in the EU and Russia's Discourses

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, the EU (previously the EEC) has positioned itself as a normative actor, thus ensuring the dominance of the neoliberal agenda on the world stage. Some of its partners accepted this state of affairs, while others, like Russia, advanced alternative interpretations of various categories to challenge the EU's hegemony. Moscow and Brussels failed to establish a dialogue in the same language. In recent years, a reverse process has developed: the EU has been integrating the categories of 'sovereignty' and 'geopolitical' into its discourse. This article aims to identify whether the use of the same terms signifies that Moscow and Brussels are about to

find a "common language." Theoretically, the article is based on critical geopolitics, which implies discourse analysis as a methodology. It helps to disclose common elements in the interpretations of sovereignty and geopolitics, as well as fundamental distinctions in the way these categories are integrated in the discourses of the European Union and Russia. The plurality of interpretations results in the conceptions of "correct" sovereignty and "negatively charged" sovereignism, and of "good" and "bad" geopolitics in the discourses of Russia and the EU. The EU's adaptation of the language of realism further complicates communication between Moscow and Brussels.

Keywords: European Union, EU-Russia relations, geopolitics, sovereignty, technological sovereignty, critical geopolitics, discourse.

Russia spent a rather long time trying to master the language of the West. Faced with the principles of market economy, competition, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, Moscow first accepted their Western interpretations but later began to creatively reconsider them (Romanova 2007, 2020). As a result, Russia's normative rivalry, primarily with the European Union, which fancied itself Moscow's guide to the world of values, kept growing. Dialogue between Russia and the EU was often conceptualized as an interaction between a realist and a liberal, as a primitive "interests vs values" dilemma. The emphasis was on Moscow's desire to destroy the hegemony of the EU (and, more broadly, of the West) and their monopoly on interpretating the basic categories of the world order.

However, a reverse process has developed since the second decade of this century. The EU has been mastering the language of realism, which it denied for a long time, making that denial the key feature of its identity. This process has manifested itself in the integration of the terms 'geopolitics' and 'sovereignty,' 'power' and 'interest' in its discourse. First, French President Emmanuel Macron proposed the category of 'European sovereignty' in 2017, picked up by then European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. In 2019, his successor Ursula von der Leyen proclaimed the intention to turn the

European Commission into a "geopolitical" instrument. This fueled the EU's discussion of strategic, technological, and digital sovereignty (and strategic autonomy as an invariant[1]), and of interests and power. Finally, the events of 2022, starting from the military operation in Ukraine to the collapse of the pillars of the world order, served as a catalyst that accelerated the spread of the language of realism in the EU.

This article aims to clarify whether the use of the concepts of 'geopolitics' (and 'geopolitical') and 'sovereignty' signifies that Moscow and Brussels are beginning to use "the same language." The study included an analysis of the speeches by Russian and EU leaders and official documents from 2017 to the present with a view to identifying similarities and disagreements in the Russian and EU discourses on geopolitics and sovereignty. It also examines how the actors use these categories to identify themselves and structure the space around them.

GEOPOLITICS AND SOVEREIGNTY: A BIT OF THEORY

'Sovereignty' is a basic concept for IR theory. In internal politics, it denotes the supremacy of power in a certain territory, and in foreign policy it limits interference in the affairs of other states and serves as the basis for the equality of actors in the international arena. European integration has historically implied the fusion of national sovereignties (Haas, 1958) and the consent of actors to jointly enforce sovereignties. The EU's characteristic feature—neoliberalism— emphasizes cooperation, globalism, and a universalist approach to norms, principles, and rules. The EU has always claimed that the sphere of sovereignty with an emphasis on power and interests is gradually shrinking. The EU itself was often seen as a post-sovereign actor (MacCormick, 1999) or a late-sovereign one (Walker, 2003).

