
Russia and Global Climate Governance



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Abstract

Russia, as the fourth largest greenhouse-gas emitter in the world, and a major supplier of fossil fuels causing these emissions, played a decisive role in the enforcement of the Kyoto Protocol, the main instrument of global climate policy so far. Domestically, serious political measures to combat climate change have yet to be taken. Thus, Russia's performance in global climate politics indicates that goals other than genuinely environmental ones, such as political or economic benefits, are the main motivation of Russia's participation. Also, Russia's national pride and its status as a great power are at stake here. This paper scrutinizes Russia's stance in global climate politics, offering an overview of Russia's engagement in international climate politics and its domestic climate policy. In the second part of the paper, Russia's engagement in global environmental politics is discussed in the context of Russia's world status and the great-power concept. Accordingly, the paper aims to shed light on how and why Russia behaves in global climate politics in the way it does. This may be of interest to actors in international environmental politics in general, and relevant to future climate negotiations in particular.

Introduction

Anthropogenic climate change is a major environmental problem likely to cause serious changes in the living conditions of people worldwide. Burning carbon-based fuels and emitting greenhouse gases contribute to global warming, with a forecasted average increase of surface temperature of up to four degrees centigrade by the end of the century.¹ As the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) from 2013 says, we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change in extreme weather patterns, particularly drought and flood, and it is likely to get worse during this century.

The cornerstone of global regulation of climate change was set in the form of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The convention was amended five years later by the Kyoto Protocol² in which industrialized countries committed to reducing their collective emissions of six key greenhouse gases (GHGs) by an average of at least five percent from the level of 1990 emissions by 2012. The protocol was originally meant to establish a permanent regime that would update the stringency and coverage of the commitments over time. However, this intention waned as countries such as the US dropped out of the convention even before the end of the first commitment period (2008-2012), and for the second period (2013-2020) only some countries adopted further targets. Negotiations for a more comprehensive agreement are going on since 2011.

Russia is an important actor in international climate politics: besides being the fourth largest GHG emitter in the world, Russia is a major supplier of fossil fuels, which are the main single source of greenhouse gases on a global scale. It has been calculated that the economic losses caused by climate change, in the form of, for example, drought and shrinking crop yields in Russia, could rise to

¹ The IPCC 2013 report can be found at <www.climatechange2013.org/report/review-drafts/>.

² United Nations, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992, <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>>; United Nations, *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1998, <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>>.

between US\$ 200 and 700 billion per year within only a few years,³ indicating that Russia would also be among the main victims of climate change. On a more positive note, Russia's forests are a significant sink of carbon dioxide, thus alleviating the problem of accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere.

Consequently, Russia has various political and economic incentives for participation in international climate politics. Russia played a decisive role in the enforcement of the Kyoto Protocol, as without Russia's ratification the protocol would have not entered into force at all. This point to foot-dragging concerning the ratification in order to gain better economic and political benefits. Russia likes to emphasize its role as a global leader in the negotiations for the terms of a new post-Kyoto climate agreement, although it withdrew from the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Domestically, however, serious political measures with regard to climate change have not been taken. In spite of a number of recently approved legal initiatives to increase energy efficiency and support the development of renewable energy, in addition to setting a target of 25 percent emissions reduction by 2020 compared to 1990, Russia's domestic climate policy falls well behind those of most developed countries. In sum, Russia's performance in global climate politics indicates the importance of goals other than genuinely environmental ones, such as political or economic benefits, as the main motivation of Russia's participation. Also Russia's national pride and its status as a great power are at stake here.

³ A. Davydova, "Russia's Silence on Climate Change Helps No One", *theconversation.com*, 25 November 2013, <<http://theconversation.com/russias-silence-on-climate-change-helps-no-one-20661>>.

