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LATVIA-RUSSIA ECONOMIC POLICY FRAMES
IN *DIENAS BIZNESS* ARTICLES 2004 – 2007

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This study examines the most problematic mutual economic policy issues between Latvia and Russia during the period of 2004 – 2007, straight after Latvia joined EU and NATO. The focus is on the coverage of these issues by Latvia’s largest business newspaper “Dienas bizness”. The study attempts to find out the possible frames that are rising from the articles about Russia - Latvia mutual economic relations and what role journalists and EU institutions have in these relations.

Previously, the framing of the events, issues, and actors as well the impact of the frames have been widely researched. However frame performed functions which are grounded in Robert Entman’s framing theory and economic policy frames in press and more specifically about Latvia-Russia mutual economical relations have not been broadly studied. In this respect the press is telling the public how to think about these relations and why.

The conducted analysis provides strong evidence of framing in Latvia - Russia economic relations issues in the newspaper, as well as explaining the functions of these frames. The most important and widely framed cases are Latvia – Russia border agreements, border queues, Nord Stream pipe line project, Latvia’s energy dependency problem as well as Latvia’s and other EU countries animal origin product import problems to Russia. The analysis shows that the causes of most of the cases are based historically on both the country’s relations and political aims; however inexperience and new business targets are affecting those as well. By not being a part of the World Trade Organization, Russia is an unreliable partner but it doesn’t make it less significant for Latvia’s business area. The newspaper suggests Latvia to be a partner with a common sense and prudence to use all the possibilities of Russia’s market. On the other hand it puts Latvia in a frame with the rest of EU to think of the common values of the union and policy towards Russia. At the same time, Russia is changing its policy towards Latvia by not limiting its business expansionist plans just to previously strategically meaningful partners. Journalists turned out to be evaluators, criticizers, and advocates of the policy making however, not considered to be strong initiators.
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1. Introduction

Since Latvia joined the European Union (EU) it has been of most importance to the business area and their arrangements in the production and export requirements according EU standards to not interrupt their business because of deficiencies. Traditionally Russia has been a significant trading partner to Latvia, and its economic importance has recently increased during the independence years. Therefore it is important to look back to see what policies have the two countries have applied to each other and what results have it brought through a prism of the leading business newspaper in Latvia “Dienas bizness” (DB).

Earlier research has disclosed how politically dominated any cooperation with Russia is and, how delicate relations should be shaped with it by not crossing the border and to be revenged for something (Raik & Palosaari, 2004). Studies show what are Russia’s attitudes and policies after the EU enlargement in 2004 when Latvia joined it (Purju, 2004; Menkiszak, 2007). Also studies have been made about NATO expansion and Russia’s opposition to it. In the context of those events also Latvia’s role has been characterized. However, specific economic events and issues between Latvia and Russia have not been studied broadly. Energy policies are the most studied field, but the rest have been left undiscovered. Also the business press role and impact on the issues haven’t been broadly researched before.

My earlier study (Cerava, 2007) focused on Latvia’s economic policies in the national press during a period of time in 2007. During this time some Russian related events appeared such as fish export to Russia as well as energy independency questions. My research however, was focused on inner economic policy questions and not the foreign policy issues. The present study can be seen as continuation of my earlier research.

Although the year 2008 and this year have started with calm economic relations between Latvia and Russia, the significance of it has remained and business relations have just spread. Noteworthy that all the events and issues that might still happen will be evaluated through a viewpoint of the previous experiences, which have been rather harsh. Although Russia is still not a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), it is raising mistrust and caution both for entrepreneurs and media that represent them. My intension with this thesis is to analyze DB publications about the most problematic Latvian-Russian economic policy issues during the period of 2004 – 2007. In this thesis I will present the possible frames that are raising from the DB articles about Russian-Latvian mutual economic relations. I will describe what role journalists and EU institutions are having in these relations, in policy shaping and in the frames. Knowledge of these representations and
possibly frames are of great importance for media researchers, producers and consumers to realize what possible effects and impact they might leave.

Framing will be the used concept as my point of departure, one of the constructivist approaches, which suggests (E.g. Entman, 2004, Negrine, 1996.) a way in how media elites define and give meanings to issues and shape messages and also how individuals interpret and evaluate information from frames. While the majority of the framing analysis lies on the constructed frames and the effects they bring, I will concentrate on Entman’s suggested frame performed functions. These are used in covering political events, issues and actors in news – defining effects or conditions as problematic; identifying causes; conveying a moral judgment and endorsing solutions or improvements (Entman, 2004).

My concept of framing is serving as a theoretical platform to study articles on economic relations between Latvia and Russia. In the same time theory is not specified towards economic relations and policies but it allows me to make considerations about how it is reported to the readers.

In my research the examined newspaper DB is the only business oriented paper in Latvia. It has been published for 17 years and together with its internet portal, is the main information source for many in the business area. As the newspaper is known for its reliability to the entrepreneurs and the qualitative and deep analysis of the sectors issues, it was interesting for me to see how it is responding to foreign economical questions, such as relations with Russia. I understand not just state policies and relations in Latvian-Russian economic relations, but also the business cooperation, especially because in Russia both actors are closely related. Also in Latvia some businesses, including the energy sector, are still state owned. In order to reveal clearer argumentation and limit my data to decent number of cases and articles, a content analysis of one of the biggest Latvian news agencies, “Leta” news, is conducted.

Structurally the thesis is divided into two parts theoretical and analytical. I begin my thesis with a theoretical part where I will explore the theory and factual material about Latvian - Russian mutual economic relations and their conditions. In this part I will discuss frames and framing analysis as well as the methodology of the analysis. Also the content analysis as a research method will be briefly introduced. In the analytical part, which is the largest part of the thesis, I will show the process of discovering the most important economic relation issues between both countries in the research period by using the content analysis. To further describe the issues and find the possible frames a framing analysis will be conducted. I finish my thesis by summing up the findings of the research and their relevance to the previous researches, as well as the framing theory. Within the last chapter I will evaluate how I succeeded in the thesis and what are the shortcomings of it.
I THEORETICAL PART

2. Latvia-Russia economic relations

2.1. Latvia and other new EU member states economic preconditions with Russia

During the time of the Soviet Union, it’s annexed and satellite republics had economic relations, mostly within the republics of the Soviet Union and its block republics. These countries were isolated from the rest of the world’s economies and trade, trying to remain and fulfill the Soviet Union’s administration orders and illusionist aims. Economic relations in this region have changed since the fall of the iron curtain and reintegration of central and eastern European countries in the EU.

The new and the old Europe can be distinguished in its relations with its eastern neighbors, especially with Russia. It cannot be generalized that all the new EU countries have common foreign and economic policies towards Russia and the differences are just further developing as time passes. Still, the main factor uniting all these countries is distrust to their former occupier, the Soviet Union. It can be said that the more problematic of Russia’s influence can be found in the eastern part of the country. The most difficult cases are the Baltic’s, which include Latvia and Estonia. For these countries joining EU was a way to “officially” save them from the Russian sphere of interest. (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 23.) It is not possible to change Russia as a neighbor; therefore these countries have to deal with Russian interests and actions in the region. The post-Soviet countries have to take Russia into account when planning their own activities and policies. Russia is not perceived as a military threat although it is perceived as a potential threat due to the fact that there is no certainty about its future (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 27). Obviously the further west, the less Russia is perceived as a potential threat. Some scholars consider that in Estonia and Latvia, “Russia is perceived as a country unable to get rid of its malign past,” (Makarychev, 2005). This consideration refers to Russia’s inability to denounce Soviet Union’s crimes and mistakes, and continuation in failing to establish democracy according to Western standards.

Russia was especially trying to resist to Baltic countries joining the EU. The time of enlargement can even be named as a “crisis” in the EU and Russian relations. This resistance was much harder against the Baltic States than to any other post-soviet state and it can be explained mostly by the geographical location of the countries, those next to their border being the most affected. After the EU enlargement Russia was not willing to have similar trade relations with the new EU countries as it had with the old ones. Russia was suspicious about the new EU countries wishing to overtake the
western economical standard. Disagreement and suspicions raised tensions between the EU and Russia, and Russia seemed to view the situation as a struggle over spheres of influence (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 6). Russia also expressed concerns about its territory of Kaliningrad, which became surrounded by EU countries and where solutions for trade possibilities were not yet clear (Dura 2008, 9). Russia accused the new EU member states for bringing to the EU their “Russophobia” and the prolonged problems that they were having with Russia. The new EU member states were also blamed for raising the crisis between the two actors. (Menkiszak, 2007.)

The EU was trying to build a cooperative environment with Russia, but at the same time, aiming to base that on the values and principles the EU itself was based on, which was democracy and market economy. To these principles Russia replied by emphasizing practical benefits of cooperation, hoping or rather expecting that the EU would provide support for the promotion of its own political and economic goals. (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 27–28.) Russia couldn’t and still is not able to accept any intervention and suggestions of how to organize its domestic policy and sovereignty.

Due to the amount of intervention and criticism about Russian domestic policies the new EU states became divided into the good neighbors and the bad ones. The good neighbors to Russia include Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic (which probably lost its position since it has politically agreed to dispose NATO’s nuclear missile surveillance base), Slovenia and Slovakia. These countries are open to Russian business projects, are not making serious attempts to decrease energy resource dependency from Russia, and are not seriously discussing the historical disagreements. On the other hand the bad neighbors to Russia are considered to be Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, and to some extent Rumania. These countries have been acting in a certain oppositional way towards Russia. Due to these reasons, Russia has criticized them sharply and has also made them face different kinds of economical sanctions, for example the latest cyber attack to Estonia. Other economical sanctions from Russia are considered to be oil supply disruption to Lithuania, blocked oil transit in Latvia, embargo of Polish meat and agricultural products from Latvia, as well as temporary rail transit disorder. (Menkiszak, 2007.)

Despite the “crisis” time, some kind of strategic partnership agreement was searched for but the negotiation or signing process was interrupted several times from the side of certain EU member states. Some EU states from time to time have worsened relations with Russia and thus spreading controversial opinions on how this cooperation should be held (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 28). The new EU member states were, and still are demanding more realistic and stricter policies towards Russia from the EU. An example of this is evident in 2008 during the Russian-Georgia war or even earlier, when Russia limited meat import from Poland. Some scholars admit that there are examples
from the large EU countries, which have a tendency to be more understanding towards Russian views and policies than from those of its small neighbors (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 29). Meanwhile Russia was trying to test the solidarity between the old and the new EU member states. However Russia’s test didn’t bring a practical result. (Menkiszak, 2007.)

In order to not be misrepresented, the new EU countries tried and still try to participate in the development of a new common agreement between the EU and Russia. Such participation can be evaluated differently. It can be useful because of the Russian language skills and experience in cooperation and culture exchange. On the other hand, some unresolved issues like Russian speaking minority rights, might stand in the way of reaching a strategic cooperation agreement. The inexperience in EU matters of these countries seems to be what is standing in the way (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 32).

Since 1997 there is a valid EU-Russian Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which was and still is an agreement of major importance. It determined that the EU and Russia reduce tariffs on the sensitive goods to Russia, increase of quotas for the Russian exports of steel, introduced a transition period for the anti-dumping regime in Central and Eastern Europe, increased quotas for nuclear materials from the acceding countries and created a free transit of goods, including energy, between Kaliningrad and mainland Russia (Purju, 2004: 5).

The EU was interested in extending this agreement after the enlargement, but they didn’t reach a consensus with Russia. Russia was trying to protect its interests against the possible negative effects of EU enlargement, including the protection of Russian speaking minorities in these countries. The EU agreed to a majority of suggestions which concerned trade and after long discussions, the agreement was extended even though the countries went through some crossfire’s’ with the Baltic countries. The EU did not agree with Russia about minority rights in these countries. (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 33). The agreement however, was not complete and the countries are continuing discussions about a need for a new cooperation agreement.

Until the EU’s most significant enlargement in 2004, Russia mainly had bilateral agreements with EU enlargement countries, but after May 2004 those countries were no longer allowed to have such kind of agreements. All trade agreements since then were passed within the union, not with separate countries. Certain dissatisfaction was raised, for example, Estonian bilateral trade agreement with Russia had fewer protectionists than the EU common agreement (Purju, 2004: 4). Both Russia and the new EU countries have expressed a wish to agree about trade conditions mutually, although Russia is the one mostly supporting the separate agreement idea, as it is has its own interest in each of the countries. In the last years, Russia has used the neighboring countries as a gateway and as a
tool of expansion in the EU market, which has lead to a consequence that this region is no longer intensely considered as specific to Russia but becoming an integral part of Moscow’s EU policy. Thus when observing Russia’s security policy, military activity in this region is still maintained and limited. (Menkiszak, 2007.)

Another precondition for Latvia and other EU states economic relations with Russia is its non existing agreement with WTO. Russia has repeatedly tried to apply, since 1993, but still remains the last biggest economy out of this organization. Most of the agreements to vote for Russia’s acceptance in the WTO from objecting countries have been received but during the approval process there are new disappointments raised, like gas supply interruptions, etc. The participation in the WTO is used as a tool from EU states to threaten Russia, hoping to make them follow fair trading requirements; even though Russia is not participating and uses the situation to not follow the WTO trading rules.

2.2. EU-Russia economic relation crosscut

Russia is a fairly significant EU trading partner but an even more important one to its new EU member states, including Latvia. It is estimated that Russia’s economic importance will only increase in this region (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 31). At the same time, most of Russia’s production import to the EU is larger than EU production to Russia. This statistical evidence is based on high amounts of Russia’s gas imported in the EU. Russia has a gas monopoly situation in many European countries like Latvia and Finland controlling 100% of gas supplies. However energy products are not the only goods being traded between the countries.

According to the EU statistical data, trade in goods with Russia in the last seven years has tripled, and within the first half of 2008, exports to Russia increased 25%, reaching 50 billion Euros, but imports from Russia increased 28% and reached 88 billion Euros. Comparing to other EU trade partners Russia’s share in exports in the middle of 2008 was 8%, but in imports it was more than 11%. This data makes Russia the third most important EU trading partner, after United States and China. Trade in services amount is significantly lower, however there is a positive balance for the EU, which puts it in a better position. Instead Russia conducts half of its foreign trade with Russia. (Eurostat, 11/2008.) The amount of foreign direct investment is increasing both in Russia and from Russia in the EU. At the same time statistics might be misleading. According to statistics, the biggest trade partners in the EU with Russia are Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, leaving Finland close behind. But these statistics are based on trade amounts in Euros not proportionally equal to each of the states trading amounts, meaning that Latvia, Lithuania and probably any other post soviet country actually have significant amount of business cooperation with Russia.
Since there are no direct agreements with Russia, EU institutions are not able to intervene when Russia, for example, bans Polish, Latvian, and Danish production. Because of unexpected policy changes from Russia towards EU countries, frustration and more active discussions have been raised about shaping common economic and cooperation policies with Russia. Russia however, disagrees about having problematic relations: “Our relations with these countries (Georgia, Ukraine, The Baltic States and Moldova) are not deteriorating. However, there is an attempt to use interstate relations for resolving trade problems. I am against using political tools for resolving economic problems”, at the end of year 2005 have said former president of Russia Vladimir Putin (Putin, 2005).

On the contrary there are considerations which show that economic cooperation is the most important element for the relations between EU member states and Russia. At the same time, to speed up economic interests, having better political relations are helping and vice versa. Some EU countries are prioritizing economic interests instead of promoting the democratization process together with human rights in Russia. Other EU countries are trying to balance between these issues while the rest are having a more principled foreign and economic policy towards Russia. (Dura, 2008: 43)

Researchers have been considering whether trade with Russia or with the EU is of more importance. Due to the significant gas supplies, the EU would most likely have an advantage, but because of willingness to become world’s leading economy importance would shift over to Russia. If Russia wants to gain this position they cannot leave too many victims behind. Russia needs partners and the EU is more reliable than Asian countries. At the same time the EU cannot rely much on this kind of logic because of the possible gas losses, as Russian foreign policy tool it can have to deal with (Dura, 2008: 43). For some EU countries it could be in their interest to keep political values and economic interests separate from one and another, not to lose in this cooperation or competition. (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 31.)

2.3. **Latvia’s economic relations with Russia**

Latvia and often also Estonia are known to be trouble makers in relations with Russia as they have brought their mutual problems and history into higher EU level (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 32). Both countries have not given citizenship to everybody who arrived to live in these countries after the Soviet Union’s occupation, and most of them are Russian speakers whom Russia is willing to support.

Russia has always been trying to protect its interests in the Baltic region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. There has been much controversy about these countries’ inclusion into the NATO.
This opposition has been much more aggressive than towards EU expansion, although also in this case it worked in slowing down the process. EU Commission has criticized Russian attitude towards the Baltic States. (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 33.)

The Baltic States are also concerned about Russian attempts to influence their domestic politics (Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 34). In Latvia, for example, there are discussions about oppositional Russian speaking political party deputies’ visits to Russia. None of them are disclosing what kinds of discussions were going on, and neither is willing to comment about Kremlin’s influence on them. At the same time, power parties’ members are suspiciously visiting and meeting Russian political and economical leaders and later on are supporting certain projects possibly in Russia’s interests.

Trade relations between Latvia and Russia can be organized into the following groups, trade in merchandise goods, trade in services, trade in the factors of production, such as investments and migration, and there can also be distinguished missing trade. (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006.) Most of Latvia’s trade relations are connected with EU countries, which accounts for about 75% of all exports but with Russia in the middle of 2008 it was approximately 11% (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2008). The amount of trade with Russia has decreased since the collapse of the USSR, for comparison in 1993 Latvia’s export amount to Russia was 30%. The decline of trade relations between those countries is mostly explained with reorientation to the West, but despite that, Russia has still remained as the 5th biggest export partner to Latvia. Russia imports in Latvia almost twice as much what is exported. (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006.) According to statistical data, in the last two years, export to Russia has increased by three but import from Russia only increased twice (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2008).

More than half of Latvian exports to Russia are machinery products such as, details for trains, cars, and producing line, as well as prepared foodstuffs and products of chemical industry sectors like medicine. In return Latvia receives raw materials such as mineral products, base metals and articles of wood, as well as natural gas from Russia. Researchers admit that the most dramatic changed of import and export products from Russia and the West have been cars. Nowadays almost nobody in Latvia is buying cars produced in Russia, but cars are bought in Western European countries and the rest of the world (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006.).

The high amount of Latvian services exported to Russia is connected with Latvia’s geographic location. Latvia is known as a bridge between Russia and Western Europe. The amount of services is hard to measure as it is an intangible product, but this cooperation, for example in the transit through railways and ports, has been rather successful and developing. However transit is
financially dependent from Russia and its willingness to cooperate, as the transit business is based on Russia as a trade partner (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006.).

Another service that at least up until the autumn of 2008 developed actively in cooperation with Russia was financial services. It’s being argued that some of the Latvian banks are solely surviving off of profits dealing with Russian and other post-soviet country finances. Last year however, brought changes in Latvia’s financial sector, when Latvia’s second largest bank, “Parex banka”, was nationalized. The bank’s largest profit source was Russian funds and non residential companies.

One last factor for economic relations is investments. Russia is the 5th largest investor in Latvian economics, mostly by controlling “Latvia’s gas”, creating a monopoly giant. (Dombrovsky & Vanags, 2006). In the rest of the post-soviet region Russia has also been increasingly investing. The main fields of investment are energy, the chemical sector, the steel and machine industries (Menkiszak, 2007). In total Russia has structured approximately 18% of all imports in Latvia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2008).

It can be argued how important of a trade partner Russia is for Latvia, more important than Latvia is for Russia, which means that Latvia has to be careful with its business partner. There are political parties and businessmen who say that Latvians should always be alert when expressing their opinion about Russia’s actions. Latvia is not supposed to make this huge partner angry or unsatisfied because Russia is too important of a partner to ruin the relations by saying something that is out of place or that may be taken the wrong way. An example of a situation that caused such controversy was in autumn 2008, when Latvia’s minister of transportation, Ainars Šlesers, said that Latvia should follow “Finland’s model” and should avoid from any kind of sharp expressions in the sake of Latvia’s own economic interests. He admitted that Latvia should not necessarily “sing the same song with Russia” but that Latvia should not always be there “the first to shout”. “I am inviting that this flag is held by someone else,” he said. (Titova, 2008.)

There are, however, political parties and businessmen who don’t agree to the previously mentioned opinion. They say that Latvia definitely should not become more dependent of Russia as it already is. This opinion is mostly based on the energy field, not on transit and transportation, or wood and food product industries. In the energy sector, Latvia’s government will soon have to make a decision to create another gas energy station or to make a station where renewable resources can be used. At the moment, arguments for gas station are more reasonable, except from the energy independence point of view. This means that government will have to make a political decision and it will be a vital sign to Russia about further cooperation possibilities.
3. Research methods

3.1. Framing as a research method

With the changes in the relationship between politicians and journalists, more and more news and media reports are being constructed in an interpretative manner. Researchers argue that this type of reporting is giving more prominence to the journalists themselves (Swanson, 2003: 23) and is making dry political statements and actions more attractive and understandable to readers. This however, makes the task for the researchers more demanding.

