

Central and Eastern European perceptions of the Eurasian Economic Union:

**Between economic opportunities and
fear of renewed Russian hegemony**

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INTRODUCTION

- Growing interest in the EAEU, incl. the EU member states

Q1: How do the CEECs perceive the EAEU?

- Increased – yet still limited academic interest in the CEE EU member states as foreign policy actors

Q2: What policy goals do they have concerning the EAEU?

Q3: To what extent do they upload these goals onto EU level?

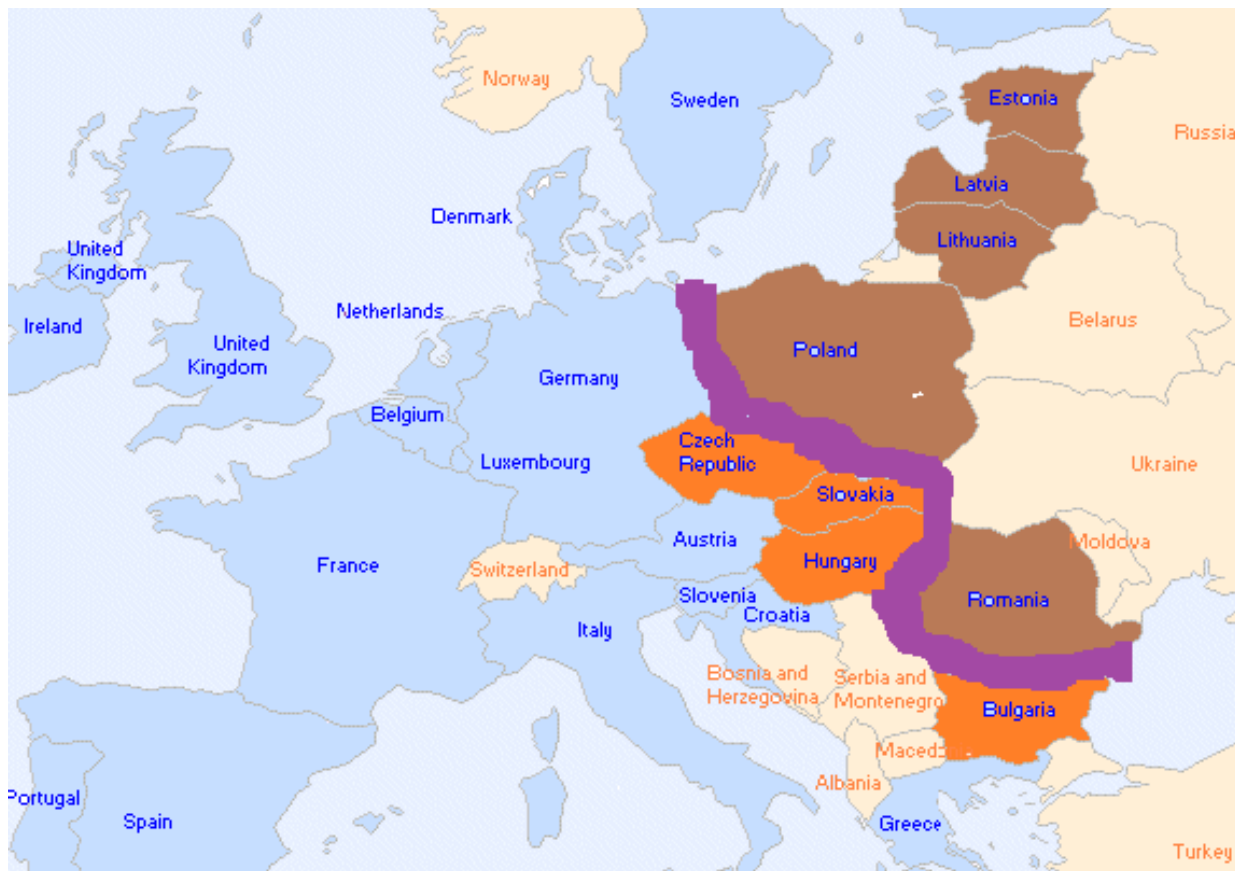
- <-> Very little is known about how the CEE member states view the EAEU

METHODOLOGY

- **Data collection:**
 - Semi-structured interviews with officials from the CEECs and the EU
 - Statements/speeches by officials from the CEECs
 - Secondary sources: EU and national news sites

FINDINGS

Q1: Fear of renewed Russian hegemony
vs. economic opportunities



Findings Q1: Perceptions of EAEU

- **STRONG** vari... s:
- **Polan**
supp
Rus
- **Slow**
Rus
- **Hungary & Bulgaria** are most supportive of EAEU

Largely in line with CEECs' attitudes and positions towards Russia since Russia's annexation of Crimea

Cf. their positions on EU sanctions on Russia

Possible explanations:

No single explanation, but combination of explanatory factors:

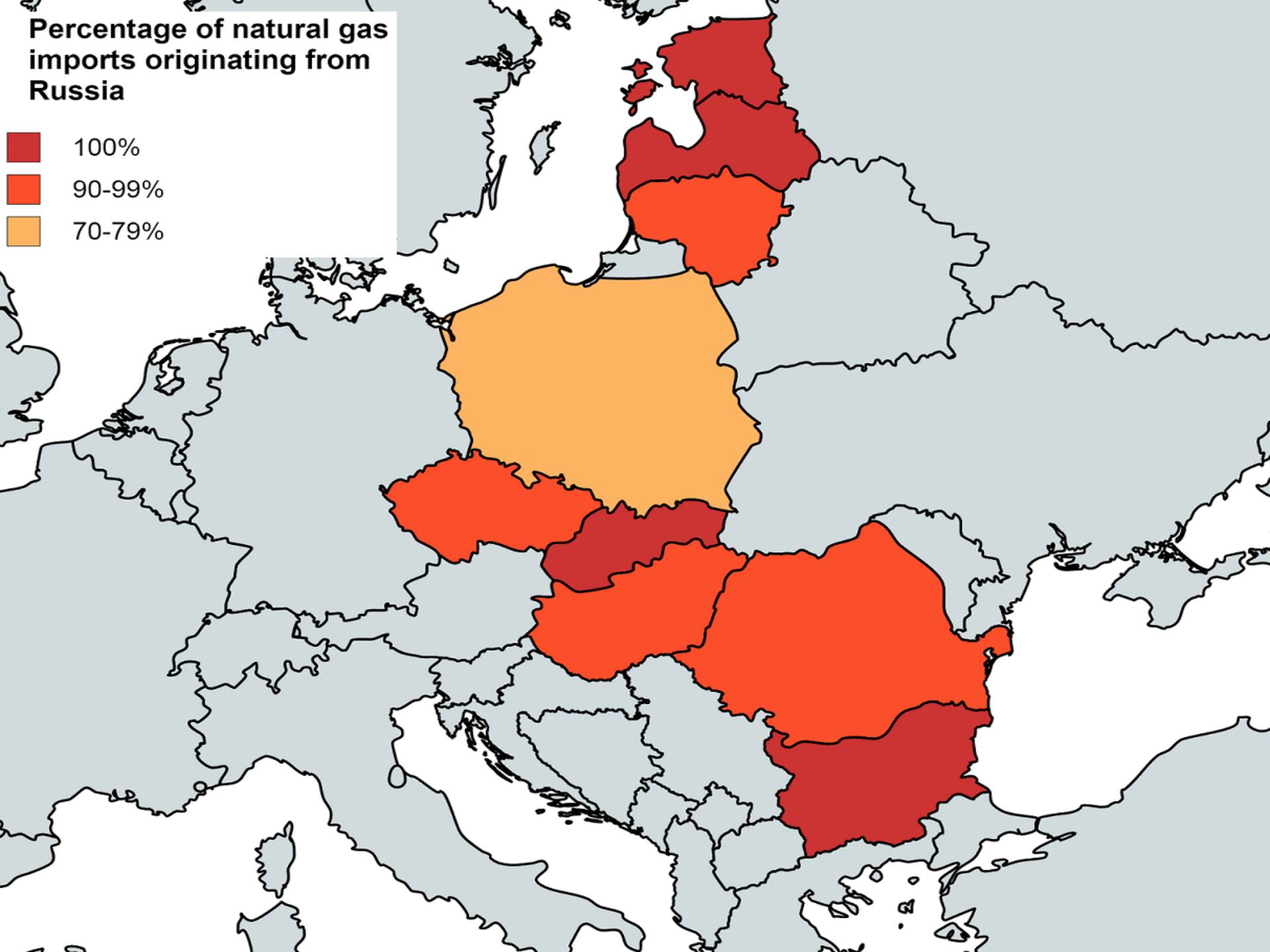
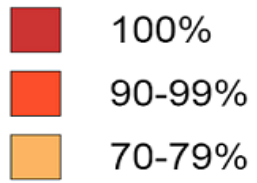
- ✓ **Historical reasons:** Poland, Romania, Baltics
 - Historically difficult relationship with Russia (<-> Bulgaria)
 - Commercial interests are overshadowed
- ✓ **Economic & energy dependence:** Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary
 - Commercial interests are prioritized
- ✓ **(Non-economic) pragmatism:** Hungary
 - Orbán's anti-democratic course

22% of Bulgarians want to join 'Eurasian Union'

EurActiv.com, 15 May 2014



Percentage of natural gas imports originating from Russia



Findings Q2 (goals) & Q3 (EU):

- **Poland, Baltics & Romania:** No rapprochement as long as Russia does not fulfil Minsk agreements
 - Poland and Lithuania active at EU level
- **Hungary (& Bulgaria):** want closer cooperation with EAEU
 - Hungary active at EU level
- **Slovakia & Czech Republic:** follow EU position but business contacts with EAEU
 - Mostly inactive at EU level



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Szergejevics SZIDORSZKIJ
miniszter



Dr. FAZEKAS Sándor
földművelésügyi miniszter



Andreichenko: “Belarus ready to be a gateway for Slovakia to Eurasian Economic Union”

05.05.2016 - eng.belta.by



Thank you for your attention!