Russia's Engagement in International Climate Policy: the Kyoto Protocol and Beyond

The Kyoto Protocol

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992 identifies the problem of climate change and the basic outlines of the actions needed. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 more specifically sets legally binding targets for greenhouse-gas emission reductions by each industrialized country, and defines their responsibilities to assist developing countries with tackling the problem of climate change.⁴ The protocol is a sophisticated agreement that, on top of the legally binding emission reduction targets, takes into account the contributions of carbon sinks⁵ through land-use, land-use change and forestry activities. It also establishes market-based tools, mechanisms that include emissions trade, Joint Implementation (JI), and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).⁶ The Russian Federation signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1999, but ratified it only in October 2004; the pact entered into force in February 2005.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, the emission reduction targets are legally binding; when calculating targets, emission levels of the year 1990 were used as a baseline. The targets varied from -10 to +10 (for Iceland), the target for Russia being 0. This meant that Russia's emissions should not exceed the level of 1990 in the first commitment period (2008-2012). In practice, it meant that Russia could actually increase its emissions and trade in surplus quotas; at the time of agreement Russia's emissions were well below the

⁴ United Nations, "United Nations Framework Convention [...]", op. cit. [2]; United Nations, "Kyoto Protocol [...]", op. cit. [2].

⁵ Carbon sinks (i.e. growing vegetation) absorb carbon dioxide, which is the main greenhouse gas contributing to the problem of climate change.

⁶ Emission trading implies that industrialized countries can trade their emission quotas among themselves, whereas joint implementation allows this trading to be linked to concrete emission reduction projects. The Clean Development Mechanism facilitates cooperation between industrialized and developing countries through emission reduction projects that contribute to emission reduction in developing countries and increase the quotas of industrialized countries. See <http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/items/1673.php>.

year 1990 baseline,⁷ as they declined drastically due to economic transition during the 1990s. The emissions trading system thus created a beneficial situation for Russia; it had surplus emission quotas, the sales of which could form a significant source of economic income. Climate policy experts originally estimated that Russia could earn about US\$ 10 million annually from the protocol through emission trading, JI projects and increased foreign investment.⁸ Although other experts warned that economic recovery would soon lead the country to exceeding its emission quotas, the general estimation before Russia's ratification of the protocol was that it would benefit significantly from joining the protocol.

On top of speculation over the economic benefits of the Kyoto Protocol for Russia, the process of Russian ratification was prolonged because of the political leverage that Russia gained as a result of the United States' withdrawal from the protocol in 2001. Now that the biggest source of GHG emissions, the US, was out, Russia was the state to decide the fate of the protocol. To enter into force, the protocol required the ratification of 55 countries, accounting for 55 percent of the emissions of the industrialized country members in 1990. By autumn 2004, over 120 countries had ratified the protocol, but they did not account for more than around 44 percent of emissions. Accordingly, Russia, with its 17.4 percent share of emissions, was the only country that could ensure the overall requirement was fulfilled. Suddenly Russia, which had played a humble role in the early negotiations, had a decisive role in enforcement of the protocol. This situation gave it political leverage in the negotiations over a number of issues, such as the doubling of the volume of carbon sinks allocated to it under the protocol. All this meant that, between 1997 and 2004, Russia was under intense international lobbying and suggestions for swapping. First and foremost, in exchange for ratification Russia received the European Union's support for its membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), which finally led to Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2004.⁹

⁷ In 1990, Russia's share of the emissions of the industrialized countries was 17.4 %, and in 1999 only 6 %. See EIA, *International Energy Annual 2001*, Washington DC, 2003.

⁸ V. Kotov, "Policy in Transition: New Framework for Russia's Climate Policy", Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, *Nota di Lavoro* No. 58, 2002.

⁹ A profound analysis of Russia's positions vis-à-vis the Kyoto Protocol is offered by A. Korppoo, J. Karas and M. Grubb, *Russia and the Kyoto Protocol: Opportunities and Challenges*, London, Chatham House, 2006.