The EU has also contrasted itself to geopolitics. Traditionally, "geopolitics emphasizes the continuing power of states and empires and the importance of power struggles among these entities; borders, lines" (Steinmetz, 2012, p.18), which the EU regarded as a thing of the past. In addition, geopolitics has historically had a negative connotation

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[1] The term 'strategic autonomy' emerged in the EU before, but now it is used as a synonym of 'strategic sovereignty' (for details, see Kotsur, 2023).

due to the association of this discipline's representatives with Nazi Germany. The EU positioned itself as a normative actor (whose actions are based on values (Manners, 2002)), as a market actor (which uses the power of the economy (Damro, 2012)), and a regulatory actor (which influences others with standards and rules (Bradford, 2020)). In Brussels' vocabulary, the term 'normative' was synonymous not only with values but also with everything positive and characteristic of the EU, while the term 'geopolitics,' as an antagonist, symbolized alternative power-based policies (Cadier, 2019). For example, in the energy field, distinctions were often made between liberal logic, typical of the EU, and geopolitical logic, characteristic of Russia (Correljé and van der Linde, 2006).

In this context, the present appeal to sovereignty and geopolitics in EU discourse is noteworthy. The theoretical framework of this study is critical geopolitics, focused on how political actors discursively structure the global space (Kuus, 2010), including how they draw boundaries between themselves and others. Actors and territories exist materially, but it is through discourse that they acquire meaning (Campbell, 1993). Furthermore, discourse reveals how an actor would like to present the world, other actors in international relations, and current events (Hajer, 2006), and how it legitimizes its political decisions (Fairclough, 2018; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). Critical geopolitics distinguishes three types of discourse: formal (academic research), practical (statements by politicians and bureaucrats, official documents), and popular (people's perceptions of the world) (Ó Tuathail, and Agnew, 1992). Our study focuses on practical geopolitics as it most clearly delineates the logic of decision-making. The empirical base of the study consists of more than 200 texts (official documents as well as speeches by Russian and EU leaders), which directly define or interpret the categories that form the focus of this study.

A CONVERGENCE OF LANGUAGES?

The World Is Changing
The EU uses the category 'geopolitics' primarily to describe the current, transformational moment in world politics. In 2020-2021, Josep Borrell

explained it as unprecedented competition, "power politics," and "a multi-polar world, but without effective multilateralism," "the strategic competition between the U.S. and China," and interdependence "becoming more and more conflictual," with "some countries seem to follow a logic of empires." He also spoke of "the threat of a decline in the level of freedom and democracy in the world" (Borrell, 2020a, 2021). Particular attention was paid to the geopolitics of semiconductors with unpredictable supply chains (Breton, 2021a) and the geopolitics of climate change that reduces the "geopolitical power of countries like Russia" (Borrell and Timmermans, 2021). The EU's transition from cooperative geo-economy to geopolitics that emphasizes borders and conflict went into high gear as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global logistics. In 2022, the events in Ukraine became a crucial part of geopolitics as a picture of a changing world for the EU. They affect the EU in "energy, food, economy, security, defense" (European Commission, 2022a), change "the geopolitical paradigm of the Western world" (Piket, 2022), and "provoke a new confrontation between authoritarian and liberal democratic regimes" (Borrell, 2022c).

Thus, geopolitics in the EU symbolizes a shift towards conflicts in the world and stricter physical and value boundaries between Europe and the others. Geopolitics for the EU has also become synonymous with "power politics," where "bipolarity is coupled with messy multipolarity," multilateralism is weakening, the U.S.-China confrontation is spreading to all spheres, the developing countries' self-esteem is growing, a "battle of narratives" is in progress, old and new wars are being fought, military expenditures are increasing, and security priorities override economic considerations (Borrell, 2023c). China and Russia are held responsible for the fragmentation of "world geopolitics" (Breton, 2022).

Russia's official discourse also includes the category of 'geopolitics' that denotes global change. "These are objective processes and genuinely revolutionary tectonic shifts in geopolitics... in the entire system of international relations, where the role of dynamic and potentially strong countries and regions is substantially growing," notes Vladimir Putin (Putin, 2022c). The Russian leadership also

recognizes the key role of the 2022 events that "have changed the global geopolitical situation" (Putin, 2022a).

Both Russia and the EU similarly use of the word 'geopolitics' to describe the current critical moment and get a similar picture. But in doing so both sides perceive each other as a threat and a source of tensions, which shows that Russia and the EU are close in using the realist language.

An Actor Must Strengthen Its Sovereignty

Both the EU and Russia agree that the current situation requires strengthening sovereignty for the sake of survival and prosperity. Back in 2017, Macron defined EU sovereignty as "our ability to exist in today's world to defend our values and interests" (Macron, 2017), including increased autonomy from the United States. In 2020, Borrell also emphasized that the EU "must ... act to defend its values and interests," and to do so "we need to invest in strategic sovereignty" (Borrell, 2020d). And President of the European Council Charles Michel stated that it "means no more and no less than being master of our own destiny" (Michel, 2021c).