Over the last decade, one of the constructivist approaches, framing, has taken a prominent place in the mass communication and especially media research. Framing suggests (Entman, 2004; Negrine, 1996) a way how media elites define and give meanings to issues and shape messages and also how individuals interpret and evaluate information from “frames”.

There are a significant amount of studies on how an event such as war, for example, has been framed in different media. The potential for framing analysis research is endless as today’s political issues and policies are complex. This complexity and the increasing amount of everyday information have made journalists seek for a solution to provide frames and interpretations that could ease the understanding process.

Numerous scholars have contributed to the theoretical development and empirical foundations of the paradigm. Grounded in cognitive psychology and anthropology the notion of frames was introduced in communication research by Gaye Tuchman (1978) and Todd Gitlin (1980) (Cited in Gorp 200: 484 – 507).

There exist multiple definitions of the terms ”frame” and “framing” and the research methods that are applied to find them vary as well.

3.1.1. A frame and framing

A frame can be like a house, which keeps the blocks together, shapes it, and gives it a structure and meaning. Without a frame there would be no house. For photographers their original work would not exist without a frame and almost no other could reconstruct the same frame. However for news it is a strategic coverage. (Cappella & Jamieson 1997: 38-39)

As both a noun and verb, the word “frame” suggests an active process and a result. Framing is an exercise in power, particularly as it affects our understanding of the world. Framing should remind us that content is only the tip of a very big iceberg. It suggests that we specifically study how our
social understanding is structured and how these understandings are tied to interests. (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31) A frame itself is a specification of the idea that connects the different framing and reasoning devices in a news article (Van Gorp 2005: 484–507). Within the scope of the news, this construct can be considered a hidden message from a journalist to the receiver, representing a suggestion or a hint to understand the news message through the frame.

Framing refers to the way events and issues are organized and made sense of. This is specially the case for media, media professionals, and their audiences. Frames can ease a journalist’s job in daily news writing, because of the remarkable amount of information they have to deal with. Referring to Gitlin, Reese (2001: 7 – 31) writes that in dealing with information, frames enable journalists to recognize frame as information. Frames help to assign information to cognitive categories, which give news a power. Likewise frames help to bring otherwise amorphous reality into a meaningful structure, making it more than the simple inclusion or exclusion of information. Thus frames are active, information gathering, as well as screening devices. In an interactive process journalists are said to seek routinely the best narrative fit between incoming information and existing frames. Frames are of greatest interest to the extent that they add up to something bigger than an individual story.

Media or news frames turn meaningless and non recognizable happenings into a discernible event. Media frames also allow journalists to quickly identify and classify information and package it more efficiently for the recipient. However framing motives can be also unconscious ones, where only unconscious interpretation of story appears. (Scheufele, 1999: 103-122.)

It is equally important to realize that just a few frames don’t shape our understandings, beliefs, or opinions; on the contrary it’s a long lasting process, for example, when a newspaper publishes a series of articles. Study worthy frames are the ones that are connected with more important causes or if frames persist over time and instances. In this respect, it is considered that unless frames endure over time they have relatively little importance for analysis. (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31) Analyses worthy frames therefore are the ones which leave an impact on their consumer.

The main purpose of framing analysis is to determine how framing devices co-occur in news text, and to form underlying patterns of meaning. (Gorp, 2005: 484–507) Framing analysis provides a way of how these journalist set frames can be found.

A frame life cycle is divided in certain periods. They are activated, revealed in public discourse, adopted by other actors such as other media, politicians, etc., and dominated in the media coverage.
and public opinion. Then the frame disappears before finally being applied again in another news article. During this process, the frame remains the same, yet the degree of perceptibility and, consequently its effects can vary. (Gorp, 2005: 484 – 507.)

In all cases, framing is way of drawing attention to something and at the same time taking attention away from other kinds of features (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997: 45).

3.1.2. Framing analysis methodology

There are many factors that may potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue, actor, or event. Frame setting is influenced by social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, the pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines, and the ideological or political orientation of journalists. (Scheufele, 1999: 103-122.) There are also at least five different ways how news media can frame issues and events such as conflict, personalization, values, consequences, and responsibility. (Shen, 2004: 400–416.)

To describe the framing process itself Sheufele (1999; 103-122) created a model (see the table below) dividing the framing process into certain parts, frame building, frame setting, effects of framing, and frame spreading to other media. He emphasizes that the framing process is affected by different inputs such as organizational pressures, journalist’s attitudes, beliefs, and other elite opinion makers. Then the media frames are spread to audiences, which take and continue interpreting the frames, thus reaching certain persuasive effects of framing. When the audience, between which is also the other media, has been affected, their attitudes and behaviors change, then their framed attitudes go back to the journalists again who continue the frame building for the next media report.
Table 1: Scheufele’s process model of framing research (1999: 103-122).

Further to the frame building, setting, and influencing process Entman (2004: 5–22) divides framing into two different classes - procedural and substantive.

Procedural frame functions have a narrower focus and function. These frames suggest evaluations of political actors’ legitimacy, based on their technique, success, and representativeness. These frames do little to encourage the public to engage in political deliberation. (Entman, 2004: 6.)

Substantive frames on the other hand perform certain functions when used in covering political events, issues, and actors in news. They can define effects or conditions as problematic, identify causes, convey a moral judgment and endorse solutions or improvements. To be able to term this frame substantive it should usually perform at least two of the functions mentioned above. (Entman, 2004: 5–22.)

Entman also provides a table to show how to manage and organize framing analysis (See, Appendix 1), as well as result analysis and search for interconnections. In my analysis I will use Entman’s example as I consider it to be more representative and verifiable method than others.

I consider Entman’s proposed framing analysis however, as a rather narrow and direct way of discovering frames, therefore I will supplement it with Reese (2001: 7–31) proposed research questions. These questions refer to his “frame” definition, that is to say frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, and that work symbolically to
meaningfully structure the social world. Each part of this definition is also divided into certain research steps and questions:

- **Organizing and structuring**: Framing varies in how successfully, comprehensively, or completely it organizes and structures information. How does one way or another of presenting a story affect the audience response? How much framing is going on? How adequate is the frame in containing the elements it proposes to embrace? How close is the frame to that promoted by sources or indicated by an event? Is the frame convincing in accounting for reality? How complex is the frame structure?

- **Principles**: The frame is based on abstract principles and they are not the same as the text’s principle through which it manifests itself. Unfortunately, in my analysis I will not be able to find those principles as it is shaped in the frame building process and in this analysis I am looking mainly within the media frames not in the frame building and setting processes.

- **Shared**: The frame must be shared on some level for it to be significant and communicable. Here researchers should try to answer the following questions – to what extent are the frames shared? What makes a satisfactory and thus readily embraced frame? What makes a frame ‘work’? When is it successful in providing a useful and coherent way of accounting for social reality?

- **Persistent**: The significance of frames lies in their durability, their persistence, and routine use over time. What factors account for one frames persistence over another?

- **Symbolically**: Frames are revealed in symbolic forms of expression, which vary from different forms of rhetoric to even additional images or to other forms of the press coverage.

I don’t think that Entman’s, Reese’s and Scheufele’s framing research models are not conflicting with each other, rather they can be seen to supplement each other in order to make deeper image of press created frames. Because of interest in looking into broader and deeper frames, I will apply analytical tools of all of these authors.

### 3.1.3. Framing effects

Findings that frames can manipulate with citizens have raised considerable concerns in researcher minds, which have made them actively study frame effects.

The most radical doubts that media framing effects raise are doubts about democracy itself and press role to secure that. Entman (2004: 122) writes how can even sincere democratic representatives respond correctly to public opinion when empirical evidence of it appears to be so shapeable and so vulnerable to framing effects? Author acknowledges that there are three different
levels of news frame interplay when thinking of political and economical elites and citizens. First of all the public’s opinions arise from framed information and most likely not from direct contact with the realities; secondly elites can’t surely know the exact reality of public thinking and feeling, so they as well rely on selective interpretations that most likely are news frames; and thirdly policymakers and connected elites are without interruptions trying to influence the news frames that at the same time influence them. In conclusion, valuating news frame influence and reliance chain leads to doubting whether public opinions which are not based on statistics, but on media, are trust worthy. But as there are very few people with approach to raw data, then audience, elites, and policy makers, cannot avoid the news frames, which in the end leave an enormous power in the hands of journalists. Here we again should remember that no one elects journalists to represent their interests and no one really checks what interests they actually present and try to influence.

Media frames can stimulate the audience to think about social phenomena in a certain way by raising simple psychological biases and then valuating certain news as positive or negative, individual or collective, and episodic or thematic (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31).

To be sure that the news frames will be understood they should reach some certain criteria. First of all it should be possible to identify conceptual and linguistic characteristics within a frame. Secondly the frame should be commonly observed in journalistic practice, and last but not least, it should be possible to distinguish one frame form another in a reliable way. (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997: 47.)

Frames can be set by metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, lexical choices, and selection of sources, graphics, stereotypes, and dramatic characters (Gorp, 2005: 484–507). All those devices are used to define a problem, assign responsibility, pass a moral judgment and reach possible solutions, which are basic characteristics of Entman’s proposed framing analysis that I am using in my research.

The acceptance and influence of media frames depends also on whether the frames are shared. Shared frames can be useful and noteworthy organizing devices. For example, early in the life of an issue, a dominant frame may not have taken hold but may gain in the complexity and coherence of its structure over time. (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31.) Frames are often shared between journalists themselves. Scheufele (1999: 103-122) warns that journalists are very susceptible to media frames. Once some medium sets some frames, another medium can overtake them and continue the frame setting on the similar grounds. So, for example, one kind of frame might expand between many unconnected media and leave enormous influence on the audience.
Frames are forming part of our culture. Framing is a heuristic tool and a fruitful way to gain an insight into crucial social and political processes. (Gorp, 2005: 484–507.) Without frames a simple reader might be confused, not understand the processes and wouldn’t have any opinion at all. Of course there is a question about what is better, a constructed opinion or no opinion at all, but people should not be perceived as passive or dumb. Individuals do not necessarily make or shape their attitudes because of the media frames (Shen, 2004: 400–416). People usually rely both on their own experiences and media constructed messages. To determine that certain frame effects will take place, there should be also common audience, memory, feelings, goals and experience but it is impossible. Because of differences in backgrounds, frames are not equal in their ability to cause information to cohere, making sense out of the world. (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31.) The more diverse the audience, the more limited the framing effect might be.

Still sometimes frames can be activated by readers themselves without their own awareness. Those effects can shape the understanding of issues and influence the choice. (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997: 44.) On the other hand frames are often also a very clear part of the messages, made through word or name selections in the text of the message or news and then the reader may evaluate it. Framing devices are cues inviting but certainly not forcing readers to accept the preferred meanings embedded in news accounts (Hackett & Zhao, 1998: 118-119).

In the end, a reader should realize that words can be used as instruments of power and deception, but it is never the words themselves that should be dubbed evil and poisonous. The responsibility of any damage that might have been done by using certain means of expression still lies with the users. (Sornig, 1989: 96.)

### 3.1.4. Framing criticism

Some academicians do not look to framing as a separate research method. Maxwell McCombs (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31.) for example has incorporated frames as a different level of agenda-setting. This incorporation might make the research more critical, qualitative and interpretative as it allows ambiguity, historical contingency, the implicit and the emphasis of how meaning is signified. The criticism to this method merging might lead to a thick description which would go on without producing patterns that transcend the particulars. Also Scheufele comes closer to the idea that framing is connected with agenda-setting theory, by dividing framing process into frame building and frame setting.

On the other hand some researchers (e.g. Capella & Jamieson, 2007: 58-86) look at those methods separately. They argue that framing effects are more subtle than agenda setting and media priming. Framing is not simply concerned with the presence of the topics but with how topics are treated in
the news. Framing might lead a researcher to realize what interpretations and associations’ journalist have used, what emphasis he/she have made, not just the news emphasis, setting and priming.

Also Reese looks at those research methods separately. Author (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001: 7–31) emphasizes that agenda-setting is concerned with the salience of issues, while framing is concerned about salience of issue characteristics. For example, some frames can be easily defined: company invested or company lost some money, positive or negative. Others news reports depend on more complex and implicit structures that are not as easily classified and manipulated. Also in the complex structures there will be information and opinions that will be excluded and then the researchers task is to seek for signs about how these exclusions or inclusions are naturalized and made logic so an inattentive reader wouldn’t notice it so easily.

Important to emphasize here that the way a frame is conceived by a researcher affects the results, the scope and the comparability of the findings. It is extremely difficult to neutralize the impact of the researcher in framing research, that’s why maybe another research method might be useful to make the analysis data verifiable or to strictly define the research process. In practice there exist many approaches to framing research that are not defined in a consistent research method. It is possible to try to define one of your own with traits from different scholars, but it is possible that there will anyway remain some missing causal links or frame coherence, but that is a target where the researcher may aim to.

In this master’s thesis, framing will be used to analyze articles about four different Latvia-Russia mutual economic relation cases. Articles are selected from a four years period, from year 2004 until the end of 2007. This period of time has been selected as significant in both country economic and politic relations, as Latvia joined the EU and NATO, as well as both countries have signed border agreement, which hadn’t happened previously. The most important economic issues in both countries relations in newspaper’s DB articles were selected accordingly to content analysis of the same period of Latvia’s news agency’s “Leta” news. To select news search word “Russia” was used. Data analysis is qualitative and exploratory.

3.2. Quantitative content analysis

Content analysis is communication content analysis in a systematic, objective and quantitative way. It is connected with meaning of phenomenon, their emergence and meaning creation process. This
method is quantitative with repetition measurement product. (Deacon & Golding, Murdock and Pickering, 1999.)

Exactly the classification and objectivity are the characteristics that let one distinguish content analysis from other press research methods. This method is reducing text and symbol findings to a statistically manipulative standardized amount of information that is representing existence, intensity and frequency. (Berger, 2000: 176.)

With content analysis it is possible to compare a significant amount of information and to recognize certain development tendencies in one or more press publications.

In this thesis content analysis will be used to get idea of the history and events that has shaped Latvian Russian mutual economic and political relations. With content analysis will be searched meanings which are not hidden in the articles.
II EMPIRICAL PART

4. Medium and events studied

4.1. Dienas bizness as an object of research

My research is based on the only one Latvia’s business newspaper, the “Dienas bizness” (DB). The owner of DB is Swedish media concern’s “Bonnier AB”.

The newspaper DB was first published on April 13, 1992, but only since 1997 did it start to publish five times per week. Since year 2000 DB becomes a leading Latvian business newspaper. In addition to daily business news and commentary, DB publishes five different supplements in the daily paper. It also publishes weekly business entertainment magazine and certain magazines annually. The newspapers main editor is Dace Andersone.

DB daily circulation is 12 thousands newspapers, but its readership reaches 92 thousand. Its auditory is Latvian speaking managers, business proprietors and professionals aged 20 - 49 with medium to high income (www.db.lv).

4.2. Events chosen

To describe and analyze the economic relations between Latvia and Russia in the chosen period, I had to choose the cases that would be analyzed with framing analysis. I chose a brief content analysis that would justify why exactly these cases were chosen.

For the content analysis I chose the news from one of the two news agencies in Latvia - “Leta”. The content analysis was performed by taking into consideration news from 2004 until the end of 2007, which was constituted from approximately 1000 news per month. The news was selected after category “Russia” and from these news the most frequent economic and business related topics where chosen (See appendix 2). As a result the most important Latvian-Russian related event timeline was created. (See Figure 1 on the next page.)
Out of all the events that have left an impact on Latvian-Russian relations, the most reported economic and business related ones were chosen for further framing analysis. The selected events and issues are – Latvia’s fish product and other EU livestock product import in Russia, Latvian-Russian border agreement, track queues on Latvian-Russian border, energy independence and Nord Stream project development.

The content analysis also carried information which months and years have been the most significant for the above mentioned events and issues. The most active months and years were selected to find articles in the newspaper DB. Altogether approximately 100 articles will be analyzed with framing analysis.
5. Framing analysis

5.1. Border agreement

5.1.1. Issue description

Since Latvia regained its independence from the Soviet Union and especially after Latvia’s joining the European Union (EU) raised a necessity to agree about common border with Russia. EU institutions were interested in solving this question as Latvia has one of the EU’s outside borders and it is with Russia. The discussions at first were interrupted from Russia’s side, which was opposing the wish to agree about definite border until Latvia resolves Russian speaking minority right questions. At the same time EU representatives tried to justify Latvia’s situation and tried to persuade Russia that it doesn’t have enough reasons to oppose border agreement. Still Latvia continued discussions with Russia about this border when a while before signing it, Latvia from its side supplemented the agreement with a declaration. The declaration was explaining the agreements meaning. In Latvia’s government opinion declaration was necessary to justify the states constitution. The constitution says of which parts Latvia is shaped and it can be read differently, as if doubting if after war lost territory (Abrene) to Russia, would still belong to Latvia. Thus government realized that it might be anti-constitutional to sign such agreement without extra explanations. Later court agreed that this agreement has not broken the letter of law, so it is constitutional to sign such agreement. At the same time Russia loudly opposed signing agreement with supplementary declaration because they interpreted it as a territorial claim for the old part of the land which was once owned by Latvia. The negotiations lasted until Latvia’s government agreed about border agreement without additional declaration, and it was signed in just about 4 years later than planned. The interrelation between event, issue, and actor functions when covering border agreement signing process can be seen in Figure 2 on the next page.
**Problem**: necessity for border agreement, LV adds unilateral declaration.  
**Cause**: historical relations, necessity to adjust agreements and other laws  
**Evaluation**: irrational, shortsighted, and delayed  
**Remedy**: explanation, negotiations, protection of historical values and land  
Russia postponing,  

**Problem**: Latvia’s proposed solution for border agreement (event cause specified)  
**Cause**: history interpretation, proud  
**Evaluation**: ready to sign, but finds “stupid” the extra declaration  
**Remedy**: postpone, argue, trying to gain  

**Problem**: Russia not signing border agreement (event cause specified)  
**Cause**: history and constitution interpretation, proud  
**Evaluation**: risky, fantasy irresponsible, balagan  
**Remedy**: negotiate, change conditions, trying to gain political weight  

**Problem**: need to sign the agreement to fulfill EU requirements and other agreements, but Latvia has its demands  
**Cause**: attached unilateral declaration, (entire event frame becomes cause in issue frame)  
**Remedy**: involve all possible different level officials to negotiate, save the historical values, spontaneous  
**Evaluation**: disagreement puts Latvian politicians under criticism; agreement would show mutual relations in a new level, ridiculous, show, endangering economic and political relations, irritant, indefinite gains  

**EVENT**: Latvia - Russia border agreement signing  
**ACTORS**: Latvia & Russia officials  
**ISSUE**: disagreements about unilateral declaration, delay  

**LATVIA’S OFFICIALS**  
**RUSSIA’S OFFICIALS**  

*Figure 2: Fully developed frame for Latvia’s and Russia’s border agreement.*
5.1.2. Conditions and causes

DB describes the actions around Latvian – Russian border agreements as irrational and political. There is not a single moment when newspaper or its interviewed information sources would support state’s policy towards this question. There are seen many negative consequences of not signing and postponing this agreement. Without a border agreement both countries are not able to sign supplementary agreements which would improve both countries’ cooperation possibilities.

The major problem which is disclosed in DB articles is that a certain political power party TB/LNNK and also other nationalistic thinking parties which are not represented in the parliament, have been opposing the agreement with Russia without a declaration. With this opposition they were approaching to their voters, showing that they wouldn’t just simply sign any agreement with Russia. According to the newspaper, these parties were just playing political games. Because of these political games the land piece (Abrene) about which all the discussions took place is characterized “the promised land” in DB articles. The newspaper realizes that it is just a principal question for these political parties not to cede in territorial claims towards Russia. Because of this principality politicians are “messing around” saying irrational and political comments that “future generations will not forgive that” (to sign border agreement without a declaration and giving away land without a reference of occupation) to us” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005). DB is very critical about the ongoing discussion and calls these actions as “torpedoed” and “organized by government”. DB shows that the additional declaration is “a complication” and “a delay” and not at all a well justified measure.

On the other hand, DB clearly and repeatedly admits that Latvia “needs a safe border” and that this discussion, complication is just building “unfriendly relations” with Russia, which might be negatively affecting business relations. Newspaper is sharing the same opinion with Russia’s side about the necessary conditions and the possible type of border agreement between each other. Newspaper showed Russia’s “disagreement” and expressed it by quoting Putin’s speech: “We are ready to sign border agreements both with Estonia and Latvia, if there won’t be any bound territorial claims which are stupid by their content” (“Gaida robežīgumu”, May 11, 2005). DB opinion is often even harsher than how Putin just described it.

