Summary

The subject of the dissertation is the bilateral energy interdependence between the European Union and Russia in the period of 2004-2014, which was supposed to lead naturally to mutual convergence, whereas in the last dozen or so years, it began to be accompanied by ever more frequent and intense disputes. Both actors began to demonstrate that interdependence became a political burden for them, which was reflected by visible strive to gradually weaken ties, mainly through the diversification of markets and sources of supply, as well as number of other political and legal initiatives.

The objective of the work is to explain factors that influenced such developments and to modify the way in which interdependence is examined, by supplementing the dominant quantitative analysis of qualitative components, in particular by the category of economic and political costs. Previous research has often led to contradictory results, foreseeing either charitable or fatal impact of interdependence on bilateral relations. This observation has led to the conviction that quantitative indicators – increased trade, investment and capital flows – are insufficient for drawing conclusions and other variables determined the impact of mutual ties on both actors’ behavior.

The main hypothesis tested in this dissertation is as follows. The way in which increasing interdependence affects relations between the EU and Russia is not a simple function of the quantitative intensification of relations. It is embedded in the asymmetry of the actors' sensitivity and vulnerability to changes in the conditions of cooperation as well as in the way how political, social and economic costs of breaking or restricting cooperation are calculated which is determined by structural properties of the actors. The basic category for measuring the mentioned asymmetry is the acceptable political costs of changing the state of the relationship. These costs are read differently in an authoritarian state and a democratic state. Energy interdependence is not only an external phenomenon for given actors, but primarily a process co-shaped by them to either minimize the costs of potential changes in the terms of co-operation or maximize partner’s costs.

The first chapter discusses the evolution of reflections on interdependence from the earliest deliberations to the contemporary ones, both characterized by great diversity. Energy interdependence is then discussed as a specific manifestation of economic interdependence with significant political implications, particularly for relations between the European Union and Russia.

The second chapter examines the problem of measurement of interdependence. Divergent definitions of interdependence translate into different attempts to estimate its scale. Various methods of measuring interdependence and the conclusions drawn from them are presented, complemented by an original attempt to build a bridge between the scale and intensity of bilateral ties and policy choices. To fulfill this function the category of political costs of the potential change in the state of relations of interdependent entities is selected. Presented methods are then applied to measure the interdependence between the European Union and Russia. Finally, the problem of the political costs of the existing interdependence between the two actors is elaborated on.

Chapters 3 and 4 outline the analysis of the European Union and Russia's strategies and policies in relation to their interdependence. Both chapters begin with an analysis of the way in which interdependence is conceptualized by both actors. Further the role of energy interdependence in the strategic documents of both entities is analyzed. What follows and completes these chapters is the analysis of the practical steps undertaken by both actors towards interdependence to shed a light on the relation between the perception of the phenomenon and the political practice. Final chapter outlines general conclusions of the research, verification of the initial hypothesis alongside reflections on the need for more in-depth study of bilateral interdependence.

Key words: European Union, Russia, interdependence, energy interdependence, political costs, economic cooperation, international trade, energy security