Special attention is paid to technological sovereignty, understood as reduced dependence on imports and services from outside the EU, because "sovereignty today is the sovereignty of technology," and without it "there is no political sovereignty" (Le Maire, 2022). The EU seeks to create its own model of technological sovereignty, an alternative to both the U.S.'s narrow corporate vision and China's total state control (Ibid). The events of 2022 increased the EU's focus on the economic aspects of sovereignty. According to the Versailles Declaration, "confronted with growing instability," the EU "decided to take greater responsibility for our security and take further decisive steps towards building our European sovereignty, reducing our dependencies" (European Council, 2022). At the same time, market restrictions through state intervention are possible (see for example, Macron, 2023).

All these aspects resonate with Russia's official discourse, which links sovereignty to "a unique path of development" and national

interests (Putin, 2022d). Russia's official discourse also includes technological, digital, and especially information sovereignty. Moscow recognizes the need to partially restrict market logic in order to achieve technological sovereignty (Minpromtorg, 2022). The importance of the latter type of sovereignty in Russia has been growing since 2022. This is well seen in a sharp increase in the use of this word combination; in official texts it has gradually replaced the term 'import substitution.' Growing Western sanctions promoted ever wider use of the category 'technological sovereignty' in Russia. The corresponding use of this term in the EU has also contributed to this trend in Russian discourse.

At the same time, the changes that the category of 'technological sovereignty' describes in both Russia and the EU are not sovereignty in the ideological or legal sense, but rather the choice of a specific set of actions. It is more appropriate to speak of (partial) deglobalization (Jackson, 2006). It may or may not be combined with sovereignty as the supremacy of power. The EU's popular invariant—"strategic autonomy"—more accurately describes this policy vector, but the emphasis on sovereignty gives greater importance and status to the corresponding set of actions. In this sense, Russia and the EU also see eye to eye.

Sovereignty Is Not Protectionism or Refusal to Cooperate
The EU and Russia vie with each other in denying the link between sovereignty and protectionism. For example, Commissioner Thierry Breton argues that "openness is deeply entrenched in Europe's DNA," and that the EU needs "international trade and global value chain integration for our economy to continue thriving" (Breton, 2022). The European External Action Service also notes that "the point is not to embrace autarky or protectionism, but to safeguard our political independence so that we remain masters of our own choices and future" (EEAS, 2020). Similarly, President Vladimir Putin says: "Sovereignty and a unique path of development in no way mean isolation or autarky. On the contrary, they are about energetic and mutually beneficial cooperation based on the principles of fairness and equality" (Putin, 2022d), and that Russia does not seek "to build fortresses and to

live behind the fortress walls" (Putin, 2021). And Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov notes that technological sovereignty does not aim to "close in on itself" (Minpromtorg, 2023).

But sovereignty, according to both Moscow and Brussels, makes them "stronger and more influential" and "strong allies make for stronger alliances" (Michel, 2021b). Therefore, the EU is ready to further deepen its cooperation with its partners. Putin emphasizes that "genuinely sovereign states are always interested in equal partnership ... on the contrary, weak and dependent countries are usually looking for enemies ..." (Putin, 2022c). Both sides are looking for an optimal combination of openness and seclusion, experimenting with the categories of "economic" or "technological" sovereignty.

Engagement with third countries also takes on a geopolitical dimension. For the EU, interaction with neighbors is at the core of the Geopolitical Commission (Várhelyi, 2019). "Acting as a geopolitical power means taking care of ourselves .... But it also means taking care of others, especially our most vulnerable neighbors," Michel notes. He calls for the creation of a "European geopolitical community" (Michel, 2022). The neighborhood region has naturally become the main arena of the clash between Russia and the EU, which turned from bad to worse in February 2022. In addition, the EU has identified Africa, which is also a focus of Russia's attention, as a region of "geopolitical interests" (Borrell and Urpilainen, 2020). However, unlike the EU, Moscow does not define the relevant territories as a sphere of geopolitical activity.

