



# Russian Energy Strategy in the European Union, the Former Soviet Union Region, and China

*Stylianos A. Sotiriou*

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## **Russian Energy Strategy in the European Union, the Former Soviet Union Region, and China**

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This book places Eurasia in its entirety within a single explanatory framework and examines, for the first time to that extent, Russia as a Eurasian energy power in its affairs with the two main geopolitical players of the region, the EU and China. Part of this geopolitical space is the Former Soviet Union (FSU) region which shares deep historical-political ties with Russia and constitutes the necessary crossing for the latter's natural gas supplies en route to the EU market. In this way, an energy triangle is established, with Russia at the top angle, the EU in the left angle, China in the right angle and the FSU region the median. Following the scheme, three bipolar relationships emerge, Russia-FSU region, Russia-EU and Russia-China, with each of them representing a different type of bilateral cooperation. In the first case there is an *asymmetric* relationship with one actor being overly powerful, in terms of energy, to impose its conditions, economic and political, on the other. In the second case there is a *symmetric* relationship with both actors having equal means of pressure at their disposal. Finally, in the third case there is a *balanced* relationship with both actors trading on an equal basis. Within this framework, one of the dominant theoretical debates in the field of International Relations, that between Neorealism and Neoliberal Institutionalism (the so-called 'Neo-Neo' debate) seeks to shed light on the governing rationale beyond Putin's Russia foreign energy policy *vis-à-vis* the FSU region, the EU and China.

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