1 Here and further on are cited „Dienas bizness” articles, which are indicated by the original title in Latvian without the author.
At first, the border agreement process didn’t gain much interest from DB, but later when the political reasoning became clear, and the delay of signing it continued, the business newspaper started to report about it more loudly and even vigorously.

5.1.3. Actors

The main actors in developing and signing border agreement between Russia and Latvia has been Latvia’s government, Russia’s president and foreign minister, and partly also EU institutions. Often DB mentions also businessmen as significant actors who would gain if the border agreement would be signed. It might seem that this actor has been added to the international discussion to make it more relevant than it would otherwise sound.

The initiator to sign the border agreement was Latvia but the EU institutions had a role of supporting and fastening this procedure.

Irresponsibility of Latvian officials

Latvia’s officials and decision makers are mostly characterized as irresponsible, risky, ruled by self interests. Politicians are “irresponsibly ignoring state’s political and economical interests” and “pushing through a belligerent declaration (“Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005). DB shows that the border agreement is no more just an agreement but a political tool. Border agreement and the discussion of its supplementary declaration used in a “risky” and “fantasy” manner.

The politicians who are directly involved in the developed situation are described as “hustlers” who are “toughly sticking to the letter of the law”. DB suggests them to “mature for real work” and ask them “to make decision” and stop playing with the past. Latvian policy makers in this question are “stubborn and not very smart individuals” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005) who “have to define Latvia’s position in relations with its Eastern neighboring country” (“Prezidente vēlas izlīgt ar Krieviju”, May 16, 2005).

The newspaper is tracing political motives in the decision of adding extra declaration to the agreement: “It looks like narrow political interests connected with rather distant elections have started to prevail. It means that Abrene’s question will be delayed till October next year” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005). The strongest supporter of this declaration was nationally and patriotically thinking power party “TB/LNNK”. It is opposing against anything that gives an image of Latvia forgetting or changing the history Soviet Union occupation of Latvia. According to this party territory loss would show Latvia’s negligence towards constitution and the past. The situation is also visualized in the following caricature:
Caricature with a clown characterizes Latvia’s lost territory Abrene, which is saying: „You just don’t stress, I have to save my political capital!” The other character is a bear which is a symbol of Russia („Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005).

Another issue the DB is worrying about is Latvia’s image in the eyes of EU and US: “Now we are risking becoming ridiculous in the eyes of EU and USA if we will not manage to step over factually inoperable geopolitical claims” („Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005). During this time Latvia’s image across the borders is rather important because Latvia just had become a member of the EU and also NATO.

Throughout the analyzed period of time there have been no positive images of the border agreement case.

**Russia strict but ready**

Russia hasn’t been very bright as an actor in this case. Russia is mostly standing out of the direct discussions and just played a role of a signature giver to the border agreement or not. At the beginning, Russia tried to reproach Latvia for its attitude towards Russian speaking minorities in Latvia but later as EU officials involved in this discussion, Russia stopped it.

The rest of the time Russia has been evaluated as “ready to sign” the agreement at any moment. The solution is in the hands of Latvian politicians. If Latvia wanted the agreement to be signed, then the agreement had to be without an additional declaration but until then, Russia is “ready to arm with patience and wait” (“Gaida robežīgumu”, May 11, 2005). Russia’s readiness to sign the agreement has been showed during all the negotiation years but with conditions.

DB as a business newspaper is acknowledging that the lack of the border agreement and poor political relations are harming not only Latvian producers and entrepreneurs but also Russian ones.
5.1.4. Endorsed remedies

It cannot be said that there have been endorsed any strong remedies from any of the actors. From the side of the EU officials it was a pressure to have this agreement signed and also the business elite in both countries asked for this agreement to take place. Otherwise Russia has just been waiting for the best agreement version to come through, but Latvia unsuccessfully trying to gain some political weight.

Latvia operating in a name of history

Latvia’s remedies are diverse and without a strategy. At first officials are toughly negotiating to manage to agree about necessity to sign an agreement with Russia. When an oral agreement was reached a power party suggested adding unilateral declaration to the agreement. It took place without extra consultations with Russia. Later on Latvia’s officials are trying to smooth down the conflict over the declaration and to manage to pass just the agreement again. Remedy of Latvia’s officials is so spontaneous and political which doesn’t give a confident picture of Latvia’s performances.

Most of Latvia’s decisions have been characterized as unconsidered and stubborn: “Now there is a necessity to think realpolitically as in the times of Latvia’s foundation times” (“Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005). Latvia’s officials just receive criticism of senseless actions and necessity to try “to define opinion explicitly”. Later when the government has already realized that with the declaration there will be no agreement the power party politicians were “trying to save reputation and show the responsibility”. At the same time and already earlier, DB was showing that “the solutions could be found just political will to act is needed”. At the moment, when just a border agreement was proposed to Russia, it succeeded and it came into force.

Russia strategically neutral

Russia’s endorsed remedies are to sign an agreement between both countries but if possible gaining something out of it. For example, reminding of the other “painful” questions as in this case minority right question.

At first Russia tried to fulfill its aims through political negotiations but as it didn’t work out later on Russia haven’t endorsed any special remedies. However Russia was trying to avoid any political discussions and waited while Latvia calms down with its claims. It even turned out that international society was not criticizing Russia of not signing the agreement with an additional one sided declaration from Latvia: “(Latvia’s politicians’) pressed trumps over Russia might make it
refuse from signing an agreement at all and for that even not receive an international condemnation” ("Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005).

At the same time, Latvian officials tried to avoid looking so emotional about the past. They were trying to attack Russia and characterize it as irrational and not willing to cooperate: “(Russia) should slow down emotions and then return to constructive work” (“Prezidente vēlas izlīgt ar Krieviju”, May 16, 2005) and “most likely in some immense future it will be possible to speak with Russia again” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005).

DB often expresses Latvian officials “hope” that this time, this year, after these changes, etc. Russia will sign the agreement and will not delay it. Meanwhile Russia remains in a winner position, except its entrepreneurs with business relations with Latvia. However in this case the agreement is more needed for Latvia and EU not for Russia.

5.1.5. Evaluation

DB was never supportive to the issue with the one sided declaration as an addition to the border agreement. This issue was always experiencing heavy criticism and even offence. It has been named as “hobbyhorse”, “propaganda animal”, “irritant” and the discussion about it as “chimerical territorial claims”. Latvia’s politicians were never taken seriously but rather ridiculous as newspaper named their activities as “show” or “balagan” and “black humor”. This situation is also described in the following a caricature:

![Caricature](image)

Caricature shows Latvia’s prime minister with whom the wall of „Abrene’s question” is being hit and he says: „What is there to think, beating is needed!!!” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005).

During the process of the event and when the agreement actually got signed, DB named various reasons why Latvia needs it: to “improve political situation”, “improve economical situation”, because it “probably will improve economic relations in the border region which is a little but significant improvement”, “will open the road to cooperation between businessmen”, “increase
possibilities to work in the wide Russian market” and the agreement will “hopefully decrease lorry queues on the border” (“Latvijas–Krievijas robežlīgums ratificēts”, September 6, 2007). These gains are rather abstract and they might have raised difficulties for the society to understand and wish to have the agreement done. At the same time, as the gains of the agreement are so indefinite then it raises possibility to talk politically about it which was also used. Economic gains usually remained only in the background of the issue as the political discussions took so high tone.

After signing the agreement, DB didn’t complement the fact but was thinking further. It clarified that Latvia had received an “adequate territorial compensation agreement” (not for Abrene) and that all together the agreement is more favorable to Russia: “fits with Russia’s interests” than to Latvia’s, as it didn’t manage to add the additional declaration to it.

By quoting Russia’s official DB shows that the border agreement “will not reduce Russia’s complaints about Latvia’s Russian speaking inhabitant life circumstances” (“Latvijas–Krievijas robežlīgums ratificēts”, September 6, 2007). The newspaper shows that even this time Russia didn’t manage to gain changes in Russian speaking rights in the Baltic region. Probably there will be another case when Russia will use the same weapon again.

Despite that there are no praises added to the fact that the agreement has been signed, the only persistent and repeating frame from DB is how absurd the issue and discussion around the border agreement was. The newspaper shows how much time it took to sign and ratify the agreement between both countries but no comparable losses of this time have been provided. In the same time DB reflects that Latvia didn’t gain much from discussing the historical border issues and the rising of extreme opposition inside the Latvian society. On the other hand, Russia gained even more, because it used another chance to politically fight for Russian speaking minority rights in Latvia. Russia successfully made itself to be heard abroad and although with no direct results.

5.1.6. EU role

EU institution role have not been significant in the Latvia – Russia border agreement issue. Most visibly EU appeared as an actor only at the beginning and at the end of the border agreement signing process.

At the beginning EU institutions were encouraging both Latvia and Russia to sign the agreement as soon as possible: “Yesterday in the EU and Russia leader meeting in Hague Russia was asked to sign and ratify border agreements with Latvia and Estonia immediately” (“Gatavs robežlīgumam”, November 26, 2004). EU was also playing a mediator role between both countries to justify Latvia
for its Russian speaking minority rights questions. EU leaders were telling that any criticism from Russia towards Latvia is inadequate and not sufficient for not signing the agreement.

After almost four years of negotiating the agreement got signed and the EU just congratulated both countries for success. EU and its officials didn’t have any other role in the issue covered by DB.

5.1.7. Role of a journalist

In this case the journalists mostly had criticizer and accelerator role. They didn’t try much to change the direction of the process, except they never supported the additional declaration to the agreement. However the agreement’s content was never under discussion, only the process and need of signing it.

The journalists explained why the process took so many years and who were the politicians gaining from this process. The newspaper constantly asked to speed up the process and not let it go into destruction: “The constitution rule, that a part of state’s territory cannot be given away without organizing a referendum now is used as a catalyst of the situation in order to liquidate the discussions about mutual border agreement ratification in a foreseeable future” (“Jādomā reālpolitiski”, May 2, 2005). The major worry for DB was the companies which were affected by a nonbeing of the agreement: “We have to remind that many of the questioned businessmen, who are in business relations with Russia, have admitted that government’s politics and unfriendly relations between both countries is significantly harming their business” (“Prezidente vēlas izligt ar Krieviju”, May 16, 2005). At the same time no concrete losses are mentioned when evaluating the agreement and analyzing the gains from it. Although concrete losses are not mentioned DB doesn’t stay silent in front of their audience.

Noteworthy that DB shows the meaning of the agreement also for Russian businessmen. With this information the newspaper shows that it supports liberal values and tries to speak above political discussions thinking of the business development: “It (border agreement) is being literally messed up; despite these chimerical territorial claims there are delays of important political and economical problem solutions” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005). However DB cannot hide the surprise and desperation of how unbelievably unrealistic the politicians can be in this case: “It would be almost better to strictly say – give Abrene back, because the position right now “between sky and ground” is more harmful to the state power prestige and to the inhabitants of Latvia,” (“Neskaidrā pozīcija”, May 30, 2005). At the same time, the newspaper’s only suggestion is to solve things quickly but it doesn’t take a role to explain how to solve the constitutional effect on the agreement.
5.1.8. General frame

After the EU suggestion to Latvia and Russia to sign a border agreement, both countries try to negotiate for it for about 4 years. The negotiations pass successfully till Latvian politicians decide to gain political benefit from the event.

Since the moment the political negotiations started, Russia takes a role of an observer and is not participating in the discussions. Latvian officials at the same time are negotiating between each other how the border agreement should look like. DB in the same time doesn’t take a neutral role but is actively and harshly criticizing the local politicians for not being responsible but rather destructive. However the newspaper doesn’t give suggestions or comment about the border agreement itself. It just tries to stimulate its acceptance as soon as possible to proceed with signing other agreements between both countries which should be positively influencing the business area.

At the end, Latvia’s side has to give up its political claims and just sign a plain agreement, which is perfectly fine for Russia as it hasn’t lost anything in these negotiations. In the same time Russia haven’t gained anything as well, because its claims to solve the minority rights questions in Latvia remained unresolved. Still Russia manages to threat to Latvia that this question will not be forgotten even the border agreement will be signed.

DB disclosed border agreement issue convincingly and persistently similarly. In no moment information sources would raise doubts if the proposed declaration actually is necessary. All the articles are opposing this suggestion and everybody who stands behind it is strictly criticized or even offended by the newspaper.

The perception of the issue is mostly promoted by journalists and editors themselves not by the interviewed sources. The events and the discussions are the promoters for the journalists to created significant amount of editorials about the issue. In the result this case’s is framed by DB itself and it provides its own meaning to the newspapers auditory – businessmen. From time to time DB uses remarkable quotations from Russian authorities but by using those journalists are just coloring their own words.

Probably because of the profile of the newspaper DB almost never reports in detail the political discussions around this issue. It makes the frame rather incomplete, but it can be justified with the newspaper’s specialization on business issues and not so much on nationalistically thinking politicians’ speeches and aims.
5.2. Border queues

5.2.1. Issue description

Already before and especially after Latvia’s joining the EU, transit and border crossing questions and problems have appeared. Latvia was having two border control points on the border with Russia and both of them are usually stuck with hundreds and hundreds long track queues. It usually takes 24 hours to cross the border but in some cases even two three days. The issue got especially urgent in the middle of 2005 when the queues became just larger and food products and other fresh goods were spoiled in the tracks and the drivers and clients became more and more upset. Officials mutually started discussions about how to ease and fasten the border crossing. All of the actors were blaming something or someone in the other country. The situation let the crime rise when border servants started to accept bribes to allow the tracks to cross the border faster. Because of illegal actions, many arrests took place. Later the officials opened another border location, which still was not enough sufficient but at least partly helped to solve the problem. Discussions started about introducing so called “green corridors” where the tracks would be able to park and then continue the way in order of numbers. The project was started and private entrepreneurs begun to act but the state postponed the approval and the EU funds for those projects. Problem increased and EU officials’ attention was coughed and it begins to join discussions as Latvia’s border with Russia is one of its outside and one of the most important borders. Still in 2009 the border issue problem in Terehova and Grebneva has not been solved. More detailed interrelations of event, issue and actors can be seen in Figure 3 on the next page.
Figure 3: Fully developed Latvia - Russia border queues solution frame.
5.2.2. Causes and conditions

The queues on the Latvia - Russia border are mostly a seasonal problem and it has lasted for many years leaving thousands of unsatisfied companies involved in the logistics. Latvia’s geographical position has determined Latvia to be a country of transit as it is located in the middle of the EU and Russia. Especially after Latvia’s joining EU the border controls become stricter and more time consuming.

Especially a lot of troubles and “intensification” of the queues were occurring during the celebration days in Latvia and Russia. These days are often different in the both countries thus leaving an impact on border controls as well.

The problem turned into an issue when specialists of the field and journalists started constantly asking to solve the “severe” situation as “the problem is huge”. However the solution was delayed and the road conveyers emphasized that “the problem solution cannot anymore be postponed” and that “the situation has only worsened” during the time (“Rindas nogriež miljonus”, April 11, 2005).

DB kept on constantly reminding that each tracks delay is connected with costs: “question has to be solved as soon as possible otherwise every hesitation can have high cost”, but neither entrepreneurs nor the journalists believe that the executers will act accordingly -“and that till the project approval will be needed a lot of effort” (“Zaļie koridori” iestrēgst”, December 7, 2005). However not just an effort was needed, says DB but also political will and action: “Entrepreneurs shouldn’t expect that the project will be accepted in the near future” or that it will be accepted at all (“Zaļie koridori” iestrēgst”, December 7, 2005).

The newspaper doesn’t precisely clarify who should be responsible for the problematic issue on the borders. However the road conveyers calculated that Latvia’s road conveyers have lost more money than the Russians. Also Russia is blamed of being slower on the border controls than the Latvian side: “Big part of the responsibility for the slow border crossings should be undertaken exactly by Russian customs office, which cannot find way how to ease border crossing and custom procedures” (“Rindas nogriež miljonus”, April 11, 2005).

After realizing how complicated it is to negotiate and cooperate with Russia to find a solution for border queue problems, both countries tried to involve higher level authorities - EU institutions – to ask for help both financial and mediator: “It would be necessarily to deal with the problem in the EU level as there are no solutions found already for few years in Latvia’s and Russia’s discussions” (“Rindas nogriež miljonus”, April 11, 2005).
Occasionally when the queues were not as long border guards are spreading optimism and expressing that “the queues will be gone” next month after the height during Christmas and admitting that in some months “the situation is not so critical”. So the press and the officials would were not anymore speeding to search for solutions.

However during the years crime situation amounts increased on the border control area. Because of the “grey business” road conveyers and of “the corrupted local custom service” in both sides of the border criminal cases have been numerous: “There is an existing informal scheme on the border of Latvia and Russia, where controlling servants are “helping” anybody for 50 Euros bypass the track queue on the side of Latvia,” (“Iespējama ātrāka Latvijas un Krievijas robežas šķērsošana”, June 9, 2005). Many arrests were taken place and lots of DB attention was paid to that.

Although this problematic issue is affecting a very concrete business field and is located in the very corner of the country, it still managed to raise attention to be a “hurting question” that should be solved, indicate DB.

5.2.3. Actors

The issues major actors are the road conveyors which are the affected side but the rest of the actors are officials who are supposed to find solution for that. The official actors are divided in Latvian, Russian and EU institutions.

Road conveyers lose money

In the border queues issue the main actors are road conveyers which are constantly year by year losing money because of the unsolved border crossing.

The road conveyers are not often interviewed in the analyzed articles. DB presents just the numbers and approximations of how many days and how many cars were queuing on the border and what losses are that bringing to them. Seldom the drivers themselves “are explaining” in DB who are the guilty ones for the slow queues. They are giving their perspective from the actual event place. In these comments they blame the custom controls, the Russian officials, the locals, etc.

However the official opinion from the road conveyer and entrepreneur side is given by the representative association of the road conveyers and logistic companies. This side is constantly characterized as “concerned” of the losses they have to deal with.
Latvia avoiding the responsibility

Latvia’s officials who are dealing with this issue is the Ministry of Transportation as well as lower lever institutions responsible for roads quality and development.

DB shows that when Latvia’s officials cannot find a solution or are stuck in doing something, they start to blame or invite the Russian officials to act more actively. Officials are expecting an initiative from the opposite partner: “If Russia could process more, Latvia would process more as well,” (Stroža, 2005). This opinion is mostly shared by the interviewed sources of information. The newspaper itself doesn’t look in the yard of someone else unless Latvians have succeeded already: “Russia’s readiness to speed up control tracks will have no sense if there will no longer be adequate action from Latvia’s side,” (Kalveits, Iespējama ātēka Latvijas un Krievijas robežas šķērssošana, 2005).

Rather characteristic trait that appears in DB articles is Latvia’s institution avoidance from the responsibility saying that it is a responsibility or a competence of another institution. In the result there is hardly seen any improvement of the situation.

Russia a partner and not

Russia’s representatives in this issue are mostly officials from the border control institutions. Their approach to the issue is rather similar to Latvia’s. They are expecting an initiative coming from Latvia’s side as well and only after that they are ready to act themselves: “Russia’s embassy’s trade attaché Raisa Redkina tried to softer business blames (about having slow custom control) and said that responsibility and initiative to ease and solve border crossing should come also from Latvia and EU member states’ side, not just from Russia (“Rindas nogriež miljonus”, April 11, 2005).

On the other hand DB shows that Russia is having a more developed border control system in general and it has already invested into the “green corridors”: “Russia has done its task long time ago” (“Iespējama ātēka Latvijas un Krievijas robežas šķērssošana”, June 9, 2005). DB concludes that Latvia’s requests to Russia to start acting are invalid.

Latvian officials have admitted that it is “difficult to approach Moscow”. It is difficult to cooperate and find solutions so the both countries road conveyors would benefit. However “in words Russia is supporting us (Latvia)” admitted Latvia’s official but in actions no solutions have been found yet.
5.2.4. Endorsed remedies

The remedies of this issue will not be viewed separately by each actor but all together as this is mutually important issue. Nevertheless it is doubted if this issue is as important to Russia as it is for Latvia. On the other hand no political or social issues have been brought up together with this issue, so there is no reason to doubt at least the common aims.

During all the problematic moments of the issue: “It has been repeatedly discussed in different state-level meetings about the problems to cross the Russia - Latvia border but until now it has been unsuccessful to find a rational solution.” (“Iespējama ātrāka Latvijas un Krievijas robežas šķērsošana”, June 9, 2005). Information sources in DB suggests to open new border control points, build parking lots before the queues, introduce taxation for transit purposes, introduce previous registration and certification of the carried goods or the “green corridors” which would allow cars to bypass the others. “The project is still only an idea and it still have to be much improved” (“Zaļie koridori” iestrēgst” December 7, 2005), admit DB questioned expert. The officials and field specialists comment that “bureaucracy apparatus is very large” and that “the project coordination takes a long time” (“Zaļie koridori” iestrēgst” December 7, 2005).