Thus, at first glance, there are many similarities in the EU and Russian discourses on geopolitics and sovereignty. The current situation on the world stage is described as geopolitics that requires the strengthening of sovereignty, where Moscow and Brussels perceive each other as adversaries. Sovereignty is viewed as a way of preserving values and securing interests. Technological sovereignty plays a significant role as the basis for deglobalization. Both Russia and the EU seek to partially cordon off their respective space in order to improve its resilience. Both sides emphasize that it is not autarky and protectionism that they have in mind, and that they intend to cooperate with others

and even speak of the same regions as priority targets of geopolitical attention and influence.

However, a closer look reveals significant disagreements between the Russian and EU discourses on geopolitics and sovereignty; sometimes they even outline diametrically different political solutions and thus impede communication.

TRANSLATOR'S FALSE FRIENDS

Sovereignty and Geopolitics as Tools for Deepening Integration

Like any other actor, the EU incorporates new concepts into the existing vision and tries to employ them to resolve outstanding problems. In this process, two features, which are naturally absent in Russia, look noteworthy.

The first one is the rejection of an unequivocally liberal approach to cooperation and exclusively normative behavior. The EU's geopoliticization is presented as a departure from naiveté and as a process of its maturing (Breton, 2022; Borrell, 2023b). Of key importance here is to learn to speak the "language of power" (Borrell, 2020b), with traditional EU economic activities recognized as the power potential (Michel, 2021c). Breton notes that "in this new geopolitical order, Europe acts like a strategist rather than just a market" (Breton, 2021b). "We need to complement it with a 'hard power' dimension… Time has come for Europe to be able to use its levers of influence to enforce its vision of the world and defend its own interests" (Borrell and Breton, 2020). In analyzing the EU's behavior in the first week after the outbreak of an open armed clash between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, Borrell noted that the EU had used "all instruments and leverage in support of its political goals" and that a "geopolitical Europe" had been born (Borrell, 2022a). The military component must manifest itself in "arming Ukraine" (Borrell, 2023b). But of key importance to the language of power, says Borrell, is the ability to delineate narratives (Borrell, 2022b), which represents a reiteration of normative power in new contexts.

The second feature is that the EU uses the discourse of sovereignty and geopolitics to deepen integration and strengthen the supranational

level at the expense of the national one. Here the EU leaders make a subtle distinction between national sovereignty, which is destructive for them, and prospective European sovereignty. French politicians suggest distinguishing between sovereignism (national egoism) and genuine sovereignty: "Our duty is, above all, not to leave sovereignty to the sovereigntists... What is at play for Europe—for its states, businesses and citizens—is, deep down, maintaining freedom to act... What is at play is our ability to promote the original European vision" (Le Drian, 2020). Borrell used the adjective 'geopolitical' to argue that "their vetoes weaken not just the Union, but themselves" (Borrell, 2020b), and "giving up sovereignty to the EU allows you to increase your capacity to act and make decisions that you would not otherwise be able to adopt" (Borrell, 2022d).

In this way the EU uses the term 'geopolitical' to delineate a more traditional and understandable actor for Russia, which employs a wide range of instruments, including strong-arm tactics. This adjective is getting a positive connotation in the EU. But, in contrast to the traditionally Russian vision, EU leaders see European sovereignty as a means to deepen integration. That is why a distinction between sovereignty and sovereignism is introduced.

Sovereignty as a Goal and a Tool on the World Scene
Russia and the EU basically disagree on how to deal with the new geopolitics. The EU continues to describe itself as "a determined supporter of effective multilateralism" and of "a rules-based international order based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, universal values and international law" (EEAS, 2022). It is threatened by "a strict sovereignist approach that constitutes in reality a return to power politics" (EEAS, 2022; see also Borrell, 2020c). In this way, the EU re-draws a border line between "good" European sovereignty, which allows the EU to preserve its values in the current geopolitics, and "bad" sovereignism, which in this case serves as the basis for power politics.

Sovereignty for the EU turns out to be a tool, a means not only to guarantee values on its territory, but also to continue to spread them in

the world (Borrell, 2023b). The EU uses the category of 'sovereignty' to (partially) close its space in order to reduce the opportunities for others to use interdependence in a destructive way. It is not by chance that Michel notes that sovereignty is being "true" to values that allows for a "realistic, less naïve" approach to achieving them (Michel, 2020). As a result, there emerges a contradiction between Brussels' declared wish to prevent the diktat of force in the world (in favor of multilateralism and rules-based order) and the use of force to promote these rules. From a theoretical point of view, this is not a normative vision, but rather an imperial one (Tocci with Manners, 2008).