Russian debate on ratification of the Kyoto Protocol

In Russia, the debate about (international) climate policy was most intense before the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2004. After ratification, the debate more or less faded; the question of what to do after the first Kyoto commitment period—whether to join the second commitment period or to start preparing a totally new agreement—was not a topic of serious domestic discussion. Domestic discussion about ratification was divided into *pros* and *cons* of joining the pact. The governmental actors as well as the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, remained generally positive about ratification in hearings and in public addresses, although certain actors among them, such as the presidential advisor Andrey Illarionov, openly opposed ratification. Business people, especially representatives of the then electricity monopoly RAO UES Rossii, widely supported ratification since they believed that it would be economically beneficial to their business.¹⁰ The opinions of climate experts and scientists varied: for instance, the academician Yuri Izrael who until 2008 was a vice-chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was arguing in 2003 that “the Kyoto Protocol is overly expensive, ineffective and based on bad science”.¹¹

The supporters of the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in Russia acclaimed its few obligations as against its ample economic and political benefits. It was argued that the protocol would support economic growth by taking advantage of Russia’s surplus allowances through emissions trading and the Joint Implementation mechanism. The critical voices of those who considered that economic recovery would soon make the country exceed its emission quotas were silenced by the argument that the emissions reduction measures could help reduce energy intensity, thus actually helping Russia to achieve the official goal of doubling its GDP.¹² The proponents of the protocol believed that this goal would be unachievable with the current level of energy intensity of Russia’s economy, but, at the same time, they saw the enormous potential for improving energy efficiency.

Proponents of ratification also underlined the political benefits that Russia would gain by joining the protocol. They argued that Russia’s image in the international arena could be significantly

¹⁰ G. Hønneland, A. Korppoo and N. Tynkkynen, *Environmental Encounters? Russian Discourse and Practice in International Environmental Politics*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, US, Edward Elgar (forthcoming).

¹¹ R. Novak, “The Russian Didn’t Bark”, *CNN.com*, 16 October 2003, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/16/column.novak.opinion.russian/>>.

¹² Igor Bashmakov, “Rossia i ratifikatsia kiotskogo protokola” [Russia and the Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol], *cenef.ru*, <www.cenef.ru/file/Bpaper104.pdf>.

boosted by bringing into force the Kyoto Protocol. Withdrawal, in turn, would lead to a loss of trust by the international community. In many newspaper articles favoring ratification, Russia was presented as a model for an environmentally advanced country, having “managed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by one-third in 10 years. This is about 60 percent of the total decline in the world”.¹³ Consequently, Russia’s role in international climate politics was argued to be that of an ecological donor; the amount of carbon that Russia’s forests were considered to be able to absorb from the atmosphere was also drawn attention to. For its “ecological services”, Russia was deemed to merit good compensation in the protocol, as well as in political issues outside climate policy.¹⁴

Opponents of ratification leaned on the belief that Russia’s economic recovery would soon lead to the quotas being exceeded. Or, conversely, they argued that, by committing itself to the protocol Russia would be obliged to limit industrial activities, constrain hydrocarbon usage or buy additional emissions allowances, which would limit its economic growth and harm its competitiveness. Opponents were also resisting the increase of international control over Russia and the growing dependency on the import of more efficient technologies. The loudest voice belonged to the former presidential advisor Andrey Illarionov, who, for the above reasons, compared the Kyoto Protocol (for example) with the Gulag and Auschwitz, and called it “the pact of death”. After the US withdrawal, opponents also strongly questioned the promises of emissions trade, as there was no guarantee that anybody would buy Russian quotas.¹⁵ It is also worth noting that part of the opposition stemmed from the fact that at the time when ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was discussed, there was no experience in Russia of market mechanisms as environmental policy tools.¹⁶ That also obviously hampered neutral discussion on the topic.

¹³ *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 4 September 2002.

¹⁴ For a more detailed analysis, see N. Tynkkynen, “A Great Ecological Power in Global Climate Policy? Framing Climate Change as a Policy Problem in Russian Public Discussion”, *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 179-195.

¹⁵ See Liberal-Democratic party deputy A. Ostrovsky’s statement in the State Duma during the ratification discussion, 22 October 2004, <<http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/>>.

¹⁶ L. Kochtcheeva, *Comparative Environmental Regulation in the United States and Russia. Institutions, Flexible Instruments and Governance*, New York, State University of New York Press, 2009.