Each suggestion to solve the situation is followed by DB with a great “skepticism”. At the same time skepticism is accompanied with a “hope” that the road conveyers will stop losing money. DB admits that some officials have “good intentions” and that the common “trend is correct” but unfortunately there are problems with the timing, as the money is being lost with every new queuing.

Some involved but undisclosed entrepreneurs are expressing opinions to the newspaper that decision making process in Latvia is political and that suggestions are supposed to be agreed upon within every new political force in power. Entrepreneurs are considering that the solution on the border will not be found soon enough as the parliamentary elections are approaching and that after them there will be other politicians interested to develop projects according to their interests: “Entrepreneurs are afraid that if project will not be accepted at least until coming elections then the work with it might be needed to start from beginning again” (“Projekts beidzot izkustas”, January 27, 2006). By expressing these doubts journalists possibly are also expressing their own opinion of how business is made in Latvia and use it as a tool later on.

Every analyzed DB article is completed with a thought what is necessary to be done to improve the situation and without which actions improvement cannot be reached. The most active solution
searchers naturally are the involved organizations whose participants are the ones queuing on the border and losing money.

During the time of solution finding both Latvia’s and Russia’s sides are trying to blame each other for not solving the situation and even for making it worse. There are suspicions of “speculations”. For example, Russia’s side is suspended of trying to search any kind of accuses “to discredit Latvia before the NATO summit” which was taking place in Riga couple month later. The suffering road conveyer organizations are showing that the speculations might have some factual background as “we know Russia’s attitude towards us” (“Spekulācijas uz robežas”, August 16, 2006). In the same time also Russia has announced that “Latvia’s border guards have specially created queues to gain something from the drivers” (“Spekulācijas uz robežas”, August 16, 2006). Possibly these Russia’s offences are just a reply to Latvian offences, however they are raising suspicions about all the system behind the border customs.

The speculations, crime, disorganization and undeveloped infrastructure are the reasons what are affecting the discussion, development of the problem and the track drivers themselves. The organizations are expressing: “As soon as the queue will move on in a civilized way, it will decrease” (“Spekulācijas uz robežas”, August 16, 2006). However not just civilized actions are asked for but for actual infrastructure solutions.

In the moment when the Latvian officials reached a stage of a decision to make a public tender to develop some section of the border, new discussions were raising. DB discusses who is interested in exactly these tenders and why exactly these companies applied and were chosen, etc. There is a wide distrust and “smell” of corruption in the air again, which fits to the previously mentioned doubts about the solution jam until next elections.

Occasionally certain politicians are expressing their suggestions to solve the problem. For example, ex-prime minister Aigars Kalvītis suggested introducing tax for transit through Latvia. This suggestion was evaluated by DB editors as an “uneconomical solution” and “the most original and in the same time the most absurd idea” (“Neekonomisks risinājums”, August 21, 2006). His suggestion has “unpleasant side effects” and DB expresses astonishment that a prime minister could have come up with a solution himself and doubt if someone has not proposed him to say it. He is suspected of having “peripetias” in his mind. This conclusion by DB again brings to the political interest topic.

In conclusion most of DB articles show that there are rather many suggestions and possible remedies proposed but not so many or almost any fulfilled. It turns the event into a problematic
issue for which direct action is needed. The suggestion to involve EU institutions in this project is not having reasonable arguments. They are rather used to prolong the decision making process and possibly to gain EU money for solving the problem.

5.2.5. Evaluation

Most of the analyzed DB articles are pessimistic and doubtful if the border development aims will ever be fulfilled. It shows that in Latvia there are so many deficiencies that it is hard to manage to solve this problem in a sufficient way unless the others problems haven’t been solved already.

The newspaper compares Latvia - Russia border crossing problematic case with most of its neighbors. It turns out that they have developed similar projects to solve this problem. It concludes that Latvia is very far back from Lithuania, Estonia and Russia. This “backwardness”, “unachievement” and “project development delay” have been repeatedly connected with the logistics business that is losing money: “The border infrastructure is not able to follow the business activities and factually cannot swallow this kind of car amount,” says one of the field’s specialists (“Lieli "korķi" uz robežas”, December 23, 2005).

The most criticized actor because of the issue is the Ministry of Transportation which “as if” understands importance of it. The administration of the ministry is also suspected of having business/political interests into developing border crossing projects. In general DB shows that there are too many persons that are willing to gain from the projects and also the bureaucratic apparatus it too large to work efficiently.

Criticism towards officials is found both in the news and in the editorial articles. The disappointment of the “stuck” project which is “moving forwards very slowly” is so high and the business representatives are acting loudly that DB doesn’t remain silent.

DB realizes that the border crossing problem has been “belated”, “not moved at all” and it has been “braked on both sides” of the border. It acknowledges that Latvia’s relations with Russia have not helped to solve the question and that there might have been purposeful or just ignorant carelessness from it.

The newspaper is also trying to be aware and not just support any kind of solution founded for the border crossing improvement. It is cautious about who is standing behind the new projects and who and when someone will earn and “control” them. The issue is urgent as track drivers are constantly losing money but it takes time to evaluate the solution proposals and trust them.
5.2.6. EU role

The EU institutions don’t have a powerful role in this problematic case. They are mostly mentioned when there is an inability to continue negotiations or to find solutions between both border countries: “(..) The problem (with border crossing) is huge and it would be necessarily to deal with the problem in the EU level because only from Latvia’s and Russia’s discussions there are no solutions found already for few years” (“Rindas nogriež miljonus”, April 11, 2005).

The EU institutions are disclosed in cases when Latvia’s actors are considering possibilities to gain investments from its funds for developing the border infrastructure. In these situations reminders come from the official actors that it is in the whole EU’s interests to put in order this border control: „One of the most painful questions right now is the track queue on the Latvia’s and Russia’s border and it is not anymore just Latvia’s but also EU problem,” and “it is also Russia’s and EU problem,” (“Risinās transporta jautājumus”, July 23, 2007). The EU should be and is interested in solving the border issue as soon as possible because it is interested to promote trade and business relations and not to brake them. On the other hand the EU considers that Russia as well should be investing and caring to improve cooperation with it and about better border crossing with Latvia: “If Russia wants to develop cooperation with EU in the field of transportation, it has to do everything what is possible, to solve this problem,” says newspaper quoting an EU official (“Prasīš Krievijas risinājumus”, September 12, 2007).

Since the EU institutions raised their attention to Latvia - Russia border issue, it has raised hope and expectations that the issue will someday be solved: “Latvia - Russia border crossing problems further on will be discussed in the highest political level, because EU has joined the problem solution process,” (“Prasīš Krievijas risinājumus”, September 12, 2007).

DB editors are supporting all actor participation in the solution of the problem but EU institution participation is valuated as approximation of the solution. It shows that with “united forces” there are more chances for a better result.

5.2.7. Role of a journalist

DB journalists and editors in the border crossing issue are having a strict role of constantly asking for solutions and evaluating the proposed ones. They are disclosing which are the responsible persons but are unclear about the role of the actors outside Latvia.

The most active influence DB journalists are showing and trying to gain over the timing and the speed of how the issue is solved. The editorials are giving suggestions to the government to what it
should pay attention and to what not. It is criticizing officials’ suggestions and asking for new ones: “In any case instead of talking about increasing tax burden, it is the last minute for the government to improve our eastern border crossing possibilities as well as all the transit sector in general,” (“Neekonomisks risinājums”, August 21, 2006).

As previously mentioned DB was disclosing opinions of some businessmen who think how political the issue is becoming. Neither the information sources were named nor were they announced as anonymous. With this manner journalists are able to manipulate the information. In the same time the newspaper is giving reasons to consider that in this issue political corruption might be involved.

In most of the cases the journalists are repeating how much money the road conveyers are possibly loosing because of unsolved problems on the border. They are keeping their role as representative media of the business field strong.

The journalists are not having strict policy shaping role, except the one of trying to speed up the solution acceptance. However it is evaluating the proposals by publishing the opinions of the business representatives and themselves which possibly are affecting the political decision makers.

5.2.8. General frame

Month after month turning into years the road conveyers are complaining of having long queues on Latvia – Russia border. Because of these queues the track owners are losing money as the fresh food products are spoiling and the drivers have to spend hours or days in the border area not even having a clue when they could actually be able to cross the border.

The track queues are developing on both sides of the border and after complaints both countries’ authorities acknowledge that there is a problem. DB is criticizing Latvia’s officials for their performed actions already since the road conveyers started to complain. Neither the communication between both countries and the proposals of solutions are good enough for the newspaper. In case the proposals were accepted, then the implementation process has been harshly criticized.

DB represents also neighboring countries successes of border control systems. Latvia’s situation is framed as the worst one, also with the lowest political will or ability to solve it.

From time to time hopes are appearing in the DB news. However often they are showed in an ironical way so those would rather be considered as criticism. The main guideline is promises versus delays and the road conveyers and the logistic companies who are continuing to lose money.
EU is seen as an outside actor, third person with investment possibilities which could help to solve the problematic situation and participate in negotiations which it actually is doing.

DB performed viewpoint of the issue is mostly promoted by the information sources. Either they are business area representatives or the officials which are searching or not searching for the solutions. However journalists are often convincingly showing the newspapers opinion also outside the editorials – in titles or subtitles and leads. Similar traits are repeating throughout the years, which make the issue perception shared by different journalists.

Border queues problematic issue frame is provided with complete information as all the involved sides are represented equally in the articles. DB is sharing mostly the same opinion with its business information sources, which also shows that the frame is shared between the organizations.

5.3. Energy independence

5.3.1. Issue description

Energy independence in Latvia can be viewed differently. It can be just another European country which is fully dependent on Russia’s gas or it can be viewed as a country which has its own privilege already since 1968 when Latvia has started to use its special underground gas storages in Inčukalns. Due to many hydroelectric stations also the renewable energy source usage is in high level in Latvia.

Inčukalns gas storage nowadays is actively functioning and its owner is Latvia’s gas monopoly “Latvijas gāze”. “Latvijas gāze” owners are German company “E.ON Ruhrgas” - 47,23%, Russian company “Gazprom” - 34%, Latvian company “Itera Latvija”- 16%, and the rest of owners - 2,76% (Vaivars, A. 2008). The owner structure shows that Russia has a significant influence in the decision making process of the company. Latvia’s gas company is buying all the gas from Russia and storing in the gas storages in Inčukalns. “Gazprom” interest has been to develop the gas storages in an amount that it could store there all the necessarily gas for Latvia, Lithuania and possibly Finland. However investment and development projects haven’t yet been approved as also EU is interested to have influence there. Every quarter or half year “Latvijas gāze” is increasing its gas supply tariffs, with an excuse that also “Gazprom” has increased its own tariffs.

Traditionally Latvia has also used a significant amount of renewable energy resources, mostly – 82, 9% wood-pulp and 16,4% hydroelectricity (Ministry of Economics, 2005). For hydroelectricity production Latvia has another energy producing monopoly – “Latvenergo”. It is still fully Latvia’s state company. Latvia’s Ministry of Economics have approximated that there is still a high potential
for wood-pulp, biogas, bio oil and for wind energy production but it is very slowly and nontransparently fulfilled. In the same time the state and the EU support for renewable energy resources have been postponed and slowed down for many years.

Since about two years Latvia has a political agreement with Lithuania, Estonia and possibly Poland to build a common nuclear energy station in Lithuania. This project would give an enormous input for Baltic country energy independence. But even the political agreement has been made; its actual construction hasn’t yet started as local energy companies haven’t agreed about their shares and investment amount in the project. Latest prognosis say that nuclear energy station is going to be finished by year 2015 but it is just an approximate time. Meanwhile some entrepreneurs have expressed interest to build a nuclear station in Latvia but this proposal has still remained only in a discussion level.

There are discussions about connecting electro cables with Sweden and about a connecting pipe line from the Nord Stream pipe line. However the most possible solutions are either a new liquefied gas station or a coal station. About those two a public and political discussions haven’t yet been finished. The discussions are political as well, because the possible liquefied gas station would be fully supplied by Russian gas. For the time being no decisions and solutions have been agreed upon although already in 2010 Latvia needs to find additional energy resources mostly because one of its energy resources - Lithuanian nuclear station “Ignalina” will be closed by then.

Since Latvia’s acceptance in the EU its energy dependence is viewed often in a broader - whole EU arena context. It is also a part of the energy dependence frame in DB. The interrelation between event, issue and actor functions when covering energy dependency issue can be seen below in Figure 4 on the next page.
Figure 4: Fully developed frame for Latvia’s and EU dependency on Russia’s natural gas.
5.3.2. Conditions and causes

For already many years EU has expressed considerations about its dependence on Russian gas, but at the end of 2004 the International Energy Agency (IEA) expressed very loud worries about this issue, thus creating a problematic issue with a necessity to solve it. DB noticed that: “Also earlier EU expressed some worries about dependence on Russia’s gas in the field of supply, but this is the first time when IEA have so clearly warned about risk towards them,” (“Uztrauc atkarība no Krievijas enerģijas”, December 6, 2004).

Latvia’s role in this issue is seen both as an EU member state and also separately as a country having bilateral energy policy relations with Russia. In moments when the discussions are rising in the EU level, DB is enchaining it to the worries of Latvia. The newspaper always keeps on reminding that Latvia is “fully dependent” on Russia’s gas and it remains as a main discussion topic throughout the years.

The most shared anxiety for Latvia are seen “Gazprom’s” decisions of gas price increase every quarter or half year. It makes the cooperation “unpredictable” and it also leaves a negative effect on Latvia’s economy: “Gas tariff increase is the first wave of the inflation which automatically call for the second, third, forth, etc. In the end it is no more factually possible to stop it.” (“Esam kļuvuši par gāzes vergiem”, January 6, 2006.)

Another problematic issue was rising when Russia announced gas limitations for Europe and threatened to cancel supply at all if the EU will intervene in Russia’s expansionist plans. These threats and activities DB describes as „pretty unpleasant news” and “a hint with a stick”.

When describing the problem in the news DB is quoting a British newspaper The Guardian to express widely known worries about Russia’s energy sector connection with the state politics: “The gas and oil is giving Russia an enormous political and economical influence, as well as promote its world power ambitions”, (“Uztrauc atkarība no Krievijas enerģijas”, December 6, 2004). This quoting seems like a wish to express these thoughts and worries themselves but it is giving more credibility if it’s brought up with a reference to someone reliable. The citing also shows that DB is sharing the same considerations and possibly the frame as the British newspaper, which means that the frame is spreading between the countries and media gaining the influence.

However DB itself in its editorials discusses and negatively valuates Latvia’s dependence on Russia’s energy resources: “EU is over exceedingly dependent”, “it (dependence) creates threat”
and “Europe hasn’t developed a normal energy infrastructure”. These are also the dominant problem condition framing viewpoints.

5.3.3. Actors

In this case it is difficult to distinguish which actors are the dominant ones as it is not only an issue for Latvia but the whole Europe, and it is not just Russian gas company’s activities but also Russia’s governments impact in the decision making process. However DB have distinguished one major actor, which are the EU institutions and two minors which are Latvia’s officials, and Russia which appears as a common actor with no division between business and political institutions.

The European Union united and diverse

The EU mostly appears in DB as an organization which officials have expressed opinions or otherwise newspaper cites and refers the EU energy commissar who is Latvian by origin.

From one side the EU representatives seem to speak about “common energy policy”, “to speak in the “same voice””, and to have “states in a coordinated approach to energy sector”. It is willing to be independent and organize its energy sector after market principles and be able to have provisional outcome. But from the other side EU is also not so coherent actor which is “already quarreling”, which might leave to no agreement in the end.

DB is distinguishing between the old Europe and the new - Eastern Europe, and seldom as well as the Central Europe: “Eastern Europe is as well searching for ways to diverse energy sources.” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006) as if those had different aims. The newspaper discloses differences from the new and older member states according to the dependency on Russian gas. DB shows that differences and need to distinguish the countries is influenced by the historical heritage, which also brings to each of the group different kind of remedies and possible solutions: “The Central and Eastern European countries are 69-100% dependent on Russia’s energy resources, because during the times of USSR there wasn’t created any straight lines which would connect this region with providers from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan,” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006). Interesting that in the moment when all the EU states agreed about certain issue in the energy sector DB characterized it as “an inexperienced consensus”.

There is one country which has showed an increased initiative in shaping EU energy policy and it has been Poland. Already in the end of 2005 Poland was trying to gain a leader actor role in the energy dependence discussion. Poland even announced that it is “preparing for the leadership role”
in the energy independence solution searching. In the same time neither DB and nor any other actor were giving Poland any special role or attention.

A special role by DB was given to someone else. As the EU energy commissar Andris Piebalgs is Latvian and this far rather successful, then his portray in Latvian press have been positive. He has also been nominated as a president’s candidate of Latvia or lately also as a prime minister. His opinions are widely published and emphasized more than others. For example, in a case where his opinion is controversial to German Environment minister than the latter one will be left just for the record but Latvian Commissioner’s opinion placed in front.

**Latvia's officials incapable**

Another actor which has not been so long lasting but however important is the Latvian officials. Latvian officials have been mostly criticized and not much taken into account. Latvia’s government “should not even try to spit” about energy independence if it’s plan is just to diversify energy resources but not the supply state.

DB admits that Latvia should be cautious and is encouraging it to manage some independency actions as Russia is rather unfriendly: “Of course business in Russia is in a very great amount still connected with politics and this country’s politicians if we are expressing it mildly, don’t love Latvia and the Baltic’s in general too much,” (“Atkarīgie no Krievijas”, April 25, 2006). DB “doubts” Latvia’s government credibility to propose certain solutions to solve the situation. They estimate that any government’s solutions for the issue and the realization of the significant projects would always differ from the previously expected “as it has been experienced before”.

**Russia – unreliable and “demonstrating muscles”**

Russia as an actor remains fully undiscovered in DB as its opinion is not expressed. Russia’s position is mostly revealed from what other actors think its position is. In the same time there are articles analyzing Russia’s activities towards stopping gas supply to Ukraine. The fact already shows of „demonstrating muscles“. The motives of such actions and later threats of cancelling gas supplies to Europe don’t need much explanation. It is power politics: “We will simply go to the markets where we are welcomed,” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006) have expressed Russia. After these activities Russia is continuously described as an „unreliable trading partner” and that “Russia malevolently can use its dominant power,” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006).

DB is establishing a fact that: “Factually Russia has tripped up possibilities for many countries for other resource transportation to them,” (“Atkarīgie no Krievijas”, April 25, 2006). In the result
Europe has not much choice than to consume Russia’s gas. In the same time DB journalists calculated that neither Russia nor the EU has any other has supply and demand alternatives for the next 15 years – “there are no realistic alternative options” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006). With this conclusion DB lets the readers know that both actors are just using loud rhetoric’s for this “duel” but no sharp changes are possible in the nearest future.

Latvia’s attitude towards Russia is also defined in these articles. DB editors explains that Latvia is a small country and it has “to take into account” what’s going on in power states “if we like it or not”. Latvia has “to consider” surroundings before making any decisions, as it is too small to leave some significant impact and it has “no significant energy resources”. DB admits that: “Russia is and will remain our most important energy resource supplier, even we might not like it,” (“Atkarīgie no Krievijas”, April 25, 2006).

Noteworthy that DB is emphasizing that dependency from Russian gas is not just a part of EU policy but it is a significant Latvia’s foreign economy policy question as Russia is in the neighbors with Latvia: “This neighboring country” with an emphasis on “this” as if it is no more necessarily to define which country it is. Later DB writes: “Russia doesn’t have a single reason to feel sorry for its Baltic neighbors,” (“Atkarīgie no Krievijas”, April 25, 2006) to provide any cheaper gas or to be friendlier for any special reason.

5.3.4. Endorsed remedies

DB is providing a wide set of remedies used by all actors and proposed by itself. The most actively discussed and covered remedy is how EU tries to manage to become independent from Russian gas.

EU searching for options

DB is writing about concrete EU plans to “lower dependence on Russia’s gas”, for example, about the gas pipe “Nabucco” in the Adriatic Sea. In the same time the newspaper expresses unbelief that this pipe line is going to get build: EU is “possibly planning to build” the pipeline, as if it was nothing clear, just expectations. This project is characterized by journalists as “unsafe and expensive”. The project is criticized also with a reference to unknown skeptics and analytics: “EU shouldn’t live in illusions that with this projects realization (“Nabucco’s” pipe line) it will gain independence from Russian gas,” (“Gazprom pret Nabucco”, June 28, 2006).

As a journalistic observation and a review of discussions DB provides a conclusion that EU states should and might “return to the nuclear energy”. This proposal is under exploration but meanwhile
some countries are considering nuclear energy “as a rude word in some languages”. However this idea has given to the EU actors “new enthusiasm”.

The suggestion to consider nuclear energy for EU independency increase has come also from the journalist side. Interesting that DB is quoting colleague newspapers in Great Britain and saying: “Newspapers are advising to develop other energy sources, as well as review attitude towards nuclear energy,” (“Pirmais solis kopīgai enerģētikas politikai”, March 9, 2006). This opinion lets a reader to consider that press has an influence and ideas for policy making process.

In the end also journalists realize and conclude that: “A conceptual EU common energy policy should be made,” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006). This suggestion is similar to the one the EU officials admitted as necessary to have. The idea is clear but no solution has been found.

Latvia searching for solutions

At the beginning of 2006 Latvia’s Ministry of Economics developed a strategy how Latvia should develop its energy sector, which prescribed that during next 10 years approximately “trifle” milliard Lats or “enormous”, “fantastic amount of money” would be invested in the energy sector to escape from dependence on Russia’s energy, which “is unlikely to happen” with this project. It anticipated that Latvia would build its own coal energy station and after that would join the Lithuanian nuclear station project. DB evaluates the plan as irrational and utopian: “Of course, for big money anything can be build but who will pay for that later?” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006); “If we are taking into account the enormous expenses a question is raising if such an “independece program” realization is not costing too much?” (“Finansējums nebūs galvenā problēma””, March 10, 2006.) Again Latvia’s officials’ solutions are valuated as impossible and irrelevant. DB considers that only the „naive ones” would pay for these huge projects as there haven’t been discussed how this energy would be used after: “Lets build a lot and think after where to put the electricity.” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006.) The newspaper thinks that the proposal is just a way “to pay off with a milliard” to deal with energy dependence.

One of the most typically question asked by DB journalists is “how likely” or „what is really going to happen”. With these questions and with these phrases in questions journalists are expressing doubts about executive or legislative organ ideas. DB is raising or trying to disperse doubts that the proposals are rational and not just utopian: “In your opinion how real is a chance to realize coil electricity station project for the price of 343 million Lats, if we are taking into account that approximately for 10 years Latvia have not been able to realize National Library project, which expenses is approximately around 100 million Lats?” (“Finansējums nebūs galvenā problēma”", 48
March 10, 2006). In this case the journalist is not letting the readers and neither the executer to forget how successful or rather unsuccessful Latvia has been in realizing significant projects. DB considers that maybe also this time the proposals shouldn’t be evaluated seriously, as they might not be realized.

DB shows that it is a business-oriented newspaper: “Energy dependence from Russia cannot become the only justification for any price independence, besides in such a short time and for such huge money, as someone in the circles of the government has imagined,” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006). The journalists ask for a bit more modest and rethought investments in the energy sector and not for any price. They show that investments should be market based and not so much politically: “It should be taken into account that every active monopolist would have consistently understandable tendency to try to get the maximum from their position,” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006). On the other hand DB agrees that Latvia’s energy independence level should be “widened” and shows that there are problems of having just one natural gas provider - Russia.

“The aim is not to avoid using resources which are coming from Russia but the aim is to decrease dependence. But dependence is when there is no choice. There is no question if the energy resources coming from Russia are bad or unwelcome. Russia’s natural gas is very effective energy resource but the problem is in its deliveries’ safety and in price stability” the worrying situation is explained by a politician and responsible executor in a DB interview (““Finansējums nebūs galvenā problēma””, March 10, 2006). This explanation is a polite way to explain fear of instability and dependence. It is not a loud way as journalists are doing it. However no interruptions of gas supply from Russia has affected Latvia: “There is an alternative but right now I don’t see any great need for that, because supplies from Russia are stable, and right now the major task is to develop a gas market in all Baltic countries,” (““Finansējums nebūs galvenā problēma””, March 10, 2006). DB through official voices gives advices not to direct the attention so much to Russia but rather look at “broader integrated market” and share political aims with the neighboring countries.

Russia – counterattacking to reach aims

Obviously Russia has its own aims in the energy sector and in its endorsed remedies. Russia is trying to gain high energy resource influence in the EU and its actions are strategically oriented to reach the aims. Meanwhile EU is slow and just negotiating and discussing but not acting to reach the independence: “While the EU is negotiating for support to Nabucco pipe project, which would give a chance for Europe to reduce the dependence from Russia’s natural gas, Russia’s monopoly “Gazprom” is in high speed expanding its influence arena,” (“Gazprom pret Nabucco”, June 28,
Russia’s reply to the EU’s actions is “a counterattack”, with what Russia tries not to remain in a looser position.

5.3.5. Evaluation

Part of the issue’s evaluation has been left out of journalistic touch and left for the readers and representatives of the business sector. One of them is in a large press article announcing: “We (entrepreneurs) have turned into gas slaves,” (“Esam kļuvuši par gāzes vergien”, January 6, 2006). “The easy days are over”, admits the businessman and explains that company “Latvia’s Gas” which is partly Russian owned is not “taking care of its clients, but just for their earnings”, because of that the state should act as the company is not reliable enough. “It is the last moment for our country to think about its energy independence from Russia”, writes DB (“Esam kļuvuši par gāzes vergiem”, January 6, 2006).

The most obvious message in DB articles says that Latvia is “completely dependent” on Russia’s natural gas. It is also statistically correct message, which is also described by a caricature:

![Caricature](image)

This caricature is added to the DB editorial saying – „Now you see what is addiction leading to.. from Russian resources!“(Atpirkšanās ar miljardu, 2006.) The speaker is the Minister of Economics of that time Krišjānis Kariņš.

Although DB is constantly questioning the possible and actual dependence on Russia’s energy resources, an EU official, energy commissioner and Latvian Andris Piebalgs is saying something else: “We do not have to be afraid that Russia could stop supplying Latvia with energy resources. There is a question of the price – and it is rather high for the gas. It is important that in the basket of energy there would be as many as possible energy sources, so the energy suppliers would be more than just one,” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June 26, 2006). He also mentions and the newspaper puts emphasis under a supplementary photo that Latvians “should have common sense” and not to develop certain kind of alternative energy resources just because the EU is giving support for that but because someone will actually produce it and someone will
really use the energy out of it. The message fits together with the newspaper’s constantly produced idea that Latvia’s officials are unable to solve problems and are just having irrational and utopian ideas.

As DB is a business newspaper and supports liberal market ideas then it is repeatedly questioning if politician and specialist suggestions to diverse energy resources is economically or politically motivated idea: “Up to now made researches have showed that alternative energy resource production types would cost more that energy resource purchase from Russia. How economically reasonable then would be resource production ourselves?” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June 26, 2006). A direct answer to the journalist’s question is not given but just development of the idea that with some sense and idea how to use these „competetive energy resources” there are significant possibilities: „Latvia has a potential” to gain in energy indepencence (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June 26, 2006).

In conclusion DB writes that: “any step (towards energy independence from Russian resources) should be first of all economically reasonable.” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June 26, 2006.) Political decisions would not be supported by the newspaper.

5.3.6. EU role

The EU roles in this case study in significant. It is a major actor and also a possible decision maker. After Russia threatened the EU with interruption of natural gas supplies if it limits Russia’s accessibility to gas distribution markets, EU institutions and officials started to actively shape its role in this business and politics. DB journalist describes: “Kremlin’s controlled giant is trying to use European energy market liberalization and sell gas immediate to consumers in Europe” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006). For the newspaper it is clear that Russia has commercial interests with a political governance and it is presented as a fact when describing Russia’s gas companies “Gazprom” aims.

After receiving threats the EU didn’t want to remain in an endangered position and tried to take part and fight in the “duel” as Latvian journalists named it: “Because of Gazprom’s expressed threats (...) Brussels assume an option to even orientate towards the scandalous Iran gas” (Vitenburga, 2006). In the same time EU officials suggests that as: „Started energy „correct partnerrelations” with Russia should be stopped” (“Meklē alternatīvas”, January 26, 2006). Later DB journalist concludes that although EU takes part in the “duel” and tries to protect itself, Russia’s attitude - “aggressiveness remains” and “muscle demonstration” - continues.
DB journalists interpret that Russia is “dissatisfied” of experiencing a necessity to change system of bilateral agreements with EU countries, as EU has expressed wish to have a common cooperation agreement. If there are separate agreements with each Russian gas consumer country, then Russia can play its own cards in each of the countries „independently”. By that probably not making as much broader attention to certain problems as it would be with the whole EU.

In commentaries DB is supporting the policy direction of the government of Latvia, which also fits with the common EU policy: “There have appeared breezes to the direction of energy autonomy increase,” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006).

In moments when Latvia plans to realize a new project, DB worries if the EU institutions will allow them to be fulfilled. Because of this reason journalists question officials about the projects already in an early project stage: “In your point of view, will EU let Latvia realize this coil electricity station, if this kind of objects is creating a rather high environmental pollution?” (“Finansējums nebūs galvenā problēma”, March 10, 2006.) DB already considers that there might be problems however the interviewed official is not agreeing to any other EU role than in division of CO2 quotas of how much a country is allowed to pollute in the following years. EU is not having a role to decide in what the country should invest.

5.3.7. Roles of a journalist

While quoting colleague newspapers in Britain DB is saying that “the newspapers are advising” not the expert actors they are quoting. It gives an impression that DB sees an influence of itself and in the colleges and tries to share it.

DB evaluates governments policy making in editorials and say: “There are no objections for the idea about increasing energy independence itself (..). But there are important objections about the way how it is tried to be managed,” (“Atpirkšanās ar miljardu”, March 9, 2006). It shows that journalist’s role is a permission or objection giver to the proposals. It is not an obvious policy shaping role.

5.3.8. General frame

DB shows that the EU as an actor is incoherent and diverse. It doesn’t try to promote just one countries or spokespersons opinion, except in the case of Latvian Energy Commissioner whose role is especially emphasized. However this emphasis has developed naturally as he has been the main policy shaper and information spreader in the EU.
The newspaper admits that Latvia doesn’t have any great role in this issue and is even criticizing any attempts of it. In the same time DB is acknowledging that Latvia is a neighboring country to Russia, thus it has its certain role in the decision making process.

On the other hand Russia is mostly showed as unreliable actor who is acting in its own way. To reach its aims Russia is demonstrating its muscles and trying not to remain in a loser’s role reveals DB.

The remedies both from EU and Latvia’s officials are reconstructed as unrealistic as there are just negotiations going on but no projects have been realized yet. In the same time Russia’s activities are showed as clear – to expand and gain more influence – using its energy resources as a tool. For DB it doesn’t raise doubts that Russia is succeeding versus the slow Europe.

In the end the evaluation of DB created frame is that Latvia has a rather positive experience in cooperation with Russia so no fairs should be raised. However because of the safety reasons in future Latvia would be safer to have diverse sources of natural gas. In the same time the methods of gaining that should be economically justified. DB also shows that Latvia has chances to gain it.

DB created frame is convincing and persistent – Latvia and the EU is in trouble and is dependent. There is a threat from Russia and the bothered actors are trying to find solutions for the situation. The provided news construction is working as its meanings are repeating. The frame is also shared between different media to which DB is referring to.

The completeness of the frame is satisfactory. Although Russia is not given as much space to express its opinion, its position is guessed or perceived sometimes. Russia’s standpoint from time to time is negatively viewed and its position is not about single actions but about its business expansionist plans into Europe. It has been rarely discussed how fortified these generalizations are.

In DB articles framing and major viewpoints are promoted both by the sources but also often by the journalists themselves. The last ones are having a noticeable voice as DB have devoted more than few editorials for this topic.

5.4. The Nord Stream pipe line development

5.4.1. Issue description

In order to realize the Nord Stream pipe line project there is established a company “North European Gas Pipeline Company” which is registered in Swiss. The dominance in the company is belonging to Russia’s gas monopoly “Gazprom”, and the minority to German companies “BASF” and “E.ON”. It is not yet been resolved if any other partners would join the project. Earlier it was
discussed that probably French energy company “Gas de France” might have some chances. It was planned that all the owners of the project and the company will receive profit from further gas distributors and they as well be allowed to buy gas for themselves.

When Germany’s chancellor Gerhard Schroeder didn’t get elected for the next round he was approved to work for “Gazprom” and to lobby Nord Stream project’s realization.

According to the official information of the Nord Stream project, it is planned that the pipe line would be able to transport up to 55 billion cubic meters of gas each year, which would be enough to supply more than 25 million households (Nord Stream, 2009).

In DB a wider discussion about the possible gas pipe line building started in the second half of year 2005, when the agreement to sign such a pipe line was signed between Russia and Germany. The interrelation between actors, issue and event in Nord Stream pipe line case can be seen below in Figure 5 on the next page.
ISSUE: Pipe line will bypass Baltic States and Poland.

Problem: fear of being blackmailed, no common EU policy towards RU and energy dependency; Baltic’s and Poland ignored
Cause: economical interests of Russia and Germany
Remedy: discussions, secret actions, calming other partners down, using the same rhetoric.
Evaluation: power politics

Problem: Signed without consulting with EU, some countries excluded
Cause: provide natural gas to Europe, economical advantage
Evaluation: strategic movement, business oriented movement, changes in EU common values
Remedy: negotiations, search for other natural gas providers to increase independence from one source, secret agreement

Problem: doesn’t want to be limited in expanding in Europe
Cause: Russia has natural gas resources and aims
Evaluation: unfair, discriminative, strategic, business and power oriented
Remedy: increase EU dependence on RU gas

Problem: excluded from the project
Cause: passiveness, small importance, not fitting power country aims
Evaluation: instability,
Remedy: interrupt or stop the project, negotiate for project expansion also to other countries, threat with environmental issues

Problem: doesn’t have EU support, Schroeder hired by “Gazprom"
Cause: Economic and business aims
Evaluation: individualistic, political decision maker
Remedy: signing agreement without broader consultations; chancellor favorable to Russia; later explaining the common EU gains from the pipe line;

EVENT: Russia and Germany agrees to build new gas pipe line

ACTORS: Bypassed countries, Russia, Germany

RUSSIA & Gazprom

Bypassed countries:
5.4.2. Conditions and causes

The most problematic condition valuated by DB is Russia’s and Germany’s decision to bypass other countries. Since the project was announced and no other countries were invited to participate they took oppositional role: “Poland’s and Ukraine’s leaders are hardly criticizing the pipe lines construction and also Baltic countries are objecting,” (“Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”, September 9, 2005). Between the critically oriented countries is also Latvia: „Latvia is evaluating (the project) negatively” are concluding journalists and Latvian officials. Project „is endangering both safety in the region and its costs are going to be enormous. We don’t see any economical argument why the gas pipe line wouldn’t go through Latvia, Lithuania and Poland,” says Latvia’s prime minister of that time Aigars Kalviņš („Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi,” September 9, 2005). From one hand he is admitting that the project is expensive but from the other hand proposing to make the project even more impressive by including a branch to Latvia.

Germany is harshly criticized by deciding to join the project “without taking into account common EU politics towards Russia” („Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”, September 9, 2005). Germany’s role in this project is differently evaluated. First of all Germany is seen as individualistic apart from the EU acting state who wants to improve its economical situation no matter what the cooperation is with. However the Nord Stream pipe line agreement is also seen as a political decision: “It is more political, than economical motivated cooperation (between Germany and Russia)”, concludes another Latvian politician („Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”. September 9, 2005). It is also a political decision because a high level politician choses to support the project and later also agreed to work as a lobby for it.

DB searches for reasons why Latvia is bypassed and why there is so much criticism towards the Nord Stream pipe line. It is being considered that possibly it is Latvia’s officials’ failure of managing this project to reach Latvia as well. Company „Latvia’s Gas” suggests that probably Latvia’s government should be responsible for being bypassed: „Hopefully next time the government will use all its possibilities and Latvia will get this kind of construction,” („Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”, September 9, 2005). Also the newspaper editors admit that its unfortunate that the pipe line will bypass Latvia and that our special gas storage capacity haven’t helped or “have been ignored” to let us compete in this area. In the same time an editorial shows that it is „too late” to complain as this decision has been made already: “Our politicians and Russian state officials can fuss up the air blaming each other and EU members. In this way its
possible to gain cheap popularity for local publics but the train with gas pipe line has already left long time ago,” (“Gaisu tricinām pārāk vēlu”, December 13, 2005).

In conclusion DB considers two problems: Germany’s and Russia’s deal purposes are not clearly known but are guessed; the bypassed countries’ are dissatisfied with the situation. In the last case the bypassed countries can be blamed themselves for not being active enough and the power countries which probably haven’t been interested in cooperation with them anyway.

5.4.3. Actors

Actors in the Nord Stream pipe line case can be divided after their participation in the project. In this case it is difficult to distinguish between functions of the frames as all the actions of the actors, remedies and evaluations are very much strategic movements and they should be looked as remedies and problematic causes in the same time. In this chapter I will only divide the bypassed countries description, as the rest of the actors are described through them and in the remedies of their actions.

The Nord Stream project was agreed between Russia and Germany “bypassing Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia”. All of the bypassed countries consider that for them it could be possibly gainful to participate in the project and they are trying either to criticize and stop the project or to gain their own participation in it: “four bypassed countries have expressed disagreement with the probable pipe line route,” (“Meklēs alternatīvu Krievijas gāzei”, November 25, 2005).

The bypassed countries try to position themselves as a part of the EU which has to make decisions together and indicate that Germany has been standing out of it. From one side it is showed that Baltic’s and Poland is united in opposing this project while being bypassed but from the other side the countries probably wouldn’t cooperate if just one of them gained the extension of the pipe line. For example, Latvia’s official says: “a branch (of Nord Stream pipe) should be build also to Latvia” (Vaivars, 2006) but journalists of DB look broader and say: „This kind of branch building is not dependend only from Latvia’s wish” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June, 26 2006). About the possibility that the Nord Stream branch would be build connecting Latvia as well, EU official and energy commissioner says: „That depends on the determination,” (“Gazprom pret Nabucco”, June 28, 2006). However many other reasons why it is too early to prognoez this option are mentioned.

In this case as the easiest and possibly the most efficient solution is found a need for common EU policy and decision: „Of course - it is all Europe’s question” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June, 26 2006) not just Germany’s individual one. DB is sharing worries that Germany
has made its own decision in spite of the rest of Europe and asks to an EU official: „Is EU not trying even more than to increase energy dependence from Russia, if we are taking into account its intensive activities with Russia’s – Germany’s gas pipe lines construction?” (“Andris Piebalgs: gāzes cena būs augstāka”, June, 26 2006.) However just a diplomatie answer to this question is received.

5.4.4. Endorsed remedies

Russia’s remedy

Russia is operating independently and strategically when the issue concerns its natural gas. Previously Russia have had conflicts with its cooperation partners but now the new agreement with Germany gives it new opportunities: “Russia will gain a chance to bypass its traditional export partners Poland, Ukraine and Belarus but Germany will become the only platform through which Russia’s gas will be divided to the rest of Europe’s markets,” (“Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi, September 9, 2005). DB evaluates the bypassing of the previous cooperation partners as suspicious and not bringing trust: „if we can believe Russia’s president Vladimir Putin” („Gaisu tricinām pārāk vēlu”, December 13, 2005).

When discussing the Nord Stream project Russia tries to calm down all the bypassed countries and to show that they can gain something out of it as well: “This is a new export road which will increase European energy safety.” (“Sāk būvēt gāzes vadu”, December 12, 2005). In the same time Russia is using the same rhetorics as Europe itself with it trying to make Europe to sound irrational and as if it was acting in the common interests. This project is „decreasing risks and gas transportation expenses”, says Russia’s official („Sāk būvēt gāzes vadu”, December 12, 2005). However these motives are not persuasive enough and DB evaluates them with a scepticism.

DB shows that Russia is not participating in many discussions but quickly and as discreetely as possible trying to build the pipe line so it could at last get „independence from transit countries”.

Germany’s remedy

Germany’s remedies are often discussed in DB who considers that Germany being a part of EU should be acting accordingly with the other union countries at least in major political lines.

Germany’s used remedies are not distinguished from its ex-chancellors Gerhard Schroeder’s actions concerning Nord Stream pipe line project. DB speculates by thinking if Schroeder knew about his position in the gas pipe line company already when he agreed and “forced” Germany’s participapation in it. It is considered that this job is just “appreciation gesture from Kremlin” and “a
payment for political support”. “The ex-chancellor has stopped being a politician but have turned into a lobbyist, which is representing entrepreneurship interests,” indicate DB sharing the opinion with some German newspapers. („Šrēders, pateicoties Gazprom, pelnīs labi”, December 13, 2005) Schroeder’s duties and position determine that he will: „promote for the company maximal favouring regime in all the deals, including with Baltic States,” and journalists are emphasizing and ironizing that Schroeder will have task to „calm down the Baltic states”, („Šrēders, pateicoties Gazprom, pelnīs labi”, December 13, 2005).