At the same time, the dissemination of EU values and rules to the world becomes a guarantee of EU sovereignty. Juncker was the first to point to this link (Juncker, 2018). The EU's standardization strategy, for example, states that "technological sovereignty, ability to reduce dependencies and protection of EU values, including our social and environmental ambitions, will depend on how successful European actors are in standardization at international level" (European Commission, 2022b). "Our standards reflect our democratic values and our focus on citizens' well-being and safety. Our European standards often evolve into global standards. That is what we call the 'Brussels effect,'" says Michel (Michel, 2021a). "We must strive to be rule-makers and not to be mere rule-takers," notes Macron (Macron, 2023). European sovereignty should be achieved by extrapolating its rules (as applied norms) to the world arena, through its authorship of new rules and regulations, and by adjusting the latter to the interests of the EU, its businesses, and citizens.

Russia in modern geopolitics positions sovereignty as a key goal. The essence of modern change, according to this view, is that "more and more states are taking a course towards strengthening national sovereignty, pursuing an independent domestic and foreign policy, and adhering to their own development model" (Putin, 2023a). Russia's policy to reinforce its national sovereignty in recent years has proven to be "incompatible with its involvement in global processes on someone else's terms" (Drobinin, 2022). Moreover, Russia is building a holistic system with "military-political sovereignty," that is, the ability "to

make sovereign domestic and foreign policy decisions"; "economic sovereignty where the development of the basic sectors of the economy does not depend on anyone"; and, of course, "social sovereignty ... the ability of society to come together" (Putin, 2022b). This excludes the instrumentality of the 'sovereignty' category characteristic of the EU. Sovereignty as such is the basic value here.

This is how the traditional discrepancy between the universalism of values advocated by the EU, on the one hand, and national identity, which in Russian discourse is guaranteed by sovereignty, on the other hand, manifests itself. The EU's normative leadership is supplemented by sovereignty only to increase the resilience of the integration bloc in the contemporary geopolitical context and thereby protect its normative leadership. So, speaking one language does not eliminate this antagonism.

Sovereignty and Values in Structuring the World
The EU and Russia structure the world using the concepts of 'sovereignty' and 'geopolitics' differently, which manifests itself in various ways.

Firstly, the difference is seen in how the EU and Russia conceptualize cooperation with other centers of world politics. The EU has formulated the category of 'like-minded partners.' Rationality determines the geography of ties here. Meaningful commitment to the values of the EU/West, rooted in the Enlightenment tradition, becomes the main factor in structuring space. In this sense, cooperation with the U.S. does not pose a problem for European sovereignty, as it allows the EU to become stronger on the world scene (EEAS, 2022). Russia, on the other hand, builds cooperation on the basis of 'friendliness,' which at first glance seems to address emotions, although this euphemism denotes actors who do not share the West's restrictive measures. These actors agree with Russia in the pursuit of multipolarity (although its modalities may differ). At the same time, the EU and Russia criticize each other's cooperation strategy. Russia reproaches the EU for its vassalic dependence on the "suzerain" (Putin, 2022c)—the U.S.—which "will not allow the EU to gain strategic or any other autonomy" (Lavrov,

2023b). Sovereignty in relations with the U.S. is Russia's litmus test for independence. EU policymakers, in turn, note the risk of Russia's vassalic dependence on China, because Moscow is left with no other alternatives (Le Figaro, 2023).

Secondly, the EU and Russia see developing countries differently in a future world order. For the EU, commitment to values plays the basic role: "New powers are emerging who have their own interests and viewpoints which they want to defend, including a desire to make the multilateral system more representative. This is a normal and logical trend," but "the degree to which the world will be rules-based or power-based matters more than whether it is bipolar or multipolar," says Borrell (Borrell, 2023a). In other words, the EU is trying to co-opt developing countries into an order based on (Western) rules, understood as universal. Only measures that may improve the integration of the Global South into the established system and thus strengthen the system itself are proposed for discussion (Borrell, 2023b). For the EU substance comes before structure. The EU equates polarity and sovereignty with negative power politics. Conversely, for Moscow the starting point is the status of actors guaranteed by sovereignty; it is the basis of the "multipolar world order" (Putin, 2023a). Russia discursively emphasizes the importance of some centers and the lesser importance of others, and formalizes and coins names for third ones. This is how the Global South and Global East, the World Majority and the Western Minority have emerged (see, for example, Lavrov, 2023a, 2023c).