Withdrawal from the second commitment period

There are several reasons why the Russian discussions concerning the country's participation in the second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol were much less intense than the debate about ratification of the Kyoto Protocol almost ten years earlier. Russia did not play such a decisive role anymore since, with the dropping-out of many important parties, the entire protocol had lost political momentum. The domestic debate about joining the second commitment period concentrated on the question whether it was wise or not to abandon the financial opportunity provided by the Kyoto mechanisms, including the domestic system established with so much effort.¹⁷ Business actors active in joint implementation projects (see below) supported Russia's participation in the second commitment period; whereas the Russian leadership assumed that the benefits would dry up rather soon, due to the loose emission reduction targets set by a limited number of participants in Kyoto's second phase.¹⁸ In addition, the revenues available through JI or emissions trading were considered small-scale, of interest only to the companies and agencies involved.¹⁹

Russia announced its withdrawal from the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol at the UN climate conference in Cancún in 2010.²⁰ Its main argument for not joining this second commitment period was the lack of participation of other major emitters. It was also noted that none of the major emerging economies had taken commitments as originally expected. At the same time, many Russian actors seemed to consider that the underlying reasons for other countries supporting the second commitment period were mainly other than environmental; the environmental argumentation of other parties was seen as involving, for example, carbon protectionism or promotion of their own technology standards. Therefore, the pact was considered unfair and irrational by their Russian counterparts.²¹ It can be argued therefore,

¹⁷ O. Samofalova, "Ruchkoi pomashem Kiotskomu Protokolu" [Let's Say Goodbye to the Kyoto Protocol], *Vzglyad: Delovaya Gazeta*, 18 October 2012, <<http://vz.ru/economy/2012/10/18/603185.html>>.

¹⁸ A. Vatansever and A. Korppoo, "A Climate Vision for Russia: From Rhetoric to Action", *Policy Outlook, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 1 August 2012, <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/08/01/climate-vision-for-russia-from-rhetoric-to-action/d4tq>>.

¹⁹ A. Shapovalov, "Kiotskii vopros reshat sovetniki prezidenta" [The President Advisers Decide on the Kyoto Protocol Question], *Kommersant*, 15 October 2012.

²⁰ S. Goldenberg, "Cancun Climate Change Conference: Russia Will Not Renew Kyoto Protocol", *The Guardian*, 10 December 2010, <www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/10/cancun-climate-change-conference-kyoto>.

²¹ G. Hønneland, A. Korppoo and N. Tynkkynen, *Environmental Encounters? [...] op. cit.* [10].

in this case, that the geopolitical big picture of the climate regime proved more important for the Russian leadership than economic, let alone environmental, aspects.

Accordingly, Russia has made it very clear that it will only join an agreement that includes all major emitters. With regard to the rules of future climate policy, Russia opposes the term “historical responsibility”²² as a basis for responsibility-sharing. Instead, the country advocates current “national circumstances” and “real capabilities” as the basis. Due to high dependence on oil and gas exports, Moscow also wants to take its carbon-intensive exports into account as a criterion for effort-sharing.²³ It also opposes obligatory payments to the UN Green Climate Fund, which was set up to help channel some of the \$100 billion a year of climate aid that developed countries have pledged to provide by 2020.²⁴ At the same time, for reasons of image, Russia is unlikely to apply for climate finance, even though such funds would be useful to help develop low-carbon technologies, improve energy efficiency and build sustainable forest management.

Rather than taken new initiatives, however, Russia has shown defiance in the negotiations over the terms of the new agreement. In the UN Conference of the Parties (COP18) in Doha in 2012, Russia ended up claiming that its interests and reputation had been violated, and it demanded due compensation.²⁵ Therefore, Russia called for procedural reform in UN climate meetings. Other countries mainly saw this as putting narrow politics before the urgent need to mitigate climate change.²⁶ In summer 2013, Russia’s delegation also blocked progress in one of the technical working groups concerning disagreement over the rules of selling surplus Kyoto permits to 2020.²⁷ The climate community’s expectations about Russia’s performance at the UN climate conference in Warsaw last November were thus not very high. However, although the Warsaw conference

²² This refers to comparisons of national responsibility for climate change; e.g. D. Clark, “Which nations are most responsible for climate change?”, *The Guardian*, 21 April 2011, <www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/apr/21/countries-responsible-climate-change>.