Later when Germany’s chancellor’s position is taken by Angela Merkel, DB is showing the difference in relations with Russia that now is „reservedly friendly” and „much colder than with ex-chancellor”. The newspaper shows that political actor changes can change also the political relations. DB considers that Angela Merkel “will try to renew closer contact with Washington, and will not admire Putin’s compliments” as the previous chancellor did. („Atturīgi draudzīgi”, January, 17, 2006.)

If the previous Germany’s leader was not paying attention to the other possible partners of the pipe line, than the new one at last is acknowledging a need to “explain” the made decision: “Gas pipe line construction is a significant investment for Europeans energy security and it is important that Europeans would explain to Baltic countries and Poland that the project is not against anybody,” (“Atturīgi draudzīgi”, January, 17, 2006). This explanation doesn’t stop DB from questioning and wondering what are the actual aims of Russia’s and Germany’s cooperation.

DB journalists concludes that a certain German bank has „already taken part in few large transactions that has helped Kremlin to hold energy sector more strongly in its fist,” („Sāk būvēt gāzes vadu”, December 12, 2005) and that probably this agreement is just another „transaction” or favour in exchange for gas.

**Bypassed countries' remedies**

Poland and the Baltic States believe that it “would be gainful” to realize the Nord Stream project which would include them. Since realization that they have been bypassed the countries started certain “pipe line torpedoes”. Lithuania’s and previously also Poland officials noted that “in Baltic sea there is an ecological catastrophe possible” if the gas pipe would be build in there („"Torpedē" gāzes vadu”, September 19, 2005). “Baltic Sea is belonging to everybody; it is not just one or two countries’ property,” they indicated to DB („"Torpedē" gāzes vadu”, September 19, 2005).

In the conclusions of almost every article about the Nord Stream topic DB is repeating a short story explaining what is the Nord Stream and what impact it might raise. There newspaper emphasize that
Poland definitely has stronger opposition to this project than Baltic’s although both are excluded. In these last lines DB is using Poland’s officials’ expressions that this project “can make Eastern European countries victims of extortion” (“Gāzes vads krietni sadārdzinās”, April 6, 2006). These last words are so repetetive and so strong that they seem to have a strategic remedy meaning, to create fair and opposition in the society against the new pipe line.

5.4.5. Evaluation

DB admits that “the Putin – Schroeder pact” (which is mentioned with asociation to “Molotov - Ribentrop pact”) is “ambitious project” for those who are in „large-scale politics”. The newspaper is setting a prognosis that “Northern Europe pipe line construction can change the political environment in Europe and can seriously complicate Russia’s relations with ex soviet neighboors.” (“Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”, September 9, 2005).

The newspaper shows that changes have already taken place as Germany agreed to sign such an important agreement without consultations with the rest of EU: “The agreement for building pipe line has raised Russia in another political level in EU, which factually means that Russia has signed an unbreakable political union with Germany. In this way (..) “the Putin’s Schroeder pact” is perfect for Russia’s influence increase and in the same time the opposition’s chances to fail the project are not high,” (“"Torpedē" gāzes vadu”, September 19, 2005). Although this message has been created according to Russian newspaper Kommersant it shows and explains the environment which was developing in Russia after the significant dicision making process. In the same time the same Russian newspaper acknowledged that „in the Baltic sea Moscows and Berlin’s political wish can turn out to be insufficient,” (“"Torpedē" gāzes vadu”, September 19, 2005) as there are strong opposition using environmental arugements. DB is sharing this opinion.

DB ir emphasizing that “the Baltic Sea region is very delicate,” (“"Torpedē" gāzes vadu”, September 19, 2005) because of all experienced in the past and the loud voice when these countries use it. In the same time no success can be ascribed to them. Possibly Latvia and Poland as well will remain without their own gas pipe line. It is also pictured in caricature in DB editorial. Look below in the caricature:
Caricature describes Russia’s and Germany’s mutual dance where Germany says: “It (Latvia) has always remained without anything.”. To this Germany’s comment Russia replies: “And will remain!” A third character – traditionally Latvian style dressed girl – is crying. (Gaisu tricinām pārāk vēlu, 2005.)

The argument about the EU common policy towards Russia and energy independence is viewed as strong thus DB acknowledges that the pipe line agreement: “is again proof that in front of economic considerations any EU solidarity ideas are paling,” („Gaisu tricinām pārāk vēlu”, December 13, 2005) and economic gains are standing over it.

5.4.6. Role of a journalist

In this case study as well as in the previous one DB puts different situation evaluation phrases into the mouths of someone else or is referring to other media. This time it is a German news channel Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: “Decisions about where should be going international oil and gas pipes have always been on behalf of higher political authorities, because in that way there are found solutions not only about transit tariffs and great investments in some certain countries, which those are crossing but also about possibilities to interrupt oil and gas supply, which is namely impact,” (“Ziemeļeiropas gāzes vads rada spriedzi”, September 9, 2005).

Another case when DB uses the same strategy was by concluding an article with a reference to Financial Times: “Putin is often moving his friends into high positions in Russian companies but this is the first case, when a foreign ally (Gerhard Schroeder) has received a leading position in energy sector,” (“Sāk būvēt gāzes vadu”, December 12, 2005).

In this way DB doesn’t hold the responsibility for what they are saying. It is a way to put an analytical commentary into a piece of news. However it is important to realize that this is not just a regular small countries practice to translate the news which also often happens.
5.4.7. EU role

In the Nord Stream case the EU is mostly mentioned as a common policy maker to which standards all EU countries should be attached to. However Germany because of its participation in the Nord Stream project is evaluated as independently acting country although in the same time it is one of the largest EU states. Possibly Germany is also one of the most significant policy makers in EU.

In this case the by-passed countries are not demanding EU to help them in negotiations with Russia and Germany to gain participation in the project as well. The countries are asking for common decisions and actions with the influencive and energy resource rich neighbor Russia. They ask EU institutions to help them not to remain in undangered positions.

In the same time common EU institutions oppinion remains unexposed as if the Nord Stream project would be just a business project and only individual country opinions matters. DB shows that Nord Stream is raising regional opinions rather than the whole EU opinion.

5.4.8. General frame

The Nord Stream project above everything else is a business oriented project between Russia and Germany. Both countries have been agreed about the development of such a pipe line in order to fulfill their own country aims. Russia is willing to expand in Europe and bypass the old cooperation partners but Germany needs gas supply and it might help the country to become more influencial. The agreement has been very political and might have been signed by personally interested Germany’s chancellor.

All the bypassed countries are dissapointed that they are not paticipating in this project as they will not be able to gain from it. All the offended countries are using tools to persuade Russia or Germany about the advantages of joining them in the project. However after declining or receiving criticism, the bypassed countries are trying to use every possible ways, and most usually environmental arguments to disturb the project.

The energy field’s analytics are blaming local governments for not taking advantage and usage of diplomatic tools to manage the cooperation in the Nord Stream project.

Journalists are trying to show how politically organized the project is and they share opinions across the borders with other media organizations. They are trying to show how careful Latvia and other bypassed countries should be from Germany and Russia. Especially careful they should be in the context of EU as this agreement has been made without political consultations with other partners. Thus this agreement have been signed without a common EU – Russia cooperation agreement and
without common EU foreign policy towards Russia. As an argument for caution is used the energy dependency argument.

The main actors in DB articles are the bypassed countries and their opinions and worries. These countries are also promoting the frames of the issue. In some cases the events like agreement with Germany’s chancellor is promoting the frames. DB is promoting its own viewpoint in editorial but its is shared mostly with the bypassed county opinion.

The frames of the issue and events are complete as all the actors are having their voice represented. However DB has created little amount of the articles devoted to this issue comparing to the other analyzed issues. The articles are also mostly based on the happenings outside Latvia. On the other hand the Nord Stream pipe line frames are convincing and persistently lasting during the years, even the article amount is little.

5.5. Latvia’s fish and EU animal origin product export to Russia

5.5.1. Issue description

Historically Latvia’s food product export to Russia has been high as well as to the other post Soviet bloc countries. The largest amount of all food product export is shaped by fish products. As Latvia is located next to the Baltic Sea then also fish product industry has been rather highly developed there. Already since Latvia was a part of the Soviet Union its special canned smoked European sprat has been highly consumed in all Soviet countries, especially Russia.

After Latvia and other 9 countries which joined the EU, Russia started to apply the same rules to the new EU countries like to the old ones. The rule that Latvia’s products will be allowed to be distributed across the borders after EU acceptance was known since Latvia started negotiations of joining EU. However about 90 companies didn’t prepare for this moment. In the same time there were warnings from Latvian authorities that Russia could apply their own rules to Latvian products than with the rest of EU.

When the exporters realized that now they have to adjust their producing principles and methods to the common EU standards they experienced sharp cut of international commerce. Some producers complained others just invested to set in order their manufactures. Most of the interested companies passed the EU standards and gained the permits to export their production. In this moment Russia expressed requirements to examine all the companies that import animal origin production in Russia themselves, and this wish was approved. It anticipated that Russian inspectors were visiting Latvian companies to make sure they fit the standards and then give their own permits for import in Russia.
Before joining the EU no such standards were applied and all the old EU member states were importing production in Russia according to EU certificates. After the EU enlargement the new standards at first were applied only to the new member states but later on also to the old ones like Spain and Ireland. In total restriction to import products in Russia was valid for about a week. That created losses mostly to the fresh product producers. For Latvia losses were in amount of 10 thousand Lats.

The restriction of animal origin production import in Russia activated negotiations between the European Commission and Russia. Soon after the restrictions were cancelled and a transition period of 3 more months was applied, till when all the exporting companies would have to be certified by Russian inspectors if they would be interested in import in Russia. After 3 months period Russia wanted to introduce a common EU certificate just for importing animal origin products in Russia, which was approved. Later on the additional certification process was applied only to the new EU member state companies.

Already in the middle of year 2004 Russian inspectors arrived in Latvia to certify companies. Each company was made to pay for the inspectors’ visits and accommodations. Noteworthy that Russia announced that the permits will not be given to those companies which in producing are using animal origin products from other member states than their own. This rule doesn’t fit with common EU requirements.

For certification in Latvia 81 companies applied, although all of them were not regularly exporting production to Russia. Most of the companies were fish product producers (Sniedze & Circene, Var pietrūkt laika, 2004). The second biggest product group was meat and milk products. Most of the meat product producers in Latvia were banned from import into Russia, as well as Polish producers. The last also become the most active fighters against these prohibitions.

Polish meat product ban was valid more than two years causing Polish official opposition to Russia’s – EU mutual cooperation agreement in April 2006. Only in the end of year 2007 Poland agreed to cooperate with Russia, as well as it allowed Russian inspectors to inspect its meat product producing companies to begin again importing them into Russia’s market.

Later on more and more Latvian companies certified for import into Russia permits but already by autumn 2006 Russian inspectors started to take into account new requirements which were especially strict to Latvian sprat producers. Russia restricted specific amount of chemical consistence in smoked sprat because they were considered to be cancerogenic. This amount of chemical was in the allowed amount in EU borders but too high for Russia. Because of these
reasons smoked sprat was banned from Russia’s market, till the cancerogenic substance would be lowered.

Another trouble that harmed fish product producers was in the very end of the year 2006 when Russian custody forbid to clear customs in Russian territory for these products. Thus the import of fish products from Latvia was stopped again.

After a half year long struggling with Russia’s custom control and import ban, smoked sprat producing was stopped by two manufacturers – “Carnikavas konservi” and “Ulmes”. Other four or five companies showed readiness to sell their enterprises.

Only since September 2008 Russia and EU equalized their required maximum amounts of benzopiren in smoked fish products and Latvian sprat producers were again allowed to import them into Russia. But after 2 years of import ban most of the survived companies have already found other markets.

Till the middle of the year 2009 no EU – Russia cooperation agreement has yet been signed as well as Russia haven’t joined the WTO. As there is no contemporary cooperation agreement between the countries, then there are possibilities for unfair trade and cooperation. The interrelation between event, issue and actor functions when covering fish products export to Russia can be seen in Figure 6 on the next page:
Figure 6: Fully developed Latvian and EU animal origin product import in Russia frame.
5.5.2. Conditions and causes

Problematic conditions and effects of this issue appeared in the moment when Russia proposed to have double certification after the EU enlargement. Already during enlargement process Russia was widely discussing effects of it and when enlargement took place Russia started to act.

Russia “burdened” and “hindered” Latvia’s production import to its territory („Lūgs palīdzību valdībai un vēstniekiem”, December 19, 2006). A representative of fish producing sector admitted to DB that “everybody hoped that there wouldn’t be so strict requirements (..) but it is the entrepreneur problem that they didn’t pass the recognition procedures early enough,” („IEgrīž vienošanās”, May 8, 2004). Even Russia’s reaction could have been forecasted DB raise no doubts that Russia’s decisions will “affect painfully”.

Double certification process and extra requirements created in “one day” about cancer causing substances in fish products are criticized the most. The situation is named as “inconsiderate” and it is “raising fuss”. The caused situation is described by journalists as “clamor” and “conflict situation” not as a real conflict. Russia is accomplishing “economical counteraction” and is “putting obstacles” which can “heavily affect all the fields financial indicators” („Lūgs palīdzību valdībai un vēstniekiem,” December 19, 2006). Later on journalists become also more artistic and called the issue as “Sprat scandal” and “a petty quarrel”.

Latvia’s officials spread protests and started negotiations about Russia’s decisions but they are avoiding to use physical actions not to make this happen to try to avoid from worse result: “Against this Russia’s wish already many times protest have been spread but there is no reason why to ban inspectors of entering the state. By acting this way Russia can turn against our producers with means,” („Inspicēs ražotājus”, May 15, 2004).

Also entrepreneurs are worried to make Russia more irritated than it is already. They are hoping and DB puts a significant emphasize that hopefully these political discussions and criticism of Russia wouldn’t in the end influence the mutual cooperation between both countries’ companies: “Right now the most important is that our relations with cooperation partners there wouldn’t be harmed,” („Līdz oktobrim jāvienojas”, June 8, 2004). The hope and caution sets a border of struggling and fighting till where businessmen and their representing newspaper DB should go to in the fight for their rights. This border is unclear but the wish is clear - until it doesn’t limit and cut off cooperation at all.
After so many months struggling with the import restrictions producers acknowledge to DB that “the situation is difficult and the sector is in difficulties”. “Situation in fish processing right now is very difficult and some companies are now standing on a border – to produce or not.” („Zivrūpnieki: situācija smaga, un nozare ir grūtibās”, May 17, 2007). Producers constantly raise attention to their problems because years pass but not many changes have taken place: “Nothing is being done to solve the problem” („Zivrūpnieki: situācija smaga, un nozare ir grūtibās”, May 17, 2007). DB concludes and emphasizes that after “Sprat crisis” it has become more difficult to live and have caused a necessity for fish production industry to search and develop other markets. However they are still hoping for some changes to take place.

Difficulties have affected the producers who have managed to gain allowance to import their production into Russia as well. They indicate that it is not the bad political relations between both countries are affecting the business but “economical protectionism” from the side of Russia: “Distributors are scared to buy fish. They are scared not of the quality of the conserves but about the possibility that with new Russia’s official decision they can be made to throw them out of shops again,” („Krievija nodarbojas ar ekonomisko protekcionismu”, June 20, 2007). However DB shows that Latvian fish product producers are not “snoozing” and will use any chance they will find to continue producing.

Conditions of the situation were never a secret nor a surprise when Russia started coming out with new restrictions, acknowledges a specialist of the field: “For long time it was known that Russia’s market is problematic but it has always been good market for our production and because of that other markets wasn’t searched. Every producer knew that if he didn’t send sprat to Russia, because the market is unstable, then someone else would and the competitor would earn,” („Krievija nodarbojas ar ekonomisko protekcionismu”, June 20, 2007).

“Protectionism” politics was not gainful for Russia itself because it might “affect Russian consumers” and possibly “raise the prices” in Russia. Considering these questions Russia tried to agree about bilateral agreements with the big meat exporters from the EU. According to DB if the old EU member states would have agreed there might have raised a conflict “horn to horn” between new and old EU member states, because of acting independently from the common EU policy. However it is considered to be Russia’s aim in this situation. These Russia’s activities are also compared with energy sector policies where Russia “is using field in which (..) there is the most disagreement” between the EU member states („Vienojas par gaļu”, December 21, 2006).

Altogether DB define that Russia already long ago was considered to be a problematic partner for EU and it was taken into account. However no one expected the problems to raise in such amounts
so the import for certain products can be banned at all. For solving the situation neither Latvia, nor EU chose to pick hard measures probably being afraid of more harming ones in reply from Russia.

5.5.3. Actors

The main actor in this issue and conflict situation is Russia with its new requirements which are brought up year by year. Other actors are the suffering or affected side actors, which are Latvia’s producers and officials and EU officials which are negotiating with Russia to solve the situation and find a solution. Poland is a minor actor in DB news but still it couldn’t be left out. As Poland’s position in broad terms is shared also by Latvia’s actors so I don’t separated from each other.

Latvia's actors delayed and hoping

Because of Russia’s new requirements Latvia’s fish producers have been “the most concerned”. Later especially smoked sprat producers were the most worried ones and “in obscurity” if they will be allowed to export products or not, as Russian inspectors were not hurrying with reports. Also milk and meat product producers have been harmed but no so significantly. The main actors have been representatives from affected NGOs’ as well as producers themselves. The actors “are hoping” that they “will not need to suffer”.

Latvian producers compared their production with similar Russian production saying that even Russian producers cannot fulfill required bensopiren amount in the product. By comparison they are trying to showing that Latvians are not worse producers than Russians itself. In this situation comparison cannot be taken into account and doesn’t lead to improvement of the situation.

The main actor role from Latvian official side is taken by the state Food and Veterinary service as well as from the Ministry of Agriculture. Both DB journalists and harmed producers share opinion that the state institutions are the ones that should take a major role in solving the situation: “Our (Latvia’s) institutions should try to do all what is possible to find solution for this situation,” (”ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu””, June 3, 2004). In the same time Latvia’s Minister of Agriculture Mārtiņš Roze admits that: “That’s what we do in our mutual relations with Russia is just a background activity, because the last word is supposed to be said by EC,” (”Zaudējumi būtu jāsedz ES””, June 7, 2004). However Latvia’s representatives are going for diplomatic trips and inviting Russia’s representatives to discuss the problematic issues bilaterally, still knowing that no agreements can be signed between them since Latvia is an official EU member state.

By the situation and later by some producer spitefulness disappointed official said: “Till now many of our entrepreneurs have had two major defects – lack of knowledge and money,” („Krievija nevar
sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004). These two “defects” are also broadly used by producers themselves. They are first complaining neither of not knowing EU nor Russia’s requirements. However later admitting they at least EU requirements have been clear long before Latvia’s joining EU. Also the money “defect” is being used as characterization tool, saying how much money producers need to invest to continue business with Russia and how much money they are losing or not gaining because of import ban. The latest also lead to some bankruptcies.

**EU surprised, negotiating and reserved**

When the conflict situation with Russia raised the affected business elite from Latvia was disappointed in the EU activities: “Now we can see how the EU is protecting our common interests – have to admit that the first test it hasn’t passed”; “Probably the old EU countries wouldn’t risk with their businesses because of the new member states,” (”ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu””, June 3, 2004). Later on the EU gained more active and reliable role and expressed stronger opinions and suggestions to solve the situation. Russia’s requirements seriously “surprised” European Commission and it kept on promising “to change everything to the best side as soon as possible,” remarked journalists („Var pie트 trūkt laika”, June 29, 2004).

As the problem prolonged new characteristics of EU institutions and officials appeared. They were pictured as actors who are listening and agreeing that there is a problem but not really reacting immediately when that was asked for: “Discussions with Brussels are happening regularly but there is a reserved attitude towards this question.” („Vinets Veldre: saplēsties jau nav māksla”, September 2, 2004). DB shows two things – EU as the time consuming bureaucratic apparatus; EU which is not united and not able to become familiar with the new Europe’s problems against their significant economic partner – Russia.

**Russia unpredictable but significant partner**

Russia’s as an actor and cooperation partner description in DB vary from a threat, source of fear, unpredictability and instability and in the same time significant business partner with which should be cautious. Russia’s behavior is at times viewed in context of existing and further agreements between Russia and EU, or as a possible member of World Trade organization.

Latvia and Russia are conflicting states. Usually the conflicts are light and look more like poking each other. Both countries use every opportunity to “traditionally reproach” each other. DB editor writes: “Already in the past Russia was known as a very big, rather hungry but grisly unpredictable market and different complications from its side has already appeared from time to time,”
(Eksporta veicināšana rūp visiem, izņemot valdību, June 19, 2007). An interviewed source comments: “Latvia had never had good relations with Russia (..), we have to take into account that Russia will act from now on as scrupulous as in an army,” (""ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu"", June 3, 2004). Because of this unpredictability and regular conflict situations Russia receives criticism from Latvia’s business elite: “I don’t have particularly high expectations towards this country,” („Uzņēmēji: trūkumi ir jānovērtē“, August 31, 2004). Another specialist comments in DB that Russia with its new requirements haven’t much surprised the companies: “Russia’s market has always been risky, and it has always been necessarily to work with it carefully,” (""ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu"", June 3, 2004).

