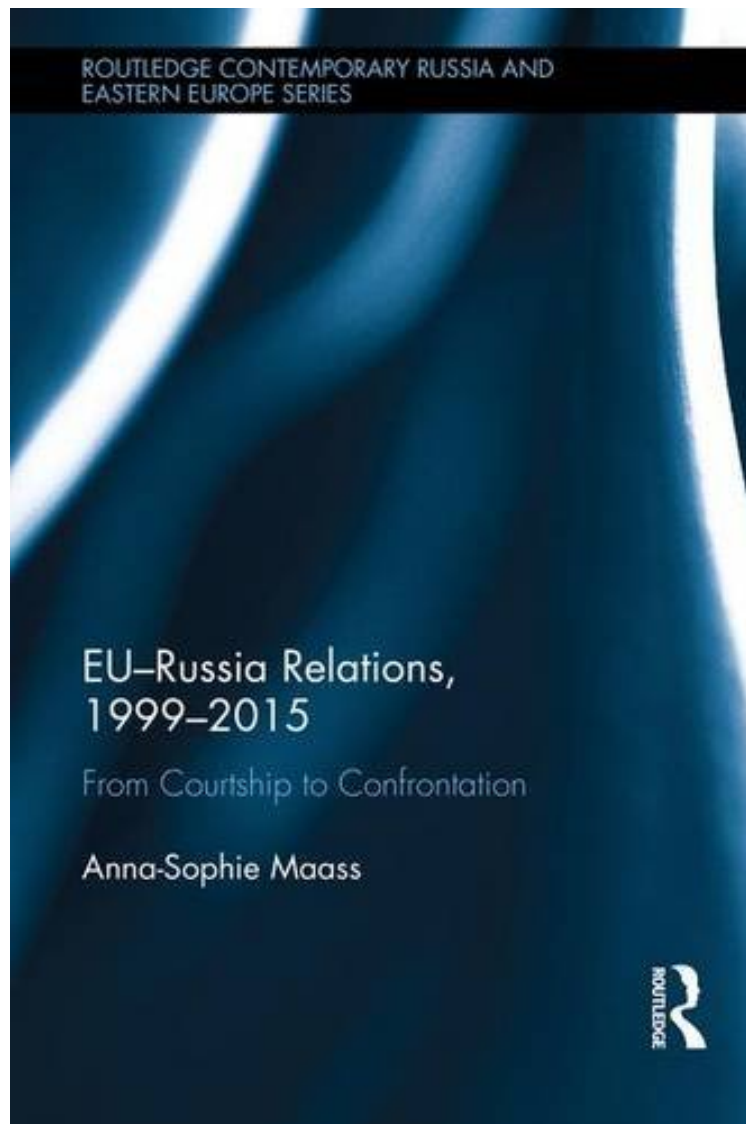


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Anna-Sophie Maass

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Anna-Sophie Maass : EU-Russia Relations, 1999-2015: From Courtship to Confrontation (Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised EU-Russia Relations, 1999-2015: From Courtship to Confrontation (Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. EU-Russia Relations - the long perspective By Lars Gronbjerg
Review Anna-Sophie Maass: EU-Russia Relations, 1999-2015. From courtship to confrontation. Routledge 2017. This book has perspective. It covers 16 years - not much in history, but a lot more than the usual analyses of current events. It explains the deterioration of EU-Russia relations by examining developments in the external context and internal developments in the two protagonists. The reader gets a clear view of how the parties tried to expand their influence globally and not least in their common neighbourhood where they stumbled into conflicts. There were also areas of common interest such as trade and investments, especially in the energy field, which are taken into account. The complexity of foreign policy
In Russia, this was the Putin period characterized at first by rapid economic growth but later by beginning stagnation. Russia became more self-confident and sought great power status in a multipolar world. Increasingly it looked beyond Europe. The regime grew more authoritarian and used foreign policy as a tool to gain internal support. For the EU, Russia was the first object of its decision to develop strategies for relations with main partners. The first and only Russia strategy was written in 1999 and Russia was granted the honorific title of Strategic Partner. This was a time with great hopes for cooperation, not least because of the common economic interests. The EU enlarged and reached the Russian border in the north. At the same time, the EU went through institutional changes which emphasised a common foreign policy and made it easier by the establishment of permanent presidencies of the European Council and the Council of foreign ministers. The book examines the continuous struggle inside the EU between supporters of the different European priorities: business, energy, human rights, democracy, security, It was not easy to agree on priorities vis--vis Russia. The EU did not manage to reach the same priorities at all times. Furthermore, EU policy was occasionally hampered by bilateral conflicts between Russia and individual EU countries. The book indicates that the EU, especially the Commission, displayed a considerable degree of solidarity with individual member states in conflict with Russia. On the other hand, some European leaders promoted their own interests through bilateral contacts with Russia even when it undermined the common EU policy. It was hard work to formulate and maintain a common policy from Brussels. The book digs into the most important disagreements with Russia in the period which resulted in increasingly severe and more permanent conflicts. All the crises (save one) took place inside the borders of the former Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, Russia looked with increasing hostility at EU's expansion and interference in these areas. Ukraine and other concrete issues
The author highlights that the internal conflicts in Ukraine were decisive for EU-Russia relations due to the active EU involvement in the Ukrainian crises in 2004 and 2013/2014. The author deems the first involvement a success for EU diplomacy. It resulted in a new regime which was expected to finally get democratic and economic reforms going. It also resulted in a defeat for president Putin leading to the much more energetic Russian resistance against EU initiatives in 2013. In the opinion of the author, the EU failed to coordinate its diplomacy at that time. Other issues analysed in the book relate to Kosovo, Chechnya, Georgia and Kaliningrad. The Kaliningrad problem is covered in greater detail than is usually seen in scholarly accounts of this type. The problem was quickly closed in 2002 but not definitively solved. The workability of the arrangements agreed depends on continued good will from both sides. The Kaliningrad issue could well come up again if good will is lost. No chess games
The author does not burden the reader with elaborate theories about international relations as games of chess or billiard. She does not see foreign policy as a result of strategic thoughts coming from wise men in ivory towers. Rather, she offers an empirical account and analyses how foreign policy decisions develop from, sometimes chaotic, domestic politicking and accidents. Individuals also play a role. It is not without consequence who is commissioner or prime minister at a given time. Personalities like Berlusconi, Prodi, Schröder, Blair, Sarkozy and Solana can make a difference, for good or bad. The book tells the story of the day when prime minister Berlusconi completely disregarded the EU position and suggested to Putin that he, Berlusconi, could take the job as advocate pro bono for the Russian position on the Chechen war at a time when the EU severely criticised human rights violations in Chechnya. This is a good example of how political leaders sometimes cause massive amounts of overtime for their diplomats who have to clean up the damage caused by leaders who have too much self-confidence to read briefs or listen to advice. The Berlusconi affair led to more strict procedures in EU foreign policy formulation. With the Lisbon treaty the prime ministers were removed from the main scene of EU foreign policy. Conclusion
The advantage of this book is twofold. Firstly, it takes the long view. Secondly, it looks at the EU-Russia relations in the context of developments inside the two parties and thereby ties internal and external developments together. It is history more than political science. It is a careful analysis of sources and events without speculation and abstract theorizing. The book is recommended for students and academics who want to see the long perspective and understand the link between internal changes in the EU and its foreign policy. It is a persuasive account of the fundamental transformation of EU-Russia relations from courtship to confrontation over only 16 years. Lars Gronbjerg [Disclosure: I am one of many who have provided background information for use in the book.]

This book traces the development of EU-Russia relations in recent years. It argues that a major factor influencing the relationship is the changing internal dynamics of both parties, in Russia's case an increasingly authoritarian state, in the case of the EU an increasing coherence in its foreign policy as applied to former Soviet countries which Russia regarded as interference in its own sphere. The book considers the impact of conflicts in Kosovo, Chechnya, Georgia

and Ukraine, discusses the changing internal situation in both Russia and the EU, including the difficulties in overcoming fragmentation in EU policy-making, and concludes by assessing how the situation is likely to develop.

"The divergent trajectories of the EU and Russia in the early 2000s set the two entities on the path of confrontation. In this detailed empirical study, Anna-Sophie Maass convincingly demonstrates that a series of external shocks helped reshape their relationship at the same time as the internal evolution of the two brought about a new understanding of their respective actorness in a system in which no fundamental mode of reconciliation had been devised. This important work represents essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of the relationship between the EU and Russia." Richard Sakwa, University of Kent, UK. "The question why the EU's and Russia's relations ended up on a conflictual path is one of the most pressing ones for our generation. This book provides a multi-layered analysis of the road from initial promise to the current bitter mutual disappointment and recrimination. It is a sobering account that should be required reading for everyone interested in the future of EU-Russia relations." Hiski Haukkala, University of Tampere, Finland. "This is an important book that speaks to a wide audience across disciplinary boundaries. Expertly following the contours of the EU's troubled relationship with Russia over the past two decades, Maass analysis is rigorous and based on a wealth of primary material. Its value goes well beyond a simple retrospective of recent conflicts and diplomatic impasses; this is a study that contextualizes the current ice age in the EU's relations with Russia and offers significant insights into the dynamics that have contributed to its emergence." Dimitris Papadimitriou, University of Manchester, UK. About the Author Anna-Sophie Maass is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the European Neighbourhood Policy Chair at the College of Europe, Warsaw, Poland.