²³ A. Korppoo and T. Spencer, “The Dead Souls: How to Deal With the Russian Surplus?”, *Finnish Institute for International Affairs Briefing Paper*, No. 39, 4 September 2009, p. 4.

²⁴ M. Carr and S. Nicola, “Russia Considers Domestic Carbon Market in Global Warming Fight”, *Bloomberg.com*, 12 March 2014, <www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-12/russia-considers-domestic-carbon-market-in-global-warming-fight.html>.

²⁵ E. King, “UN climate chief dismisses Russia ‘hot-air’ protest in Doha”, *rttc.org*, 10 December 2012, <www.rttc.org/2012/12/10/un-climate-chief-dismisses-russia-hot-air-protest-in-doha/>.

²⁶ A. Phillips, “As Global Emissions Rise, Countries Prepare for 2013 Climate Talks in Warsaw”, *thinkprogress.org*, 8 November 2013, <<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2013/11/08/2915531/unfccc-warsaw-cop-climate/>>.

²⁷ A. Vitelli and S. Nicola, “UN Global Warming Talks Blocked by Russia Set Back Six Months”, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 14 June 2013, <www.businessweek.com/news/2013-06-14/climate-talks-failure-risks-2015-deadline-on-emissions-pact-1>.

can be argued to have failed in many ways, Russia did not cause any major problem there.

Russia's Domestic Climate Policy

Russia's domestic climate policy has been relatively modest; its first practical steps were taken only in 2013 when the government approved a package of legal initiatives to support the development of renewable energy through the capacity market, and a target of 25 percent emissions reduction by 2020 from 1990 levels. As Russia was already out of the Kyoto Protocol at that point, it can be argued that the Russian leadership never really initiated implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The President of Russia launched *the Climate Doctrine* in 2009,²⁸ but this tool is more of symbolic value than any guide to practical policies. *The Plan of implementation* that followed the doctrine in 2011 did not launch any new policies or funding. Instead, the document *Projection of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2030*, approved by the prime minister in 2013, for the first time provided official data on projected peaking of GHG emissions beyond 2020 and then declining back to 70 percent of the reference level by 2030.²⁹ The projection outlines that achieving these targets requires improved energy efficiency and the introduction of energy-saving technologies, but does not address issues such as renewable energy.³⁰ In March 2014, the representative of the Russian delegation in the UN climate talks announced that Russia was considering a domestic carbon market to cut greenhouse-gas emissions, but it will not be ready before 2020.³¹

The potential provided by carbon trade is enormous in Russia, one of the most carbon-intensive economies in the world. The energy industry accounts for around one-fourth of Russia's GDP (in 2011) and over half of the federal budget.³² Carbon-intensive oil, coal and gas account for about 85 percent of Russia's primary energy consumption, the rest being covered by nuclear energy

²⁸ President of the Russian Federation, "Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation", 17 December 2009, <<http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/12/223509.shtml>>.

²⁹ Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, "Projection of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2030", 2011, <www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/macro/prognoz/doc20130325_06>.

³⁰ A. Kokorin and A. Korppoo, "Russia's Post-Kyoto Climate Policy: Real Action or Merely Window-Dressing?", *FNI Climate Policy Perspectives*, No. 10, p. 4, <www.fni.no/doc&pdf/FNI-Climate-Policy-Perspectives-10.pdf>.

³¹ M. Carr and S. Nikola, "Russia Considers Domestic [...]", *op. cit.* [24].

³² Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, "Projection of long-term [...]", *op. cit.* [29].

(about 7 percent) and large-scale hydro; the share of renewable energy sources is less than 1 percent.³³ Despite the objective set by the Russian government in 2030 to increase the share of renewable energy in the country's fuel mix by up to 14 percent, no practical policies to promote renewable energy sources are in sight at the moment.³⁴ The share of coal will probably not increase dramatically, but Russia is planning extensive investments in nuclear energy so that by the end of the century, nuclear is to cover 70-80 percent of electricity production in the country.³⁵ This development would, of course, decrease GHG emissions originating from energy.