Thirdly, the difference in approaches manifests itself in the competition for developing countries which are seen by the European Union as a boundless space of world politics based on the liberal norms, and a space with clear boundaries determined by the sovereignty of each country. In fact, the dispute is about whether contemporary 'geopolitics' signals a fundamental change in the world based on the unconditional primacy of sovereignty (as Moscow sees it) or simply a challenge to the liberal international order that the EU (and more broadly the West) wish to overcome by better co-opting developing countries and limiting the negative impact of interdependence on itself as the leader of the liberal world through sovereignty.

Finally, the two sides see differently the factors that guarantee the equality and freedom of the system's participants. For the EU, it is multilateralism, a rules-based order, and common (Western) norms providing protection. For Russia, it is sovereignty, while Moscow accuses the West/EU of seeking "to ... impose their rules as they continue to act in complete disregard of other countries' sovereignty, national interests and traditions" (Putin, 2023b). In this regard, the adjective 'geopolitical' in Russian discourse more often appears in negatively colored phrases to characterize EU/Western plans: they play "geopolitical games" in an attempt to preserve hegemony (Lavrov, 2023d), try to extract "geopolitical advantages" (Lavrov, 2021b), satisfy "geopolitical ambitions" (Lavrov, 2021a), and conduct "geopolitical experiments in the wake of the 'rules-based order' concept" (Lavrov, 2021c).

WILL SOVEREIGNTY AND GEOPOLITICS FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND BRUSSELS?

Since 2017, the EU has been trying to integrate the categories of 'sovereignty' and 'geopolitics' in its discourse. At first glance, this could help Russia and the EU bring closer their understandings of world politics. Both describe the state of the world in the same way and agree on the need to increase their own sovereignty (or rather, to partially deglobalize) in order to protect their own values. Moscow and Brussels also compete in asserting their willingness to cooperate and in rejecting protectionism.

At the same time, Russia's and the EU's positions differ significantly. Firstly, the EU uses sovereignty and geopolitics to stimulate integration, which is unique to Brussels. Secondly, the EU uses sovereignty instrumentally for protecting liberal values on its territory, whereas for Russia sovereignty is a value that guarantees identity. Thirdly, the EU preserves values for the spatial organization of the world. For Russia, on the contrary, sovereignty plays the key role in the transformation of the world order (with special importance attached to independence from the U.S.). For the EU it is a confrontation between democratic and authoritarian regimes, of rules-based and power politics, while for Russia it is a struggle between sovereignty and Western/EU hegemony.

The EU's adaptation of sovereignty and geopolitics seems to have made its discourse more contradictory. The EU wants to possess power (to become geopolitical) and struggles with it. It seeks sovereignty and denies it (in the traditional sense equated to sovereignism). However, sovereignty becomes a tool for the EU's consolidation at the supranational level and a way of partially closing itself to the rest of the world to ensure its resilience (which the U.S. is sometimes critical of). The ability to define the "normal" and interdependence are no longer sufficient for the EU to ensure its security and status in the world. Sovereignty is meant to reinforce them, but not replace them at all. Also, globality is rejected in favor of priority cooperation with like-minded partners.

The depth of dissimilarity between Russian and EU discourses regarding the analyzed concepts is seen in the attempts to conduct dialogue with alternative meanings. In Russian discourse, there appear neutral geopolitics (objective changes in the world) and negatively charged geopolitics (actions by the EU/West). In the EU, this category varies from neutral (for the world) to positive (for the evolution of the EU). In EU discourse, one can identify good European sovereignty and bad sovereignism of its member states, as well as of third countries oriented towards power politics. Moscow prefers not to notice the 'sovereignty' category in the EU discourse. It pays attention only to strategic autonomy and denies it to Brussels.

As a result, the European Union's adaptation of geopolitics and sovereignty categories and its attempt to fill them with a different meaning only further complicate its communication with Moscow.

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