Expert comments in DB are repeatedly negative: “From Russia we can expect anything and its actions are unpredictable” and “knowing Russia’s actions in similar cases, I am not sure (if it would cancel the restrictions),” („Latvija solījumus vērtē skeptiski”, June 7, 2004). The newspaper initiate producers think about other possible business solutions for their businesses and not so much rely that something would make Russia change its political or/and economical reasons’ caused requirements.

On the other hand there DB is not only critical towards Russia’s actions. Russia receives also an understanding and respect because of its significance for Latvia’s producers: “The big Eastern neighbor is significant and serious trading partner,” says specialist of agriculture market development („Neizslēdz Krievijas embargo“, April 12, 2006). DB through a person involved in fish product producing admits that Russia’s economical protectionism is understandable: “From the viewpoint of Russia, this country is acting very understandably – it is protecting its inner market,” (""ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu"", June 3, 2004).

Nonetheless the newspaper acknowledges that Latvia’s participation in EU haven’t changed the fact that Russia can act as it was acting. Also Russia’s delay of being a part of WTO is giving it free hands of setting its own requirements. EC representative comments the issue to DB: “This kind of attitude to further World Trade organization member state is not proper,” („Krievija turpina spītēties”, June 4, 2004). In the same time Russia doesn’t consider that this issue could have any impact of its acceptance in WTO: “EC wouldn’t risk to connect meat import problems with Russia’s joining WTO,” („Latvija solījumus vērtē skeptiski”, June 7, 2004). Russia considers it as a threat and is threatening back. This is again a way of showing power politics. In this case Latvia considers that a threat to ban Russia’s participation in WTO is not enough and asks to EC to “do countermeasures”. Yet the newspaper shows that „Russia is not afraid” of EU possible countermeasures.
Trying to find reasons why Russia should change its requirements towards Latvia and other EU member states DB presents an opinion that “Russia itself cannot provide itself fully” („Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004). This comment shows that even though Russia is trying to limit imports in the country, it will now have a necessity to look for other food product importers.

5.5.4. Endorsed remedies

To ensure protection for Russia’s own animal origin food producers or just to conflict with EU, it suddenly announced new requirements to the previous cooperation partners. The cooperation partners decided to use mostly the negotiations to renew the free market conditions as they were previously.

EU negotiating with no political intervention

Both the Latvian producers and officials agreed that the most important decisions should be coming from the EU institutions not from them. Quick responses from the EU institutions were expected because it was blamed for the raising in this particular situation. EU could have been blamed because no cooperation agreement and no transposition of laws took place before its enlargement. The criticism and appeals are mostly coming from producers not from DB itself: “For this situation responsible is EU bureaucrats, not Latvian officials” („Līdz oktobrim jāvienojas”, June 8, 2004); “Factually, Europe should make a decision what to do next in the next 24 hours” (”ES neizturi pirmo pārbaudījumu”", June 3, 2004).

At the same time DB shows that many common decisions are necessary before the EU institutions can actually make any actions which would match “the common EU position”. This leads to how bureaucratic is the union and how long time every action takes. First “there has been a decision made for a need to have more active position in question of Russia’s demands,” („Brisele sola rīkoties aktīvāk,” July 20, 2004) and only then some actions could come from EU officials. Because of the speed and possibly the interest, the EU institutions are “not giving official response” to worried Latvian representatives.

Although the EU considers the situation as serious and is surprised that Russia took her liberties for such measures, it “doesn’t consider that the incident (with animal origin production import ban) means a beginning of commerce war. But no war situation doesn’t eliminate a possibility to do some counter measures,” writes DB („Latvija solījumus vērtē skeptiski”, June 7, 2004).

After a couple of months of failure in technical discussions with Russia, Brussels realized that in the future it also needs “a political action to gain some progress,” („Brisele sola rīkoties aktīvāk”, July
This conclusion was expressed by an official: “If we from the side of EU are just going to continue discussions about technical questions and not giving Russia any political messages, then we will not reach the needed progress,” („Brisele sola rīkoties aktīvāk”, July 20, 2004). On the other hand Russian officials expressed that the EU is not sending political messages but it “is even ready for obliging attitude” towards Russia’s demands („Krievija un ES atsāk sarunas”, August 18, 2004). The conclusion was expressed before the EU has announced any solution for the situation. This controversy shows that possibly EU officials just speak what they would need although the actual results of negotiations might be clear already.

Latvia’s side individually active and skeptical

Latvia’s actors are rather constant in their activities. They negotiate, fulfill the requirements and discuss the problem, in order to find the quickest solution of renewing export in the previous amount.

Both officials and producers valuates situation as serious and they acknowledged that media with its impact could be useful and were “calling together mass media” to announce its position and search for help. However actors are also “skeptical” and “waiting” if Russia would change import requirements by itself, shows DB.

As the EU’s remedies to solve the problematic situation were not so active and persuasive then Latvia’s officials were trying to negotiate bilaterally with Russia. For these activities Latvia was criticized because an individual EU member state is not supposed to have any bilateral agreements. In the same time Latvia’s officials and DB is not giving much criticism to this fact, because any solution in this situation would be evaluated higher to common EU policy. Trying to justify itself an official says: “Latvia was not the only one which was negotiating with Russia” independently from EC („Krievijas lēmums radījis zaudējumus”, June 21, 2004). However diplomatic relations doesn’t need a justification says the field’s specialist: “Although it is first of all needed to be dealt between Moscow and Brussels, also our politicians and responsible officials may meet Russian colleagues, explain the situation, urge to find solutions and so on” („Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004).

However not only political or technical solutions needed to be find also “faults should be eliminated” concludes DB and its questioned businessman („Uzņēmēji: trūkumi ir jānovērš”, August 31, 2004). Most of the producers were trying to solve the problems and asking the inspectors for repetitive inspections. In the same time inspectors have been no just criticizing Latvian companies’ hygiene and other quality standards but for example “specialists have not liked” if the road next to factory is asphalted or not. Another entrepreneur says: “passed expertise
true reason was not care for product safety,” („Uzņēmēji: trūkumi ir jānovērš”, August 31, 2004). The inspectors themselves have also been rather open-minded in explaining the situation they: “admitted that decision will not be made by them but administration in Moscow” (Babris, 2004). “The “chess game” starts in Moscow to decide who will be allowed to export who not,” says another company’s representative („Uzņēmēji: trūkumi ir jānovērš”, August 31, 2004).

Later on some of the producers admitted that complications in exporting to Russia “are not a deadly problem” („Var pietrūkt laika”, June 29, 2004). For some on the other hand, it was as if they went bankrupt or tried to sell their companies.

A producer suggests to DB that in future Latvia’s officials should think further and determine such possible situations in both country mutual agreements if there would be any: “This question (of cancelling double inspection) should be put in mutual Latvia’s – Russia’s cross-border economical package. It is clear that it is political, not economical decision.” (””ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu””, June 3, 2004).

After the second Russia’s intervention into the business of Latvia’s fish producers and their chances of importing the production in its territory, fish producers “not being able to resolve the prolonged sprat crisis themselves” was “asking to the government and ambassadors for help” („Lūgs palīdzību valdībai un vēstniekiem”, December 19, 2006). Manufacturers showed that in October 2006 Latvia and Russia signed mutual economic cooperation agreements and that they would wish that Latvia’s officials would start “to put this agreement into the motion” („Lūgs palīdzību valdībai un vēstniekiem”, December 19, 2006). Otherwise they are not able always to fulfill whatever requirements Russia comes up with.

**Russia’s spitefulness**

Russia’s operations have been surprising and unpredictable but in the same time typically oppositional of what has been expected from it. In trade Russia doesn’t act like a country which would be ready to join global trade agreements and just waiting while it would be accepted. Russia is acting in its own economical and probably also political interests.

The big neighbor’s activities are characterized as “continuing playing”, “political pose” and “acting against the hopes” “punishing unfriendly neighboring states” („Neizslēdz Krievijas embargo”, April, 12, 2006) and “a political reverence”. Russia realizes that “further concession (to the EU) will not bring a positive result,” („Krievija turpina spītēties”, June 4, 2004) and it means that it will have to act independently, concerning its own interests. In the result Russia gains the most it has required and journalists can just valuate that it is “unyielding” in its activities.
Already since the EU enlargement Russia kept on expressing its opposition to it and remained critical on cooperation with new EU member states. If Russia could not stop the enlargement then it tried to show how irrational the old Europe’s decision was. One of involved Latvian entrepreneurs considers that: “These peripetias proofed Russia’s wish to show that it can “put on the knees” the old EU member states,” („Latvija solījumus vērtē skeptiski”, June 7, 2004). “It is difficult to understand Russia’s approach’s real reasons,” admits EU official. By saying this DB is showing that EU is “disappointed” in relations with Russia and indicate that “Russia has broken ... the agreement (to give transition period to the new EU member states),” („Krievija turpina spītēties”, June 4, 2004). Russia’s attitude to the new countries of the EU is compared to the grain cultivation where the new countries and their companies have been “sifted” like grains to decide which should be “rejected as defective” and which not.

After one certification round from Russian inspectors’ a Latvian official expresses that Latvian companies had to pass tougher restrictions than Russian ones. He doubted “if Russian companies are being asked to fulfill all the normative like the Latvian ones. These are double standards,” (””Sijā” eksportētājus”, July 28, 2004). This opinion leads to considerations that Russia’s remedies are unfair and unjustified.

Russia is so unpredictable that speaking in words of involved entrepreneur: “Plans are being changed every three hours,” („Var pietrūkt laika”, June 29, 2004). In one moment “Russia doesn’t want to speak” and in another “Moscow doesn’t express wish to communicate even in technical level,” („Krievija negrib runāt par gaļas importu no Eiropas Savienības”, June 21, 2004). This Russia’s ignorance doesn’t bring to solutions.

In DB, the discussions are rising whether Russia’s activities can be evaluated as political more than economical. “There is no logical explanation for this certification. These are political games,” acknowledge entrepreneurs („Var pietrūkt laika”, June 29, 2004). Likewise journalists are concluding that Russia is having “political aims” and it is not solving food quality issues but its economic protectionism aims.

After trying to solve the problematic issue in technical level an EU politician says that “the question has turned into a level of political administration” („Latvija solījumus vērtē skeptiski”, June 7, 2004). DB shows that the EU officials as well are considering Russia’s activities as something more than just national economic protectionist activity. Likewise Latvia’s officials indicate for a need of political action: “If there would be political will, this technical question could be solved in 15 minutes,” (””Zaudējumi būtu jāsedz ES”“, June 7, 2004) or in another case one of the field’s
specialists wonder: “We can only guess what political games are being played in reality” (“Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004).

At some moments in a name of a source DB admits that “Russia has its rights to postulate” (“Krievijai ir tiesības izvirzīt prasības”, June 10, 2004) and clarifies that “everything depends from Russia”: when it will be willing to hurry, it will hurry, when it be willing to negotiate it will. Possibly these bans and restrictions are not the last activities Russia will perform towards Latvia, scarily says a fish product producer representative: “When this will be over, another blackmailing series will arise from Russian side,” (“Var pietrūkt laika”, June 29, 2004).

When the EU managed to agree about common rules for meat product import in Russia, Russia expresses that it is “determined not to ban” European products further on. It doesn’t say that it will not ban but just determined. DB calls it “a mutual agreement”. This logic also just leads to admittance that Russia can make whatever decisions it wants and later can gracefully say that only probably the trade interruptions will not repeat from its side again.

5.5.5. Evaluation

This chapter reveals animal product import ban issues evaluation and judgment. DB shows that all involved persons in this situation are negatively affected but conflict situation creator Russia is enjoying its advantage.

One of the first responses from suffering producers was: “It is hard to tell who have missed to do something in this case,” (“ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu”, June 3, 2004). The comment shows that Latvian producers cannot find the guilty one in the raised situation. It includes that producers itself could have some responsibility for issue’s development.

It is not possible to evaluate how crucial the ban to Latvian producers was because everyone’s involvement level was different. In the same time the dominant frame is that the ban has caused significant impact on the current and on the possible future cooperation and trade: “This process is like long march in the desert but the cow dies not reaching the grass,” (“ES neiztur pirmo pārbaudījumu”, June 3, 2004). This comparison is used as a last sentence of an article, which gives a doom connotation to the message. It asks for a quick action from whoever is responsible, otherwise Latvia’s producers might suffer too much or even disappear: “If other producers (..) have diversified their markets, then fish production producers, especially can food producers have “put all the eggs in the same basket”, because almost 90% of their production is export to Russia. For canned fish products it’s not so easy to find other markets,” warns a quoted analyst (“Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004).
When the first conflict situation concluded, DB through a specialist admits that some of the Latvian producers were not serious enough to pass Russia’s demands. On the other hand most of the producers have been working according to the EU requirements and Russia’s standards and have fulfilled all the demands. Till the end journalists valuate this situation as “Russia’s problem” although the ones who are suffering are mostly the new EU member states entrepreneurs and states’ economics.

Most of the articles are finished with opinions and thoughts whether the issue or the conflict situation should be evaluated as political or not. Journalists are trying to find where the conflict actually grounds: “Is it possible that the roots of the current conflict should to be searched in the period before 1st of May when Russia expressed wish to sign trading agreements with every new EU member state separately?” (“Zaudējumi būtu jāsedz ES”, June 7, 2004). Not only journalists and producers but also politicians admit that the cause might have been deeper and grounded historically. For example, Russian speaking minority right question have been actual ever since Latvia regained its independence. Politicians have expressed worries that Russia might use the Russian speaking human right question to negotiate about economic relations with Latvia. A cited official admits to DB that previous or parallel political relations have left influence on both countries’ economic relations: “It happens rather often when justifications have to be found to their (Russia’s officials’) questions about minorities’ in Latvia” (“Vinets Veldre: saplēsties jau nav māksla”, September 2, 2004).

Although justifications against Russia’s offences are often searched they are also found. DB editor analyzes the situation: “We shouldn’t forget that Kremlin has always needed an outside enemy to brighten its own image, and Baltic’s has always been very convenient for this purpose. Moscow didn’t succeed to prove that in Latvia and Estonia human rights are being offended. It just seems that a just now a new era has started – to prove that the Baltic’s are just an economical debtor,” (“Absurdie miljoni”, October 5, 2004). Banning production import in Russia is just one of the tools of this era and Latvia’s producers and politicians should be aware from it when shaping cooperative relations with it.

Latvia is trying to gain economical independence from Russia, but not many alternatives and not many perspective markets are around it like Russia. A field’s specialists say to DB that “Russian market shouldn’t be evaluated too low as if it was cheap and without perspective. It is a big and growing market in any sphere. For long time there will be possibility to sell goods in Russia. Not without reason all the greatest world’s economic blocks are fighting for the market there,” (“Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004). Analysts are motivating producers to fight for
the prospective market even the cooperation nowadays doesn’t seem captivating: “Russia’s market is huge and it is practically impossible to fulfill it. We have to do as much as possible to enter and remain there. (..) We have to be smart and work with everyone” („Vinets Veldre: saplēsties jau nav māksla”, September 2, 2004). In the same time entrepreneurs say that: “business plan cannot be based on Russia” („Krievija izsijā arī igauņu miesniekus”, September 1, 2004). As in any business an entrepreneur have to be smart and as mentioned previously “not to put all the eggs in the same basket” and not to let the business be dependent from Russia’s benevolence.

On the other hand DB editors propose the producers to choose more reliable markets: “Yes, entering in other and more predictable markets takes a lot of time and also money. But maybe it is worth not to listen any more to weird stories about too high bensopiren amounts, nonstandard packaging shape, ugly labels and to what else not,” („Eksporta veicināšana rūp visiem, izņemot valdību”, June 19, 2007). Nonetheless DB opinion shouldn’t be evaluated as a dominant because it is expressed in only one article. Possibly it is rather an annoyed and hopeless comment after long year observation of the import situation with Latvian fish producers in Russia.

During all of the conflicting years the cooperation and discussions with Russia have continued in hope to renew the collaboration. Further on Russia’s behavior shouldn’t be underestimated and producers would be more prepared for different situations. Small Latvia’s officials realize that: “For Latvia’s animal originated food producers Russia’s market is more important than for Russia’s food producers – Latvia’s market. Because of these reasons Latvia have to agree to some kind of compromise,” („Krievija turpina spītēties”, June 4, 2004). The main guideline is to find a compromise because Latvia is not as powerful as Russia and cooperation for Latvia brings more gain than a conflict: “It is not an art to fight,” emphasizes a journalist („Vinets Veldre: saplēsties jau nav māksla,” September 2, 2004).

In the end DB tries to find an economic reason, explanation and prevision of further economic relations with Russia: “Russia just wants a trustful and more importantly partner who is capable of paying.” („Lielvalstis neatteiksies no sadarbības ar Krieviju”, April 26, 2007). However Russia’s partners always have to remember that it will not let herself to be blackmailed or offended.

On the other hand economic or business reasoning is frightening for a small country even it’s a part of the EU if there is no actual cooperation agreement. As with the case of Nord Stream pipe line, individual interests are going first: “Russia’s and the EU developed states’ economic interests realization will not be stopped because there is not a certain agreement (EU-Russia’s cooperation agreement),” („Lielvalstis neatteiksies no sadarbības ar Krieviju”, April 26, 2007). DB admits that
the new EU member states unfortunately can just remain in “looser role” although it’s complementary to try to fight for the rights.

5.5.6. EU role

The EU and its institutions have not had very pleasing role in DB publications. Since Latvia joined the EU also the problems started with import into Russia’s territory. First the EU was blamed for not having agreed with Russia about mutual relations after enlargement but later criticism affected the EU responsiveness towards requests for help. The EU’s role is evaluated as significant and in the end crucial.

DB journalists show that “EC didn’t manage to agree” about import conditions with Russia before enlargement but later also not letting forget that exactly the institution EC was actively negotiating and trying to gain some transition period and not to cause so high losses for the producers.

In most of the articles DB expresses wish for the EU institutions to act in name of all the countries. The newspaper is raising hopes and spreading idea that the new Europe should check if it is full-scale participant in this union or not: “Maybe pressure from the new member states will be enough strong so this question would be solved soon,” („Inspicēs ražotājis“, May 15, 2004). If the new Europe is a real member than it means that it also has a power of action which it should use. DB shows that with a collective action EU decisions can be changed and that probably Latvia should also try to rely on them.

DB enjoys the situation that Latvia now is a part of the EU and that an outside actor as Russia cannot just attack the country and not receive a reply: “By posing such claims (Russia willing to bill Latvia for soviet currencies changes) to Baltic’s including Latvia, Russia factually is posing claims to EU together,” („Absurdie miljoni“, October 5, 2004). This editor’s conclusion is a proposal to remember the new status of Latvia to promote braver actions in conflicts with Russia.

Also Poland’s activities versus Russia’s meat ban has made DB to write about the EU role in representing all member states’ opinions and to consider one state’s problems as “a problem to all the EU” („Lielvalstis neatteiksies no sadarbības ar Krieviju“, April 26, 2007). DB even thanks Poland for its active initiative in fighting for its rights: “Have to compliment Poland’s action for at least trying to use its participation in EU as an instrument to fight for its rights and show that one country’s problems can turn out to be a problem for the whole EU. At least in this way it can be possible to make Brussels’ to discuss about this question,” („Lielvalstis neatteiksies no sadarbības ar Krieviju“, April 26, 2007). DB editors agree that Poland’s actions might not change much in the
EU – Russia’s relations and that without a new mutual cooperation agreement collaboration will not change. The new mutual agreement’s signing is “lasted”, emphasizes the newspaper.

On the contrary in some articles DB shows interest in acting separately from the EU institutions as if blaming them for idleness. Interestingly that the newspaper from time to time approves quick solutions to a problem even if its opposite from the common EU principles: “There is a letter in preparation to Russia’s Minister of agriculture Aleksey Gordejev, in which there will be an appeal not to evaluate all the EU as united country group to which automatically can be adjusted common market conditions. The letter would also ask for evaluation of each member states possibilities to provide production quality which fits to market demands,” („Krievija šokē ES”, June 3, 2004). This letter would ask Russia to give Latvia and other new member states different rules than to the rest of the EU.

However even DB supports individual actions out of the EU control it realizes and actively publishes opinions about the EU crucial role in relations with Russia: “Now everything is on behalf of EU,” („Krievija turpina spītēties”, June 4, 2004). It also considers what could happen “if the big ones (EU and Russia) will not agree,” then Latvia would suffer and lose money till they find a solution („Krievija nevar sevi apgādāt pilnībā”, July 6, 2004).

5.5.7. Role of a journalist

In this case journalists have mostly served as mediators between Latvian, the EU and Russian officials and producers to show the discussions, negotiations, disagreements and disappointments. There have been especially many officials interviewed to cover the case as putting the power into their hands to solve the situation. Also couple specialist articles were published to allow explaining the situation better and possibly giving suggestions for further action.

The low journalists’ involvement in the case could be explained in proximity of the issue and the foreign economic policy decision making process. In solving this issue journalists are not able to be present in any moment and in both sides of the actor public actions. Journalists stick to their side of the story and represent the other only occasionally when the access is possible. In the end the story is set mostly against the aggressor and there is expressed direct support to the defender which is either individual producers or the government.

However once after three years of troubles with exports to Russia DB starts to criticize the government of not caring of “export promotion” and that it has been lacking fast political response like memorandum in the moment when it was needed: “Was there a memorandum? It was sent only after several months and only in circumstances when everybody in our country is worried about
terribly negative import – export balance” („Eksporta veicināšana rūp visiem, izņemot valdību”, June 19, 2007). This reaction to inaction seems to come dilatory when realizing that three years have passed and Latvian producers still are having troubles with similar issues and no serious changes have been taking part.

In this case study journalists mostly take role of business supporters not as policy makers. In no moment they proposed actual norms in a cooperation agreement between both countries as well as in the common EU – Russia cooperation agreement.

5.5.8. General frame

The situation with the animal origin food import ban, mostly concerning canned fish or the smoked sprat, tells about the new EU member states that have experienced unfair or unexpected competition in cooperation with Russia. In this failure the responsible one is Russia with its economic and political aims and the EU institutions which were lacking diplomatic action in solving this problem before it actually developed. From time to time also producers have admitted their fault or being blamed for not being enough caring.

Latvia’s mutual historical and actual relations with Russia are one of the explained reasons why the situation has developed in this way. Often it is discussed what impact history has on Russia’s defined requirements. Mostly Russian speaking minority rights issue is mentioned as a possible social-political reason for that. It is clearly showed that Latvia’s joining the EU has caused certain opposition: “Already after the EU expansion Russia immediately showed its attitude towards the neighbors, by causing problems to the new EU member states to export animal originating production to this Eastern country” („Absurdie miljoni”, October 5, 2004).

Russia’s remedies towards Latvia’s product import is seen as accidental or hasty and unpredictable: “Last year in one day Russia announced that in its territory for now one will be forbidden Latvian companies’ “Brīvais vilnis” and “Gamma A” tinned production” („Eksporta veicināšana rūp visiem, izņemot valdību”, June 19, 2007). In one day straight after Latvia’s joining the EU, economic relations with Russia became directly unfriendly and unreliable. Latvia’s producers acknowledge that they were aware that they have to be careful in cooperation with this Eastern neighbor but still they admit if having hope of successful cooperation, which made them disappointed.

Although historical relations are taken into account when evaluating both country economic relations, DB shows that Russia has its rights to act in this way and it has its own economic justifications and reasoning for that. On the other hand Latvian producers are willing to receive help
from political institutions and higher level organizations help in solving the situation. Help is received and active negotiations between responsible institutions in Latvia and in Russia were taking place. Also EU institutions were participating in solving the conflict but it took a lot of time. It is explained either as bureaucratic breaking of necessary actions or as inattentiveness towards the new EU country misfortunes. In the same time also local Latvian government was criticized but that happened only in the end of the analyzed conflict period – in 2007.

DB devotes many articles to analyze Russia’s actions and to express opinions how the issue is valuated. Not so much have been discussed how to prevent Latvian and the other EU countries’ producers from similar situations, how to prevent threat and how to diversify cooperation markets no to find out ourselves in such dependence from Russia. Mostly short term solutions as searched for and no wide discussions about cooperation agreements have been made. That might show also the newspapers and journalists ability to participate in this event as an actor with an influence.

Most of the criticism about Russia’s activities came at the first wave of Latvian, Polish and other production import ban. At this time more than one EU country was involved and the EU institutions were responsible to solve the situation. The second wave didn’t raise so many official protests, probably because as the restrictions were justified with real chemical analysis although they were more harming and losses bringing to Latvian producers. It means that the EU institutions have a voice in this newspaper.

Most of the news articles about this case are told from the side of involved and/or suffering companies or Latvian state authorities which mostly express similar opinions. Both trying to cooperate and solve the situation. When expressing its own opinion in editorials DB supports the leading opinion of the situation as well. Only after three years of support criticism raises. Shared, similar opinions by sources and by journalists lead to convincing and shared frame, which is persistent and doesn’t raise doubts. The produced news and editorials are providing complete frames with information and doesn’t lack any side’s viewpoint. Although as mentioned earlier Russia’s opinion is featured less but that’s a specification of foreign economic news when a newspaper cannot provide a reporter across its borders.

The analyzed case is framed and as showed in general frame it is shared throughout the analyzed four year period which makes it work and possibly leave impact on the readers.
6. Conclusions and discussion

6.2. Stories with frames and functions

The core preposition of the framing theory is that framing is affects press readers understanding of the world (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001), including how to evaluate and what opinions to have about the economic relations between Latvia and Russia. Framing is a hidden message from the journalists (Van Gorp, 2005) and it gives cognitive meanings and meaningful structures to shape the readers attitude about certain processes thus giving the power to the news, commentaries (Reese & Gandy and Grant, 2001) and media organizations.

The findings of my thesis show that Entman’s (2004) proposed definition is fulfilled and the DB news articles and editorials are repeatedly setting similar functions when covering political and economical events, issues or actors: defining effects or conditions as problematic; identifying causes; conveying a moral judgment and endorsing solutions or improvements. In most of the cases more than just two of those functions are performed by frames, thus making them more persistent and powerful.

DB journalists have been using the same frame narratives throughout the analyzed period. Yet the analysis doesn’t show in which moment DB started searching for the best and most suitable narratives to frame and represent Latvia – Russia economic relations. The analysis show that the frames might have developed already at the beginning of the analyzed period with Latvia’s joining EU and the animal origin product export problems to Russia. These issues already then created frames let the journalists compare the new actualities with the old ones. In the result similar frames have been produced by DB.

The research showed that the time period from 2004 till 2007 was an important and significant period of time to analyze and look back as many policy shaping events took place. 2009 is also the 5 year anniversary of Latvia’s joining the EU and the NATO. Another reason which made the analyzed period worth to study is the importance to review Russia’s impact before and after Latvia’s joining the EU. Mostly the content analysis shows how many discussions have been made about Latvia’s joining the two organizations and how Russia was trying to oppose or at least delay this process. Also the analyzed case studies show that the problematic issues mostly are connected with the new power relations after the EU expansion. My research shows that Latvia’s joining the EU caused dissatisfaction from the side of Russia. Russia tried to set a conflict between the old and the new EU member states. Apparently it didn’t succeed in most of the cases. However in the Nord
Stream pipe line case Russia managed to shape bilateral relations with Germany and make it act independently from the rest of the EU, which caused a lot of criticism from DB.

Since the end of 2007 no significant, disputable events between Latvia and Russia took place. Possibly Russia now tends to be thinking broader in cooperating with the whole EU not with single countries were its obvious influence is decreasing. The post Soviet countries now are a part of a broader EU policy (Menkiszak, 2007) which means that the individual revenge conflicts might decrease in the future. The analyzed period seems to be a transition period between Russia and Latvia and possibly also towards the other Baltic States. The other post Soviet countries which are not yet a part of the EU still have to struggle and pass this period. For example, Belorussia is the latest victim of Russia’s economical revenge plan by stopping its dairy product export to Russia in June 2009.

6.3. Historical conditions

Conditions and causes in all the analyzed cases have similar traits. In most of the cases the cause of the issue is the historical political and economical relations with Russia. In the energy policy cases it is fear of repeating Russia’s dominance and influence in Latvia and in the end dependency which might limit the freedoms of the country. In the border queues and fish product import cases the conditions are linked with the current political relations between the both countries. There are many suspicions, doubts and mistrust between Latvia and Russia to start working together and cooperate. In the same time there are reasons for caution as the both countries do not miss a chance to attack each other or “give hints with a stick”. At the same time Latvia and the rest of the EU have to take into account also non existence of a new complete cooperation agreement between the EU and Russia, as well the fact that Russia still is not a member of the WTO. These facts warn and make Latvia assume that there might be disagreements and the problems might be solved rather differently from commonly accepted ones in the WTO. Latvian producers, politicians and even journalists have to consider how far can they struggle and fight with Russia not to remain greater losers than they already are. They have to be cautious not to offend the neighbor, not to raise new threats and restrictions. Latvia has to remember that it needs cooperation with Russia more than Russia needs it with Latvia. However DB raises hope in the readers and expects the situation to improve. The newspaper shows that the officials and same as the entrepreneurs had expectations before that Russia might come out with restrictions to affect relations with Latvia. In the same time even by being aware that cooperation with Russia might worsen, not all of the producers and officials were ready for that. DB shows that in some cases it was too late to react, that Latvia missed its chance to be a part from the Nord Stream pipe line project; that some fish producers lost their
market because of being too lazy to react early enough. In conclusion DB let the readers realize that anyhow the solutions are in the hands of Latvia, just the political will to act is needed, to act for the rights and the best solutions. The newspaper is encouraging entrepreneurs and trying to be a rational observer and evaluator between all the actors.

6.4. Actor interests

The main actors of the analyzed cases are Russia and Latvia with their officials and companies. In many cases also the EU institutions are a significant actor, however in none of the cases it is directly the main actor. There are also various minor actors as Germany and its chancellor in the Nord Stream case, as well as Poland in the fish product import restriction case.

Latvia’s actors are mainly the government and other responsible institutions which are broadly criticized in DB. Criticism has reached the actor irresponsibility, self interest, slowness and the bureaucratic attitude. One of the most explicit traits of the newspaper is a caution when evaluating official suggestions. DB is observing and analyzing whether no one gains out of the proposed solutions. The gains can be divided by political and business ones and both are specific for Latvia’s economical and political elites, which are sharply criticized by DB in support of transparent and competitive business. On the other hand other actors as NGOs and businessmen in DB are seen as sufferers, with a bad previous experience, alert and also lacking knowledge and money. They are seen as skeptical and hopeful in the same time. Actors hope that the business relations with Russia can change in favor of Latvia or at least rational cooperation can develop. Both bureaucrats and involved businessmen are searching for situation solutions but often they turn out to be irrational, utopian and naive. DB indicates that changes are possible but there is a lack of political will, already fulfilled promises and good organization.

In the same time Russia is seen as an authority which is giving the last word. It is framed as conditional, difficult to approach and threatening when it doesn’t gain what it wants. Russia is “demonstrating muscles”, trying to use its dominant position and choosing cooperation partners or ignoring and punishing them to reach its aims. Russia is “THE neighboring country”, risking with the relations and is the source of fear to the surrounding partners by using power politics. It is not participating in discussions about painful questions but keeps on remembering the Russian speaking minorities in the Baltic States. Russia is scrupulous and not afraid from EU and its possible measures. Russia doesn’t believe that its restrictive or expanding actions can anyhow leave impact on its interests of joining the WTO or being a partner in further cooperation. The business field in Russia is clearly connected with the political field and that makes it unpredictable and unreliable. Russia is acting against EU’s expectations and hopes, as well as it is holding a political pose in
order to gain stronger influence in the EU energy sector and it is also succeeding in it. In the situations when Russia’s aims are interrupted it doesn’t mind counterattacking the “guilty” ones or just waiting while the opposition calms down and then continues what was started.

However studies show that there are contradictory assumptions about Russia’s power politics and economical sanction usage to gain political weight. Dombrovsky & Vanags show that there are no clear proofs of strong correlation between political conflicts and mutual trade between Russia and the Baltic countries. On the contrary other scholars (Raik & Palosaari, 2004; Menkiszak, 2007.) indicate that there are significant traits of political disagreement on the practice of economic policy between both countries. Even Latvian politicians admit that neutral relations with Russia could leave better influence on trade and in general on economic relations between both countries than conflicts.

I cannot affirm that Russia is playing just political games with Latvia but my research shows that Russia is using every possible way to turn the trade agreements in its business elite’s interests although against the WTO practices. Here the question rises whether Russia is really interested to have a well regulated trade agreement with the EU or not? Without agreements Russia can and still uses different measures and standards from the EU. On the other hand Russia is interested also in fast state’s economical development, so it is possibly using globally unacceptable methods to stimulate its local business while it can. Russia will probably use these measures until they will fulfill their political aims.

6.5. Journalists as evaluators, not policy makers

Even though my analysis results indicate strong evidence of persistent and shared framing, some findings do not support the initially asked questions. Especially it refers to the question of the role of journalists’. My assumption was that journalists are trying to influence the political procedure of policy making and the implementation. In the result the research proved that journalists were mainly trying to influence the speed or just trying to attract attention to certain issues. The cases of actual suggestion and evaluation have been very rare and rather non-significant. DB journalists are strong criticizers of the decision makers and partly also not supporting the official position of Latvia. The journalists are repeatedly asking for solutions in the name of the entrepreneurs and the business sector. DB criticism and at all opinions should have influenced its readers and possibly raised support to the newspapers proposed suggestions. Probably DB article framing analysis is not the best way to analyze journalists’ roles and look if they have any policy making role. Rather interviews with the journalists and editors would have given the answers and explanations to these considerations. However then the economic policy issues itself might not be studied.
6.6. EU significance

The EU turned out to have a larger role than I previously considered. In three cases out of five EU plays significant role which has a power of influencing the event or issue. Role of the EU institutions appear in the situations when Latvia needs help to solve the problems. In these cases the EU have a role of encouraging people to act, give suggestions and even solve the problems. The EU has also an investor or financer role as it is not a secret that Latvia’s officials are often considering whether EU institutions could help with extra money. If not with the finances then the EU institutions are mediators and negotiators between Latvia and Russia. Interesting that with the enlargement the EU was “tricked” into closer cooperation with Russia, as it became a closer neighbor to Russia than before. The EU institutions tried to serve for common interests and policies towards Russia however this aim only succeeded partly in the analyzed cases.

The EU institutions have rather negative evaluation in DB articles. The evaluation is negative already in the analyzed first case when EU failed in having a new partnership agreement with Russia. It meant that straight after Latvia’s joining the union it had to experience trading interruptions because of non existing agreements of how the trade should be held between Russia and the new EU member states. Later the EU institutions were criticized for not doing anything perceptible but just listening, negotiating while the business continued to suffer. DB discusses whether the attitude from the old EU countries and institutions towards Latvia and other new member states is equal or different. The research shows that altogether the attitude is the same, however doubts remain. The inequality is rather strong argument for Latvia also further on in other policy questions. In conclusion the EU bureaucracy apparatus is characterized as too much time consuming and delayed. This aspect is especially significant for Latvia, as the businesses there are not having old and strong traditions, thus any mistake and failure is affecting many seriously and almost begging for solutions.

All in all DB shows that the economic relations between Latvia and Russia are complicated and not unambiguous at all. DB creates a lot of criticism and pessimism all around the analyzed cases. It shows how companies are “dying in the dessert” and disappearing from the scene because of “putting all the eggs in the same basket”. DB shows how backward Latvia is and how slowly any changes are created. Surely DB is interested in Latvian companies to continue cooperation with Russia by trying to find a legal protection for them but meanwhile attracting as much attention as possible and involving the EU institutions as possible settlers.

The newspaper acknowledges that it is necessary to improve the relations between the both countries so the business relations would be more foreseeable and predictable. DB suggests that
with united forces both inside the countries and also in the EU level would possibly bring productive cooperation. Latvia should not be afraid to fight for its rights but should use its common sense to improve the situation and be diplomatic. DB admits that it is the last moment to think about the energy dependency from Russia even Latvia can already be named as “a gas slave”. The newspaper indicates that Russia wins most of the competitions and argues that the both countries go through, because Russia’s economic gains stands over anything else in these relations. Russia is careless and enjoying its advantages when playing “chess games”, while Latvia seems not to be in the game at all but just queuing to play. DB shows that Latvia has to play this game and have to find compromises in it, trying not to offend Russia but still trying not to remain a looser. Latvia has to be smart enough to use Russia’s market and the geographical situation for developing its own business and the state economy. However if Latvia’s entrepreneurs find a possibility they are advised to search for more reliable markets and not to base all the business in relation with Russia thus possibly losing both money and honor.

The new political order after the EU enlargement brought changes in the EU thinking and has increased Russia’s influence in the EU region. EU representatives seem to be aware of the changes and are slowly talking about political remedies towards economical unfairness and discrimination. Nonetheless no practical changes have occurred during the analyzed period.

The research showed that in most of the analyzed cases the facts and opinions are expressed mostly from the side of the entrepreneurs. The political, social or any other side of the issues were not so much taken in account as either irrelevant or as a part of the framing. Still DB is especially concentrating on what is bothering business and economics related audience, so it is reducing or narrowing its viewpoint which is relevant to its readers.

6.7. Personal reflection

The empirical research for me was more intriguing, especially while analyzing commentaries not the news articles. Noteworthy that those DB commentaries are not signed by a journalist, so it is supposed to be perceived as editorial opinion. These opinions were always bright full of expressions, not saving anybody but just following the business and the state’s economy logic. They were a great source of analytical material and their positioning is capturing my attention for possible further researches.

In my opinion the chosen Entman’s framing analysis method has been successfully realized as the author has rather clearly explained how to structure and oversee the analysis and the results. However as Cappella & Jamieson indicates the next researcher of the same or similar object
probably would have come up with different frames as it’s not possible to duplicate them, because of the researchers own influence.

My research has some shortcomings as well. First of all my analyzed data limits the generalization of the topic. I have been analyzing only five cases out of many possible ones and in the other possible issues the economic relations between the both countries might have been disclosed differently. However the previous researches in the field show that the general context and experiences were repeating year by year. On the other hand the carried content analysis was including all the publications of the time concerning Russia and it gives a strong support for choosing exactly these cases.

I attempted to analyze the most representative business press in Latvia but for a wider spectrum and more complete analysis it might have been useful to analyze also the most influential Russian speaking business newspaper in Latvia “Bizness & Baltija”. This newspaper was left out of my analysis due to imperfect Russian language skills which are binding for framing and any other textual analysis. Nevertheless both newspapers are economic and business newspapers thus their auditory is supposed to be the same and the message from them shouldn’t differ incredibly. DB in its articles evaluates negative and positive effects also on the businessmen in Russia and it has never been distinguishing the owner ethnical belonging when framing the issues.

Business and finance media studies are especially significant in the time of economical crisis and depression. People are more intensively searching for suggestions, explanations and ideas of how to improve their living conditions and this kind of expert medium as DB is there to help and lead them. However it is particularly important to realize the directions the consumed medium can lead you to. Also it is essential to realize what policy directions are the medium supporting and participating to develop. This thesis is in a way giving a review to receive the answers to the previously asked questions.

The EU issues, regionalism and common policies in order to resolve or develop certain policies and practices are not a popular topic of what Latvians are thinking and talking about a lot. This thesis proves that although the EU and its institutions are often forgotten, DB and the interviewed sources increasingly do relay on it. This realization is possibly indicating changes in the thinking, although Latvia has been in the EU just for five years. Probably further on this reliability might show out also in the policy making practices, including further Latvia – Russia economic policies.

DB is often criticizing the local political style and ethics which are lacking dignity from the entrepreneurs and possibly from any Latvian. This criticism show that DB and other media
organizations still have increasingly many tasks to do to check and possibly balance the power. Meanwhile the newspaper itself is and will be balancing on a border of power and neutral business field interests representation of which the readers should be aware.
Bibliography

Published sources:


Other sources:


Appendices

Appendix 1: Framing classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of frame</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Political actors (individuals, groups, nations)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining problematic effects/conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying cause/agent</td>
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<td>Endorsing remedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conveying moral judgement</td>
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</table>

Functions and objects of news frames (Entman 2004: 24)
Appendix 2: Content analysis categories

1. Medium
2. Date
3. Theme:
   a) Discussions about Russian schools in Latvia
   b) Latvia joining NATO
   c) Russia’s talks about its port capacity increase
   d) North stream building
   e) Russia’s - Latvia’s border agreement
   f) Latvia’s joining European Union
   g) Queue on the Russia-Latvia’s border
   h) Putin’s second presidency
   i) Production companies consider moving to Russia
   j) Russia’s gas
   k) EU food import limited in Russia
   l) Russia’s railroad tariff politics
   m) Wood industry and Russia
   n) Fish product import in Russia
   o) Transit between Latvia and Russia
   p) Energy independence
   q) 9th May celebration in Russia
   r) Oligarch Berezovsky visiting Latvia
   s) Ventspils nafta sale
   t) New EU Russia Cooperation agreement