The energy sector accounted for about 82 percent of Russia's total GHG emissions in 2007.³⁶ For many Russians, then, global climate policy only makes sense if it contributes to further reform and new investment in Russia's energy sector.³⁷ Although separated from climate policy objectives as such, to increase competitiveness and economic efficiency, the Russian leadership strongly recognizes the need to improve the energy intensity of the economy. In 2008, then President Dmitry Medvedev identified energy efficiency and conservation as top strategic priorities in the general modernization of Russia.

New energy efficiency legislation approved in 2009 envisages various concrete economic incentives to realize the potential of improved energy efficiency, estimated at around 45 percent of primary energy consumption.³⁸ The legislation requires a 40 percent increase in energy efficiency per unit of GDP by 2020. Energy efficiency policies are expected to have the strongest impact on the emission trends in the country. Russia is also putting different tools in place to support these targets: financial mechanisms such as loans, tax credits and state guarantees, and regulatory instruments such as mandatory energy managers and energy management certification.³⁹ In the past, energy efficiency policies remained unimplemented for various reasons, such as low energy prices, lack of financial basis,

³³ Enerdata, "Energy Research Estore: Russia", 2012, <[www.05.abb.com/global/scot/scot316.nsf/veritydisplay/5fe3ef5f71dab20cc1257864005185df/\\$file/russia.pdf](http://www.05.abb.com/global/scot/scot316.nsf/veritydisplay/5fe3ef5f71dab20cc1257864005185df/$file/russia.pdf)>.

³⁴ N. Tynkkynen and P. Aalto, "Environmental Sustainability of Russia's Energy Policies", in P. Aalto (ed.), *Russia's Energy Policies. National, Interregional and Global Levels*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, US, Edward Elgar, 2012.

³⁵ Institute of Energy Strategy, "Energy Strategy of Russia for the period up to 2030", 2010, <[www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_\(Eng\).pdf](http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_(Eng).pdf)>.

³⁶ Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, "National Communication n.5 of the Russian Federation to the UNFCC", p.9, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/rus_nc5_resubmit.pdf>.

³⁷ A. Korppoo, J. Karas and M. Grubb, *Russia and the Kyoto Protocol* [...], op. cit. [9].

³⁸ IEA, "Development of Energy Efficiency Indicators in Russia", *IEA Working Paper*, 2011, <www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/Russia_En_Eff_Ind.pdf>.

³⁹ Institute for Industrial Productivity, "Russia's GHG Emissions Reductions Policies", 2013, <www.iipnetwork.org/IIPFactSheet_Russia.pdf>.

lack of a clear division of responsibilities, and legal complexities.⁴⁰ Now that energy prices have gone up and the legal framework has been introduced, we can expect progress in this field, too. So far, however, there are no signs of significant energy efficiency improvement, although some major businesses, such as Rosneft,⁴¹ have recently been launching their energy efficiency programs.⁴²

The most important tool provided by the Kyoto Protocol for Russia, the mechanism of Joint Implementation,⁴³ was basically enabled at larger scale in Russia only in 2011. The main task of the domestic policy process was to establish an administrative framework for approval of these projects in Russia. The discussion on the mechanism and its benefits began as soon as the Kyoto Protocol was accepted in 1997, and the more detailed international rules and guidelines were specified in 2001, but the actual process for establishing a domestic approval system was launched only in 2005, and the adjustments to the regulations continued up to 2011. This delay left very little time for implementing the mechanism, as the first commitment period of the protocol expired at the end of 2012. Yet, in 2011-2012 the mechanism resulted in over 150 projects.⁴⁴

Many experts on Russian climate policy believe that the main obstacle to greater Russian commitment to climate policy actions is that the damage caused to the country by climate change is not understood at all in Russia. Accordingly, Russia has not initiated any adaptation plans or policies. This is also related to the lack of sustainable forest management policies, which threatens the resilience of Russian forests as carbon sinks. Indeed, according to expert estimations, without a sustainable forest management policy Russian forests might turn from net absorbers of CO² to net emitters by 2040 because of forest fires, forests' growing age, the spread of tree pests and diseases, and harmful logging practices.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ A. Novikova, A. Korppoo and M. Sharmina, "Russian Pledge vs Business-as-Usual. Implementing Energy Efficiency Policies Can Curb Carbon Emissions", *FIIA Working Papers*, No. 61, 2009, p. 17.

⁴¹ "Rosneft to Save 1 Bln\$ Through Energy Efficiency 5-Year Plan", *The Moscow Times*, 16 May 2014, <www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/rosneft-to-save-1bln-through-energy-efficiency-5-year-plan/500332.html>.

⁴² IEA, "Energy Policies Beyond IEA Countries: Russia 2014", <www.iea.org/countries/non-membercountries/russianfederation>.

⁴³ The main idea of Joint Implementation is to allow a country with an emission reduction or limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to earn emission reduction units from an emission reduction project in another country, which can then be counted towards meeting its Kyoto target. See: UNFCCC webpage for Joint Implementation, <http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/joint_implementation/items/1674.php>.

⁴⁴ In 2012, more than 150 projects were under way in Russia; see A. Kokorin and A. Korppoo, "Russia's Post-Kyoto [...]", *op. cit.* [30].

⁴⁵ A. Davydova, "Russia's Silence [...]", *op. cit.* [3].

Conclusion

First and foremost, it is Russia's national pride and overall status in the world that has defined its position in global climate politics throughout the years. Initially, when the 1992 UN Framework Convention was being negotiated, Russia's involvement was motivated mainly by the effort to maintain its status among industrialized countries and, at the same time, to protect its position as a transition economy.⁴⁶ Russia's performance vis-à-vis the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, in turn, reflected the extent to which it exulted in its decisive role, given that the fate of the pact was in its hands. Against that political leverage, it did not matter that economic benefits were lost alongside the time wasted by the foot-dragging on ratification. The same happened again in 2010, when Russia announced its withdrawal from the second commitment period. Although major businesses in Russia supported participation, the leadership did not, because the situation was considered unfair as not all major emitter countries were joining. This supports the argument made by Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom⁴⁷ that, in Russia's semi-authoritarian context, the key determinant of the country's attention to climate politics has been the policy priorities of the highest leadership and of the President himself, rather than domestic bargaining. It also indicates that the leadership considered economic benefits much less important than geopolitical aspects. Therefore, economic matters, such as Russia's WTO membership, are unlikely to change anything in the country's climate politics unless political side-benefits are available.

Moreover, part of the Russian attitude in global climate politics can be explained⁴⁸ by Russia's inclination to draw on the premise that it is a great power, even a great ecological power, environmentally superior to other countries. Accordingly, both in domestic and international arenas, Russian representatives present the country rather as a do-gooder than a bad guy in climate politics. It is emphasized that, in addition to the high volume of existing ecological reserves, Russia's GHG emissions significantly decreased during

⁴⁶ A. Korppoo, J. Karas and M. Grubb, *Russia and the Kyoto Protocol* [...], *op. cit.* [9].

⁴⁷ L. Henry and L. McIntosh Sundstrom, "Russia's Climate Policy: International Bargaining and Domestic Modernization", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 7, pp. 1297-1322.

⁴⁸ N. Tynkkynen, "A Great Ecological Power [...]", *op. cit.* [14].

the 1990s and early 2000s, while those of most other countries increased—due to economic recession.

What is of concern here is that foreign partners are also tempted by the rhetoric of Russian greatness. Rather than pointing to environmental degradation or appealing to Russia's global duty, the EU in particular has echoed the line about Russia's rich natural resources and the benefits to be gained from these resources. The EU is, of course, hesitant about putting the screws on Russia, as it remains dependent on energy imports from the country. Yet, recognizing Russia's influence, countries active in global climate politics should engage in a more profound discussion with Russia about the responsibilities and interests of a great power, drawing on the idea that great powers have special responsibilities in international society.⁴⁹ On that basis, more pressure could be put on the Russian leadership to deliver real emissions cuts rather than mere window-dressing. This would be important for successful negotiations of post-Kyoto climate policy and, more to the point, for the sustainability of Russia's great-power status vis-à-vis ecological reserves and leverage in global environmental politics in general.

⁴⁹ H. Bull, *The Anarchical Society. The Study of Order in World Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977.