The thesis analyzes key aspects of Russia's European energy policy. Energy in this thesis is limited to two commodities: oil and natural gas. Russia's European energy policy is not homogenous and varies from country to country, from region to region. Nevertheless, energy remains one of the strongest links between the European Union and Russia. The link is so strong that it allows to speak of interdependency as a distinctive feature of the EU-Russia relationship. Unable to break it, both sides concentrate on the management of the interdependency.

The main question of the thesis is the rationalities of Russia's European energy policy before and after the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union. The accession of ten new member states mainly from the Central and Eastern Europe, that once were either satellites or members of the Soviet Union, have created new opportunities and challenges for Russia's European energy policy. Russia's policy is rational and pragmatic as it is aimed at optimising the dialogue with country's most important partners and maximizing profits. On the other hand, new member states from the CEE and Russia often struggle to find a common language, while the legacy of the controversial past and CEE's high dependency on Russian energy imports often hinder the progress towards a rational and pragmatic relationship.

It is practically impossible to analyze the EU-Russia relationship without knowing the context of Russian domestic politics, especially in the sphere of energy. There is a clear difference between Yeltsin's and Putin's approaches towards the energy issue. For President Putin the energy plays an important role in strengthening the role of the state as well as increasing Russia's influence in the EU and worldwide. It is equally important to shed some light on Russia's energy policies towards key European transit countries that are not members of the EU - Ukraine and Belarus. These countries also represent a challenge for Russian energy policies and the EU-Russia relationship as both are more easily integrated into the European project than their giant eastern neighbour.

Conclusions are presented in the form of three scenarios for the future. All three scenarios are based on the Eurocentric point of view. A short-term scenario to 2010 envisages a situation where both sides are looking for ways to get an upper hand in the management of the interdependency and improving its position vis-à-vis its partner. A long-term negative scenario to 2020 envisages a deterioration of the EU-Russia relationship and Moscow's slow drifting towards more intense interaction with East Asian region, especially surging China. A long-term positive scenario to 2020 envisages a political rapprochement between the EU and Russia where energy cooperation is considered a mutual asset, thus creating a sense of stability, at least in one part of the world.

The theoretical background of the thesis is based on the assumptions of Neorealism, a dominating meta-theory in International Relations, and Rational Choice Theory. The assumptions are often used and discussed implicitly. Russia's alleged deviation from classical western interpretations of rationalism is also discussed.

Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Key words
Russia
European Union
Ukraine
Belarus
energy policy
energy dialogue
eastern enlargement
Neorealism
Rational Choice Theory
Venäjä - energiapoliitikka
Euroopan unioni - laajeneminen
Ukraina
Valkovenäjä
energiapoliitikka - neuvottelut
kansainvälistet suhteet - neorealismi
kansainvälistet suhteet - rationalistisen valinnan teoria

Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited