

Processes of Integration and Disintegration in the European and Eurasian Space: The Geographical Context

Edited by Cezary Madry

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Contents

Introduction	7
<i>Cezary Mądry</i>	
Integration and disintegration processes in the Eurasian space in the light of the territorial social system concept	9
Chapter 1. Political aspect	17
<i>Tatyana Ivanovna Pototskaya</i>	
Integration strategies of states in the territory of the former Soviet Union	19
<i>Anatolii Bobrovitskyi</i>	
Challenges of integration Ukraine to European Union (advantages and problems)	29
<i>Aleksander Druzhynin</i>	
Russian-Turkish cooperation in the Black Sea region: geo-strategic aspect	39
Chapter 2. Economic aspect	47
<i>Ekaterina Antipova, Liudmila Fakeyeva</i>	
Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union as a factor of integration into economic space	49
<i>Larisa Korganashvili</i>	
Economic and geographical aspects of the participation of Georgia in the integration processes	69
<i>Babulia (Dodo) Mghebrishvili, Ekaterine Urotadze</i>	
Georgia's trade relations and euro integration	79

Chapter 3. Social aspect	85
<i>Tomasz Michalski</i>	
The cohesion of European post-Communist countries in terms of selected parameters determining their societies' situation	87
<i>Cezary Mądry, Julia Kaczmarek-Khubnaia</i>	
When a minority is in majority. Areas of population prevalence of ethnic and national minorities in the post-Soviet region	101
<i>Larysa Novak-Kalyayeva</i>	
National unity and territorial identity in Ukraine: problems of acceptance	125
<i>Tomasz Wites</i>	
Russia and the European Union in the present-day scientific context – international experience of Aurora Project	139
<i>Giuli Keshelashvili, Mariami Jibuti</i>	
Role of NATO in the development of the education and scientific infrastructure in Georgia	155
<i>Giorgi Begadze</i>	
Tourism – Support for integration. Analysis of important decisions in Georgia, that contribute to tourism development	161
<i>Julia Kaczmarek-Khubnaia</i>	
Importance of regionalism in the consciousness of the inhabitants of Samegrelo and Svaneti	173
Chapter 4. Balkans case	183
<i>Rajko Gnjato, Goran Trbić, <u>Marko Stanojević</u></i>	
Geopolitical aspects of modern disintegration processes in west Balkan area	185
<i>Igor Zekanović</i>	
Political-geographical impact of disintegration processes within SFR Yugoslavia geospace on the modern ethno-demographic features of Republic of Srpska – a Bosnia and Herzegovina entity	199
<i>Jędrzej Paszkiewicz</i>	
Factors affecting disintegration and integration processes in the Balkans after the Cold War	213

Introduction

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Integration and disintegration processes in the Eurasian space in the light of the territorial social system concept¹

Abstract: The publication uses the concept of the territorial social system (TSS) as a research tool, thus arranging the perspective on integration and disintegration processes occurring in the area of Eurasia. It distinguishes three TSS subsystems: political, economic and social, which all constitute the structural frame for the monograph.

Key words: Eurasia, post-soviet countries, CIS, territorial social system, integration, disintegration.

Introduction

The theory of systems in science is a widely popular methodological approach, especially in the field of natural and social sciences. Among its founders and promoters, one should mention L. von Bertalanffy, O. Lange, J.G. Miller, M. Bunge (1979), H. Spenser, and N. Luhmann (2007). In Poland, among others, Z. Chojnicky (1988, 1999) introduced the systems theory, from which he derives the concept of the territorial social system (TSS). Its adaptation to study a political system was made by C. Mądry (2014b), who then implemented it to study the presidential election in Ukraine (2014a). In these works the concept of TSS was thoroughly discussed; therefore, below only those elements of the TSS concept will be presented which had a substantial impact on the design of this monograph.

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In addition to material layers, the TSS also comprises social layers, i.e. the population. The latter is created by elementary components (single persons) and collective components: the **cultural**, **political**, and **economic subsystems**. Thus understood composition of the system can be spatially distinguished in the form of a territory, or a section of an area, which is effectively controlled by the given population. Such a territory is relatively isolated and closed, politically usually taking form of a state. In the external aspect, it is surrounded by other TSS, or in this case other states. This, however, raises a problem of the TSS borders.

The first issue is a matter of the borders fuzziness. The closure and control of TSS in the post-soviet area is unclear. On the one hand, the borders drawn on maps can be regarded as arithmomorphic, although their course sometimes remains disputable (the Georgian-Russian border, the Japanese-Russian border, the Russian-Ukrainian border /the Kerch Strait dispute, Crimea, the war in Donbas/) or was established only at the beginning of the 21st century (the Estonian-Russian border). It should be noted here that the designated borders of the republics in the Soviet period were rather illusory, and they were often designed contrary to the historical borders or ethnic ranges and economic unions. Hence, on the other hand, one can hypothetically assume that borders in the post-Soviet area are *de facto* of a non-arithmomorphic nature, and therefore they are characterised by fuzziness, instability, and changeability, depending on the situation or criteria. For example, ethnic and cultural systems are of such a nature. This results in frequent territorial claims or wars (e.g. Nagorno-Karabakh, Donbas, etc.), a domination of one culture over another (e.g. in the realm of pop culture) or language disputes.

The second issue is the role of borders in the development of the system. The TSS borders can be both a result of integration processes of the system by creating strong internal bonds and be a factor or a basis for integration of the system. In the first case, the state borders are an expression of the existing cultural, political and economic ties; in the second case, they trigger and organize ties within the given country².

Integration and disintegration processes in Eurasia

The political, cultural and economic situation in the Eurasia³ area tends to be constantly dynamic with both disintegration and integration processes at play.

² Geographical depiction of political borders are presented in detail, among others, by S. Kałuski (2017) and S.V. Sievastianova et al. (2016).

³ The concept of Eurasia is differently understood in different countries. In the tradition of Polish geography, Eurasia is a geographical term treating the continents of Europe and Asia as a whole. In the Russian literature, Eurasia is connected with the doctrine of eurasism. Then Eurasia constitutes a separate geographic, cultural and civilizational entity, distinct from either Europe or Asia. Because the vast majority of its territory is taken up by Russia, it is this country that is predisposed to the leading role in this region. This idea appeared in the late 19th century, and its creators included, among others, P. Savickii, N. Trubeckoi, N. Sokolovskii (Moczulski 2010). The idea revived after the break-up of the Soviet Union in the form of neoeurasism. Its modern propagators are Russian nationalists (Massaka, 2001: citing Cianciara), including the

They are accompanied by political, cultural and economic aspects on a national and regional scale (the notion of a regional division will be that of the second degree administrative division, i.e. districts or equivalent statistical units: republics, countries, districts, autonomous circuits, district cities).

Already in 1989, the Latvian National Independence Movement demanded leaving the Soviet Union. Similar demands appeared in the other Baltic States. The Parliament of Lithuania was the first of the republics to announce the declaration of independence on March 11, 1990, and, on August 20, 1991 it was made by Estonia. Signing of the Belavezha Accords on December 8, 1991 is considered to formally end the existence of the Soviet Union. As a result of the dissolution of the USSR fifteen new states were created. In the same year, Yugoslavia was dissolved, which marked the beginning of many years of warfare in the area.

On a regional scale, the situation is more complicated while the disintegrations had different origins and courses⁴. They may be divided into:

1. Disintegrations following the dissolution of the USSR aimed at complete independence (the Republic of Tatarstan, Transnistria, the Chechen Republic⁵);
2. Disintegration of territorial units without demands of independence (e.g. the dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Oblast into Chechnya and the Republic of Ingushetia);
3. Disintegrations resulting from other political events (one week after the rigged presidential elections in Ukraine on 21 November 2004, members of the Donetsk Oblast council set a date on December 5 to hold a referendum on creating an autonomous republic in case of cancellation of the results of the elections giving victory to V. Yanukovich. Similar trends emerged, among others, in Charkov and Luhansk oblasts. The other example is the secession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia);
4. Disintegrations aimed at gaining complete or partial autonomy within existing states (separatist movements in the Altai Republic, the Kaliningrad Oblast, etc.). The Komi Republic, the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, the Tuva Republic, the Republic of Buryatia, the Republic of Karelia concluded agreements with authorities of the Russian Federation which gave them certain international authority (Szajkowski 1994, citing: Sobczyński 2006).

On the other hand, disintegration has been accompanied by integration processes. On the national level, they are reflected in establishing various multinational organizations. They include:

Communist Party of the Russian Federation (Kolosov 2013), and the main promoter is A.G. Dugin (Eberhardt 2005, 2010, Sykulski 2013). The concept of Eurasia is also commonly used in publications of geographers to define the post-Soviet area. This approach can be found, among others, in A.G. Druzhynin's research (2005, 2009, 2016).

⁴ F.A. Popov (2012) proposes in his publication a typology of some of the disintegration processes – secessionism.

⁵ Ultimately, Tatarstan and Chechnya concluded international treaties with the Russian Federation, confirming their international personality, including the right to direct relations with foreign states (Sobczyński 2006). After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the constituent parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska gained a similar legal international status to the former Soviet States (*ibid.*, p. 168).

1. Organizations consisting solely of the former USSR republics:
 - including Russia and focused on reinforcing its political, economic or military dominance (CIS, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Common Economic Space);
 - established to counterweight Russian influence (the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development /GUUAM);
2. Organization not limited to the former USSR republics (e.g. the Shanghai Cooperation Organization).

On the regional level, political (and administrative) integration comes down to combining units into larger ones, sometimes to changing their status as legal entities. These processes were preceded with referenda and a rather delusive public debates. They have become more intense since 2005 (e.g. on 1 December 2005, Perm Oblast and Komi-Permyak Okrug merged into Perm Krai). This process has not come to an end yet; one of the planned initiatives is merging Altai Krai and the Altai Republic.

The changes referred to above may be dealt with as external, political manifestations of trends in specific countries.

Integration and disintegration processes have also affected culture: as people tend to be the chief media of culture, these processes can be interpreted through the condition and situation of national minorities in the specific countries. For example, the dominance of Russians in Crimea, in the eastern districts of the Ukraine, in Transnistria, in northern Kazakhstan etc. in the face of a weak central government may be perceived as a factor contributing to separatist movements and disintegrating the state. At the same time, departing from the Cyrillic alphabet which has already taken place in the Baltic States, South Caucasus, Uzbekistan, and is planned in Kazakhstan, further deepen the cultural disintegration of the post-Soviet space but – in the opinion of those implementing the changes – their task is to integrate the population of the given country through the processes of distinguishing themselves from others.

Similarly, integration and disintegration processes have taken place on an economic level. A case in point is Russia where in 2009 (as part of combating the economic downturn and protecting domestic producers), imports of cars were severely curtailed while sales of Russia-made vehicles were subsidized. These activities may be viewed as targeted at closure of the Russian economy and the regions' internal integration. It is ironic that these activities triggered off social protests and reinforced a sense of exploitation in the remote regions, especially in Siberia and the Far East. On the other hand, the president's declarations of modernizing Russia involve the country's and the regions' opening up to foreign investors.

TSS subsystems and the design of the monograph

The above issues have become a basis of this monograph. In accordance with the defined TSS subsystems, three parts have been distinguished. The first shows changes in the political system, the second – in the social, the third – in the eco-

conomic one. Territorially, they concern the post-Soviet space. The fourth part of the monograph has been included separately. It comprises articles on the space in which integration and disintegration processes have been taking place as intensively as in the post-Soviet area, although it is a separate geographical region – the Balkans.

The part on integration and disintegration processes in the political and geopolitical dimension is opened with an article by T.I. Pototskaya. She analyses the integration strategies of post-Soviet countries and unrecognised states (or partly recognized ones) dividing them into pro-Russian, pro-European, alternative pro-Russian and indefinite ones. The Author also assesses the degree of compatibility between the declared integration strategies of respective subjects and the directions of their foreign trade.

A. Bobrovytskiy presents integration strategies of Ukraine in the geopolitical context. He manifests an attitude alternative to T.I. Pototskaya in terms of the choice of the integration path of Ukraine, clearly seeing its place in the European structures, not the Eurasian ones. The Author presents barriers to this integration and the potential benefits for the European Union resulting from the proposed membership of Ukraine.

A.G. Druzhinin's article tackles the Russian-Turkish cooperation in the Black Sea region. The author sees this region as an area of overlapping geostrategic interests of both countries. He shows the factors affecting the present relations of those states, focusing on the last quarter of the century. He points to "dewesternization" of Turkish ties as a new dimension to the Turkish geopolitics and the common goals of both states.

The second part of the book contains articles about integration and disintegration processes in the economic dimension. The part starts with an article by E.A. Antipova and L.V. Fakeyeva on the business links between Belarus and the European Union. Changes in the volume of trade and the branch structure have been presented. The authors identify the problem areas in these relationships and further priorities, among others, including greater openness of Belarus to foreign investment, especially in the area of new technologies and science, cross-border cooperation, simplification of transit, expansion of cooperation especially with the northern and western neighbours of Belarus, who have accomplished successful transformation.

Economic integration of Georgia within the framework of the GUAM countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) and the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation), as well as in the context of relations with the EU is raised by L. Korganashvili. The Author indicates that regional economic integration for small states which find it difficult to compete in the global market is an opportunity for their development. Unfortunately, in her opinion, many opportunities which these organisations gave have not been used. Marginalization of these relationships has increased after Georgia signed the Association Agreement with the European Union, which is a lot more demanding partner. The geographical structure of Georgia's foreign trade is also presented in the article by B.G. Mghebrishvili and E.Z. Urotadze, who draw attention, among others, to

the stable share of the EU in exports from Georgia and a growing one of the CIS countries.

In the third part of the monograph, articles on integration and disintegration in the cultural field (socio-cultural) have been collected. Using eight international synthetic indexes, T. Michalski shows that social cohesion in post-Communist countries is small. In this respect, countries of East-Central Europe, the Baltic Sea and of the former western Yugoslavia are strongly distinguished from other post-Soviet states and some Balkan ones. At the same time, he finds little impact of the most recent history on the position of individual countries and the secondary one of the membership in the EU and the NATO. He emphasises cultural factors as having the strongest influence on the situation of women and LGBT persons.

C. Mądry and J. Kaczmarek-Khubnaia draw attention to the differentiation of the post-Soviet space in the ethnic and language aspects. They present areas where ethnic minorities of particular countries constitute the prevailing majority over the main nationality of the country and they show the main determinants of such a situation. They identify three most important factors affecting the distribution of minorities: migrations, changes in the borders of administrative units (including countries) and ethnogenesis in the same or a similar area. In a further, in-depth analysis, the Authors draw attention to historical changeability of especially the migration factor.

L. Novak-Kalyayeva takes up the issues of national and territorial identification in Ukraine. She indicates the causes of conflicts in its territory and raises the question of their impact on the processes of identification and national consolidation. She calls for the strengthening of decentralization processes in the country and for the empowerment of local authorities. Additionally, she identifies socio-cultural problems which Ukraine will have to face in order to bridge the strong social divisions.

T. Wites raises the issue of scientific cooperation between Russia and the European Union. He lists the problems but also the chances of the development of scientific contacts and points to the common challenges facing science, regardless of where it is practiced. He draws attention to the “soft” factors, such as a different research perspective, methodology or mentality, yet seeing a great chance to continue the integration of the scientific community. Implementation of one of the international Russian-EU projects – project AURORA – has been presented in detail.

The role of international cooperation in the field of science is described by G. Keshelashviliu and M. Jibuti. The subject of their research is the impact of NATO on the development of education and scientific infrastructure in Georgia. Project GRENA exemplifies this process. The authors see the regional cooperation and the NATO as a factor stabilising the region and enhancing opportunities for the socio-economic and scientific development.

G. Begadze draws attention to another aspect of international cooperation as an integrating factor. The subject of his analysis is tourism and the determinants of its development in Georgia. The author points to a number of actions taken up

in Georgia to increase the tourist traffic, especially in terms of transport, education, environmental protection, culture, visa requirements, etc. In his conclusions, he identifies the impact of tourism on the integration processes at three levels: international, business and individual ones.

Part four of the monograph has been distinguished for both geographical reasons and the different processes that the authors take. It focused on the Balkans as an area of intense disintegration. In a very emotional article, R. Gnjata, G. Trbić and M. Stanojević draw attention to the geopolitical aspect. According to the Authors, the disintegration processes in the area of the former Yugoslavia were a result of external forces, primarily of the West and the Vatican, against Orthodox Christianity and Islam. They view the region of the Western Balkans as still unstable, beset by a series of internal conflicts. The expansion of the EU and the NATO to this area is considered to be unlikely and increasing the disintegration of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Analysis of the impact of disintegration on the current ethnodemographic situation in the Republic of Srpska is made by I. Zekanović. The war lasting in this area till 1995 is defined as an ethno-religious civil war whose consequences are still felt and noticeable, among others, in the demographic structure of the Republic.

The whole is closed with an article by J. Paszkiewicz which identifies the factors influencing integration and disintegration processes in the Balkans after the cold war, based on the extensive literature of the subject. The author sees a risk of further disintegration of the area, especially in the local dimension in the context of strongly rooted mistrust in some communities. He indicates the various initiatives for interregional cooperation but also lists their disadvantages, including a low degree of institutionalization or superficiality. The barrier of mistrust at the regional level becomes an important factor determining the attitude of the authorities and local communities to European integration. Simultaneously, he indicates the danger of hegemonic tendencies that undermine the integration processes.

Thus this monograph contains seventeen papers by twenty-one scientists from twelve scientific units and six countries: six from Georgia, five from Poland, four from Bosnia and Herzegovina and two from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine each. The views presented in these articles are the Authors' private opinions.

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Chapter 1.

Political aspects

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Integration strategies of states in the territory of the former Soviet Union

Abstract: The paper reflects the major outcomes of the research conducted on the integration strategies of the states in the territory of the former Soviet Union: development stages of integration processes in the above mentioned territory as well as their characteristic types of integration unions are singled out. On the basis of the yielded data, certain integration strategies of the given states, namely, pro-Russian, pro-European, alternative pro-Russian and indefinite, are identified and analyzed. Apart from integration strategies of independent countries, integration strategies of partially recognized and unrecognized states in the post-soviet territory are taken into consideration. The degree of congruence between the declared priorities of the foreign policy in the studies states and the priorities of their foreign trade is determined.

Key words: geopolitics, the former Soviet Union, integration unions, integration strategies.

Introduction

The territory of the former Soviet Union in the meaning “new independent states”, i.e. countries which became independent as a result of the collapse of the USSR, is a region which, taking the first place in the list of regional priorities in the Russian foreign policy (in accordance with “The Concept of the Foreign Policy in the Russian Federation”, 2013), is characterized by heterogeneity, lack of obviousness and still unfinished formation of political guidelines. Hence, the goal of our research is to identify current trends in the foreign policy of the states in the post-soviet territory on the basis of the peculiarities of their integration behavior, since the new independent states have most actively employed integration relations in order to establish their national identity. Many of them regarded cooperation with other states, in many cases more influential and powerful ones,

as the key to their success, consequently, they considered integration processes to be a vital condition for their existence and further development.

Materials and research methods

Since cooperation between states affects various fields of their existence, the characteristic features and peculiarities of this interaction are studied by representatives of different sciences. Thus, the state integration processes make up a multidisciplinary subject matter of research. The most significant studies of integration processes in the territory of the former Soviet Union were primarily conducted by political scientists, economists and sociologists, such as S.R. Ananicheva (2013), A.N. Bykov (2009), S.Yu. Glazyev (2013), A.M. Libman (2012), S.G. Luzyanin (2013), V.D. Nikolaenko (2004), E.I. Pivovarov (2008), Zh.T. Toshchenko (1997), E.D. Khalevinskaya (2012), A.A. Yazkova (2009) etc. Having said that, any integration processes regardless of the addressed issues (political, social, economic, ecological etc.) possess some features which define them as the research subject matter of the political geography. Firstly, it is their obvious and doubtlessly geopolitical character, as any coordinated joint international actions (such actions being the essential nature of integration) are regarded as manifestation of alliance which is an integral part of foreign policy. Secondly, it is a territorial reference of any integration actions, since the differences in the territorial properties compel the subjects located there, i.e. states, legal entities, private people etc., to enter relationships between themselves. Therefore, the main method implemented by the author is essentially geographical, namely, a method of geopolitical analysis.

Research outcomes

The research carried out by the author revealed that the whole investigated period (1991–2013) can be divided into two stages according to the types of integration strategies in the given countries and, consequently, the types of their foreign policy: primary (1991–1995) and contemporary (1996–2013). Judging by numerous aspects, the primary period can be regarded as inertial, since the political elites attempted to implement their already established view on the regional integration processes. In compliance with this perception, such alliances of states were formed which were able to solve problems of their member-states. For our purposes, these integrations can conditionally be grouped in the following way. Firstly, these are alliances of states which were established within the frames of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), such as the Customs Union (CU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Secondly, these are sub-regional alliances in the post-soviet territory, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Thirdly, these are alliances of the states whose activities contradicted Russian geopolitical interests. The Baltic Assembly (BA) can be referred to such alliances.

All the above mentioned facts led to the formation of two kinds of primary integration strategies pursued by the states of the former Soviet Union at that time.

The first kind is “Inertial pro-Russian integration strategy” closely connected with the orientation of foreign policy towards Russia as a successor to the USSR. 11 out of 15 new independent states seceded from the Soviet Union fall into this group. All of them practically simultaneously entered the Commonwealth of Independent States. Their involvement into the activities conducted by this organization was to a large extent determined by inertia of their historical background of existence in the same political and socio-economic space with Russia. However, it should definitely be considered that both the character and the degree of these states’ integration within CIS were significantly different:

- firstly, active integration with Russia in the frames of CIS in the political sphere (CSTO) and economic sphere (CU) – Belarus and Kazakhstan;
- secondly, integration with Russia in the political and military spheres – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan (within CSTO);
- thirdly, integration with Russia in the frames of CIS in combination with active regional integration within BSEC – Ukraine, Moldova;
- fourthly, integration with Russia in the political and military spheres along with active regional integration in the frames of BSEC – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia;
- fifthly, declarative integration with Russia in the frames of CIS – Turkmenistan (observer status).

The second kind is “Integration strategy alternative to Russia” which is characteristic of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Disassociating themselves from Russia, they aspired to develop outside the zone of its political and socio-economic influence. However, in spite of being united with European countries through common history and culture, orientation towards them could not come into effect quickly by means of integration strategies due to objective reasons. National economies of the Baltic states did not have the necessary potential to be able to join either the European Union (EU) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). That is why they decided to unite their efforts on the way to European integration by establishing a regional organization, namely, the Baltic Assembly (BA). Despite the fact that the countries declared pursuing coordination policy in different fields, such as economy, social sphere, legislation, they nevertheless concentrated the main efforts on international security. Moreover, these states regarded security in the context of fight against Russia: they demanded to acknowledge occupation of the territory of the Baltic states by Soviet troops in the period of 1940 – 1991 and thus they made consequent territorial claims to Russia and generated the problem of citizenship for the Russian-speaking population; furthermore, they demanded to withdraw Russian troops; then they started creating their own coalition military forces, i.e. the Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON), The Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET) etc.

Further development of integration strategies pursued by the states of the former Soviet Union led to diversification and making these strategies more complicated and sophisticated. Hence, there appeared a strict regional division of the

former united political, economic and social space which, in turn, resulted in the formation of contemporary types of integration strategies of the states in the given region.

Along with already existing integration establishments, such as the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which became attractive to a number of states in the studied region, new alliances were forming according to the chosen policies.

The first category of such establishments is integration of countries within the CIS frames. The most active processes took place in the field of economic cooperation aimed at improving customs policy. The Customs Union smoothly grew into the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and then turned into a renewed Customs Union (considering joining the World Trade Organization) with the corresponding transition mechanism – the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) with the prospect of creating the Common Free Market Zone. This process was primarily initiated and fostered by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan owing to their geographical location. Russia and Belarus went even further by declaring creation of the Union State of Russia and Belarus which entails establishment of the so called above-government authorities which provides evidence of the highest evolutionary stage of integration processes – the creation of the union state. At different times such countries as Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Yugoslavia, and later Serbia declared their wish to join the Union State. Unlike economic integration processes, military and political ones in the CIS frames not only slowed down, but also weakened to a large extent. Out of 9 countries which initially signed the Collective Security Treaty only 6 states became members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). According to V.D. Nikolaenko (2004) it proved the existence of political disagreements among the CIS members.

The second category of establishments is sub-regional integration in the territory of the former Soviet Union. To the already existing alliances such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Organization of Central Asia Cooperation (OCAC) which later merged with EurAsEC as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) were added.

The third category of establishments is made up by alliances of countries whose activities came into contradiction with the Russian geo-political interests. Along with the Baltic Assembly (BA) there came into effect the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) and the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) which is sometimes called “Community of democracies of the Baltic Sea, Black Sea and the Caspian Sea region” and which was initially regarded as an alternative to the Commonwealth of Independent Countries.

Thus, integration processes in the studied region formed different types of the state foreign policy. On this basis four main types of integration strategies can be identified (Table 1).

Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Tadjikistan fall into the group of countries with “Pro-Russian integration strategy”. Out of 10 countries with

Table 1. Types of integration processes in the territory of the former Soviet Union, 2013 sensu T.I. Pototskaya (2013). (IS – integration strategy: 1 – Pro-Russian IS, 2 – Pro-European IS, 3 – Pro-Russian alternative IS, 4 – Indefinite IS)

Type IS	State	Integration within CIS	Sub-regional integration	Integration alternative to Russia	European integration
	Russia	CIS, CU, CSTO, EurAsEC, FTZ	SCO, BSEC, CBSS	–	NATO (PFP ¹)
	Belarus	CIS, CU, CSTO, EurAsEC, FTZ	–	–	NATO (PFP)
1	Kazakhstan	CIS, CU, CSTO, EurAsEC, FTZ	SCO	–	NATO (PFP)
	Kyrgyzstan	CIS, CU, CSTO, EurAsEC	SCO	–	NATO (PFP)
	Armenia	CIS, CSTO, FTZ	BSEC	–	NATO (PFP)
	Tadjikistan	CIS, CSTO, EurAsEC	SCO	–	NATO (PFP)
2	Estonia	–	CBSS	CDC ² , BA	EU, NATO
	Latvia	–	CBSS	CDC, BA	EU, NATO
	Lithuania	–	CBSS	CDC, BA	EU, NATO
	Ukraine	Legally not a member of CIS, FTZ	BSEC	CDC, GUAM	NATO (PFP)
3	Moldova	CIS, FTZ	BSEC	CDC, GUAM	NATO (PFP)
	Georgia	–	BSEC	CDC, GUAM	NATO (PFP)
	Azerbaijan	CIS	BSEC	GUAM	NATO (PFP)
	Uzbekistan	CIS	SCO	–	NATO (PFP)
4	Turkmenistan	CIS associate member	–	–	NATO (PFP)

¹ – The Partnership for Peace (PFP) – a program of practical bilateral cooperation between the NATO and European countries and former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus and Central Asia which are not members of this organization. It was founded in 1994.

² – The Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) – alliance of states which has primarily a declarative character. Initiatives for establishing such an alliance were frequently declared in 2005–2006.

the CIS membership they interact with one another most intensively. The priority field for cooperation is economy. Being initiators of establishment of the common economic space grounded on the elimination of any customs restrictions, the above mentioned states at different periods entered various kinds of customs alliances, such as the Customs Union, EurAsEC, FTZ according to the data presented on the official web site of the Eurasian Economic Community (2013). Owing to objective reasons, namely, due to geographic remoteness from Russia, implementation of the suggested economic integration is quite problematic for Armenia and Tadjikistan. As for Kyrgyzstan, it moved ahead of the other CIS countries in joining the World Trade Organization, thus, denying itself an opportunity to enter into any CIS customs integration. Furthermore, the above mentioned countries are actively combining their efforts in the field of military and political cooperation within the frames of CSTO. Collective forces of prompt

response established within this organization are aimed at repelling any military assault, at conducting anti-terrorist activities, at fighting against international organized crime and drug traffic as well as at eliminating consequences of any emergency situations. According to the data published on the official web site of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (2013), the military objects of this organization are located in the territory of these states.

To the group of countries with “Pro-European integration strategies” belong Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This is an only category of states in the post-soviet territory which has never declared any intention to join CIS in any of the existing forms (constant member, associate member, observer). Treating Russia as a threat to their sovereignty, these countries initially established their own integration, namely, the Baltic Assembly in order to align and coordinate their actions in the field of foreign policy. Then on the basis of their previous historical background (close relationship between Estonia and Finland, Latvia and Sweden, Lithuania and Germany) they chose European countries as the main external economic and political partner, joining first the NATO and then the EU along with that. Later on the states of this group started actively supporting those alliances which discriminated against and impinged on Russian geopolitical interests, for instance, the Community of Democratic Choice.

The group of countries with “Pro-Russian alternative integration strategy” is made up by Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Characteristic features of their geo-political position determine their objective interest in building up close political and socio-economic cooperation with Russia, which was duly reflected in the CIS membership (Georgia seceded this organization). Nevertheless, these states made some efforts to decrease their dependence from Russia. As a result, there appeared the following integrations alternative to CIS: GUAM and CDC. According to resolutions issued by Guam and published on their official site (2014), GUAM aims at reducing primarily energetic dependence of its members on Russia by providing its own territory for construction of traffic arteries to deliver cargos, mainly energy resources, without entering the territory of Russia. Apart from that, GUAM stimulated withdrawal of the Russian troops from the conflict zones in the studied countries, thus, reducing their political dependence on Russia. CDC, in its turn, striving to support oppositional regimes springing up in the states in the territory of the former Soviet Union, stimulated the so called “popular revolutions”, thus, destabilizing official ruling political regimes and, consequently, deterring the economic development in these countries.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan fall into the group of countries with “Indefinite strategy” of integration. These countries do not have their own views on the integration strategy, their involvement into the CIS processes is to a greater extent defined by their historical background of political, social and economic co-existence with Russia. This factor explains their membership in the CIS (though in different statuses), however, each state demonstrates its own attitude towards integration as a whole. Turkmenistan maintains neutrality detaching itself from alliances or groups. It participates as an associated member in the CIS. At the same time Uzbekistan carries out the most active integration policy

among other post-soviet countries revealing some inconsistency and incomprehensibility. The integration policy swings like a pendulum first from Russia to Europe and then from this vector to the national way of development, which resulted in multiple joining the Collective Security Treaty Organization and Eurasian Economic Community with the consequent withdrawal and the attempt to join GUAM. The impulse of integration in these countries does not evolve inside, it is brought from the outside by such world leaders as Russia, China and the USA. First, it can be explained by the peculiarities of the geographic location of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the border with Afghanistan. This circumstance determines the necessity to join effort against drug trafficking, terrorism, extremism coming from the territory of Afghanistan and spreading over the neighbouring countries.

In general the solutions to the problems mentioned above are found within the framework of SCO, though Turkmenistan refrains itself from this membership. It is worth mentioning that the CIS countries actively participate in the cooperation within sub-regional organizations which do not pursue any political aims but coordinate and regulate the common exploitation of natural resources, the most active of them are the Council of the Baltic Sea States and Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. SCO is considered to be an exception which presents significant interest from the geopolitical perspective. According to S.G. Luzyanin and official materials presented on the SCO site (2013) the organization appeared as a mechanism for resolving territory conflicts in China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Tadzhikistan, later it transformed into an effective regional alliance dealing with the issues of regional security (combating terrorism, extremism and separatism), economic issues (it encourages the integration of energy resources producers, transportation companies and consumers as well as the construction of common economic space) and conflicts over the partition of lands (for instance, the Caspian Sea). The geopolitical influence of SCO can also be explained by the fact that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran have the status of the SCO observers with two of them being nuclear powers. The SCO format allows the consolidation of two geopolitical spaces. First, the pan-Russia strategy increases the Russian influence. Second, it constitutes the present continental integration institution with the Russian and Chinese participation. These circumstances form the ground for the assumption that SCO can be considered as the beginning of the new military and political alliance alternative to the NATO. Although this assumption may cause a lot of discussion, it should be mentioned that all the SCO participants have the resources for the implementation of this project.

Studying the modern geopolitical status of the post-soviet countries it is necessary to analyze the so-called unrecognized states which appeared as a result of inter-ethnic conflicts: Pridnestrovye, Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia. All of them are the members of the Commonwealth of Unrecognized States (CIS -2). Being created in 2000 the organisation has a nominative character. Although Russia officially recognized only Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia it still takes an active part in conflict resolution in the territories of all these states.

Therefore, their geopolitical status is determined to a great extent by their relations with Russia.

In other words, the integration politics of the post-soviet countries proves their preferences in international cooperation: 10 countries out of 15 (or 14 out of 19 including the unrecognized states) connect their integration with Russia. This justifies the use of the “Monroe’s doctrine” towards Russia in modern geopolitical science in the meaning of «post-soviet space for Russia».

In this respect, the priorities of international politics of the present countries fully or partially coincide with their economic and trade priorities (international trade is considered to be one of the main factors of the world politics). Russia takes an active part in their international trade, especially in import. According to the data presented in the «Russian Statistical Annual» (2012) the countries with the «pro-Russian integration strategy» import over 30% from Russia: Belarus – 52%, Kazakhstan – 38%, Kirgizstan – 37%, Tadjhikistan – 50%, Ukraine – 33%. Other countries import 20% from Russia. The countries with the “indefinite integration strategy” have not provided the CIS Inter-state Statistics Committee with their international trade data for a long period of time (for instance Uzbekistan has not informed the Committee about its international trade since 1999, Turkmenistan since 2004). At the same time the countries with the pro-European integration strategies also have a significant share of the import from Russia: Estonia – 37%, Lithuania – 33%, Latvia – 14% (according to the Baltic Assembly and Baltic Export.com (2013)). The geopolitical location does not allow them to break their social and economic links with Russia!

The analysis of the Russian international politics at the first sight can be fully determined by the integration processes mentioned above, which can be proved by the regional component of the «Concept of the International Politics of the Russia Federation» (2013). The cooperation with the CIS countries is one of the main priorities; it is implemented through the mechanisms of Union State of Russia and Belarus, Customs Union, Eurasian Economic Community, Collective Security Treaty Organization. The cooperation with border states within S O and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation takes the second place whereas the cooperation with the countries of Euro-Atlantic region (the Council of Europe, OSCE, EU) and the Baltic States comes third.

However, mere comparison of the Russian declared priorities of the international politics with the priorities of its international trade suggests the idea of the incompleteness of the integration processes in the post-soviet space and their low level of efficiency. The geographic analysis of the Russian international trade shows that the post-soviet countries have never been its top priority in contrast with the European countries. At the very beginning of the integration processes in the post-soviet territory the European region had 42% of the general goods turnover of Russia (1995) whereas the CIS countries had about 22%. Later, the turnover with Europe increased upto 46% in 2011, but the share of the post-soviet countries decreased and reached 16%. Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan were the main partners of Russia in the post-soviet territory. Only Belarus managed to increase its share in the Russian goods turnover from 4% up to 5% whereas the

share of Ukraine and Kazakhstan decreased from 10% to 6% and from 4% to 2% correspondingly. According to the CIS Inter-state Statistical Committee (2013), the increase of the goods turnover with the Asian countries from 12% upto 23% (first of all with China) is the only geographic aspect of the international Russian trade, which has the direct connection with the integration processes.

Therefore, the present research showed that Russia is the integrator of the post-soviet and Eurasian space carrying out its active international political and economic integration based on various mechanisms of their implementation. From the geopolitical perspective there is a tendency of the «Big Eurasian space» construction or should there be another name for the cooperation of Europe, Russia and Asia?

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Challenges of integration Ukraine to European Union (advantages and problems)

Abstract: The path of Ukraine is an important topic not only national but global scale, as elected by the people Ukraine is ambiguous way relationship. In an attempt to publishing author rationale for steps to reform the economy and socio-economic complex of the country in order to establish standards of public administration, regional development, and others who would primarily provide developing countries and would adapt it to the possibilities that open integration with the European Union. The article reveals not only the attractiveness integration of Ukraine and the European Union, but also opportunities to European countries as a result of the integration process of Ukraine.

Key words: economic integration, geographic location, regional development, economic development model, EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, theory of economic integration, socio-economic complex.

Introduction

During last centuries, Ukraine existing as part of other countries without traditional attribute of independent state: foreign policy, independent economic policy, monetary system and own money, army and police. Ukrainian language prohibited in official use for fifteen times. Prehistory and modest history of independent Ukraine normally should keep out country of any integration units. Nevertheless, more than 60% present of Ukrainian citizens support steps towards integration Ukraine to European Union. Why? Historic experience does not teach Ukrainians, isn't it? No. It means Ukrainians ever feel themselves Europeans and Ukraine ever being a part of European civilization and European culture. What are the reasons to move so dramatically to European civilization, economy and culture? Europe is different level of the development civilization. Ukraine was

a part of this civilization and in many areas donor and defender of the European Civilization. Ukraine is closely linked with Europe at the level of natural resources social ties and mentality. For long time Ukraine was not developed in close industrial cooperation with Europe and used different standards for economic development. This situation left Ukraine out the process of European integration and behind European standards. Very close human contacts Ukraine to European countries dramatically changed Ukrainian understanding of European choice. Ukrainian society was and is the main engine of the movement towards Europe and European values. Ukrainian choice is European Union. Country understands which steps we should to do and which stages in our development we should achieve to approach he level of development European Society

Characteristics of research object

According to B. Balassa (1961) definition of economic integration as "abolishing discrimination within the area". During dozens years Ukraine was separated from Europe because country was dependent. It was a part of Soviet Union and all the links were developing not directly, but thought the decision of central power. Beginning of 90th brought crucial changes in relations between Ukraine and European countries. Country began to create own neighborhood and partnership policy with high developed European countries and countries in transition (Eastern, Central and Southern Europe). First steps of Ukraine as independent state accompanied by founding and enlargement of European Union. Ideas French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman to unite European states and start to create common market led to the steps towards founding Coal and Steel Community (1951), European economic Communities and European Atomic Community (1957). The most strong countries of Europe had started unification in the most sensitive and important areas of European economy, required investments and regulation within the common market and protection on the world market.

Six European countries united efforts in the most sensitive areas of their economies – steel and metal and coal industries, nuclear power industry (branches required huge investments and scientific support). All the countries signed treaties had the same level of economic development and very similar historic and social development. At the same in the research of European Union development was not underlined territorial as one of the main reasons compactness of location countries participants of treaties as one of the main reasons such union.

The second important reason of founding Union of Coal and Steel was very strong competitiveness between these European countries. In less than 60 years, there are 28 countries in EU and EFTA countries closely cooperate with the union. So strong that it was the reason of two world wars during XX century with millions of the victims. To our mind, these reasons were the main reasons of founding scaled Union, which became to play important role in the world economic and politic processes and transform Europe in one of global center of influence and the formation of world order.

EU enlargement took place quickly and rapidly, forming a continuous territorial array that covers the territory across Europe, creating social and political territorial entity with the rules and laws that allow balanced and progressive development of the whole continent. European policy in the face of the European Union is to control the countries bordering the association by gradual economic reforms in these countries and the introduction of rules and values that are the foundation of European values. Among the long-term objectives of the EU is to create a European center around safety belt with countries that are friendly to the EU and seek to introduce European socio-economic market model.

Ukraine belongs to the mandate of the European Union, as outlined above meets the criteria for EU enlargement. On the other hand, for 24 years of independent Ukraine is still in the search for social and economic model that would ensure its rapid and progressive development. Despite the natural resources, economic and social potential, and especially economic geographic position. Search model of socio-economic structure predisposes the choice of politicians and the population of Ukraine as to what the best model is the European model.

In addition to reforming its own socio-economic model of Ukraine for several reasons hopes to become one of the world's most powerful production centers of industrial and agricultural products with a giant market of the European Union. It should be noted reciprocity of interests of both the EU and Ukraine in the dynamic development of the latter, given the global security aspects, given the rules communicated world security order placement Russia Ukraine on the brink of confrontation makes it strategically important area for global security in the European Union.

Ukraine at the beginning of the road to European integration has many problems that encourage its search partnership in solving them. Such problems should be highlighted social and political problems, which is a direct impediment of Ukrainian society. Socio-political problems include a complete corruption of society, lack of public confidence in the judiciary and the government, the economic and financial system that stand in the way of the development of business (economics) Ukraine. Corruption of Ukrainian society prevents equitable allocation and management of public finances, which in turn leads to poverty and the shadow economy. These processes lead to corrosion of society and enhance national security threat.

During the period of independent development have made some mistakes in the privatization of public property (including voucher privatization) that led to the redistribution of property in the initial stage of «wild capitalism» in Ukraine for shadow and criminal clans that privatized basic industrial engineering and joined the management of financial streams strategic export oriented industries, is the basis for payment balance of Ukraine. Without additional investments and, in some cases, due to government support formed billions in wealth minor share of the Ukrainian society, which began forming their own wealth actively incorporated into the power and shape their own business environment that aims not for a country or society, and has only private interests. Such an environment increasingly influenced leaching from public funds for such groups. Diminished

capacity of the state on funding and forecasting its development and the state budget deficit has been actively covered not by economic growth and by external and internal borrowing. Stagnation is accompanied by invading Russian troops in the eastern regions of Ukraine and occupation of Crimean peninsula. In this state, Ukraine is reforming the economy and social relations to overcome the internal crisis and external enemy, adapting standards and regulatory framework according to the legal framework of the EU.

Ukraine plays an important role as a transit country, while ensuring the European Union's energy. The country is also a major exporter of commodities metallurgical complex (enriched ore, pellets, coke and coking coal, manganese concentrates and poly-metallic ores, billets and primary processing steel cycle) to agricultural raw materials and semi-finished products and so on. The structure of exports to the EU Ukraine is characterized by the type structure exports, which is dominated by raw materials and intermediates.

The same situation observed in Ukraine. The most painful areas of Ukrainian economy now is energy sector and high-energy consumption economy based on the old technologies and non-professional management, absence of strategic vision of Ukrainian economy development low competitiveness of Ukrainian economy.

Potential of Ukrainian economy base on the natural resources (mineral resources, climatic resources and black soils), large-scale heavy and chemical industries, machine-building industry, agriculture, high-qualified labor and very good transition location.

Traditionally Ukrainian economy was depended on the economies of others post-soviet countries. Ukrainian economy was developing as a part of common economy. After "divorce" and founding independent Ukrainian economy was still depended on the economic links to NIS. Only resources base branches were privatized and get start to produce for international market. There are steel and metal industry and chemical industry (production of fertilizes). These brunches born rich elite listed in the Forbes and other lists. These industries became the main export industries of Ukraine during last dozen years. They were generating high profit but corruption schemes does not bring big advantages to the state of Ukraine. Steel and metal works in spite of high profitability were not modernized and refurbished and the cost of final production remain very high. Works produced mainly mass, raw products or semi-finished products for further processing. These developments made steel and metal industry less competitive to American, Asian and Japanese producers. Ukraine lost time and markets. This example shows development of core branches of Ukrainian industry.

Ukraine lost competitiveness in other branches of industries, like machine building. More than 50% of machine building industry of Ukraine were companies produce military products or component for military products and weapons. On collapse of Soviet Union most of them lost state orders and financing. They were not adapted to the market conditions, lost highly qualified labor. A lot of them, were not privatized and not supported by state.

Different situation in agriculture. Beginning of XXI century was the time of reformation of state owned farms (collective farms). All collective farms' property was divided between collective farm members, including agriculture lands and privatized. Majority of collective farms disappeared. Instead of them were founded big agro-industrial companies based on one or few final products. Fast growing companies concentrated land resources and production facilities (the highest concentration of the land resources in the world up to ½ million hectares per company). Ukraine has highest level of concentration in production of several agro-industrial products like sunflower oil, chicken, cereals, milk and others. Agriculture is growing rapidly and stable as one of the main Ukrainian export branches. Good resources of commodities and raw materials is basis of fast development of food industry.

These examples illustrate the way of development Ukrainian economy and the most real reflection of tendencies of its development.

Beginning, from 1991 Ukraine was as recipient of world and European experience in different areas of state management, but no crucial improvement in the organization of social and economic life. Beginning from the end of 2013 Ukrainians announced about the main way of the country development, reformation and movement towards European standards of life and management. This decision was very painful and long. More and more Ukrainians were convinced that no alternative to European development.

The aim of the movement towards European Union is to increase level of state and society organization and life in compliance to European level. Lack of organization the main problem of Ukrainian society. For example, if we compare GDP Ukraine and Kingdom of Sweden and Poland, we can state difference between countries in the level of GDP per capita: 21,000 USD in Poland, 40,900 USD in Sweden and 7,400 USD. Difference is estimated 3 time less compare with Poland and, more than 5.5 times – compare with Sweden. It means Ukraine should make relevant steps towards increase of productivity and GDP level to be equal in European Union (Bobrovytsyi, 2014a).

Geographic location

Ukraine is second biggest (due to the territory) country in Europe located in eastern part of the continent and binds Asian and Middle-East and Caucuses countries with European Union overland and the most convenient sea ways. Ukraine does not play yet important role in the development such economic ties in spite of the favorable economic and geographic location. In a future location of Ukraine should increase direct overland links European countries with Asia, Caucasus and Middle East. The development of Black Sea infrastructure and adaptation of Ukrainian road and railway system can increase its role in development trade between European countries and Asia. Ukraine should become a trade and transportation hub of the Eastern Europe and increase movement goods to and from Europe. The Ukrainian biggest Black Sea ports even now play important role in

container shipping to and from Europe binding Black and Baltic Seas. Ukraine is the shortest way from Northern Europe to Southern

In the development trade with Asian countries Ukraine can be the way of the fastest and cheapest way trade development of Europe and Asian and Caucasus countries.

Geographic location of Ukraine play important role in the development European security, because Ukraine is located on one had with European Union on other hand with aggressive countries which can threaten to eastern borders of European Union.

Big differences in the level of socio-economic organization of European and Ukrainian societies is big danger not only for Ukraine, but in the first time for Ukraine and for Europe too. Decision Ukrainians to change their country is decision to move to well-organized society. Ukraine borders with EU countries – (Poland – 428 km, Slovakia – 90 km, Hungary – 103 km, Romania – 538 km) – totally 1159 km. Economic and geographic location of Ukraine play important role for trade development and is a basis for country industrial development. Owing the location country can participate in development of Common European Market of goods and services doing positive impact of European development. At the same time Ukraine has positive impact of the regional competition in EU, as transit country for transportation of energy (natural gas, crew oil, semi-products) from Russian Federation, Middle Asia and Caucasus countries to Europe and vice versa – European export goods and technologies to those countries. Due to own possibilities Ukraine can be European partner in purchase of natural gas and keeping reserves in the storages on its own territory.

Ukraine due to the economic and geographic location open huge possibilities for the development production facilities of European companies as close to markets of the Middle Asia and Caucasus countries and other countries of Southwest Asia and Middle East.

As part of this publication, there is no possibility to stay on a detailed analysis of the sectoral structure of the economy of Ukraine and the positive and negative aspects of the impact of economic integration on their functioning as a topic for a separate study.

It is important to review the experience of economic integration of Ukraine, as it was very deeply integrated into the Soviet Union and by definition B. Balassa (1961) was in the highest stage of the integration process – full integration, which means – a member of the formation of a single currency, economic and political union.

Said experience enables an objective assessment of the benefits and problems of full integration. Learned from the experience of the selected lessons will give the opportunity to objectively assess the processes of interaction within any entities and take advantage of this partnership for now and the future membership for self-development in the association and the benefits of the common market for the development of the continental market and the development of socio-economic regional complex.

Within a few years of hard work Ukraine and the EU was prepared fundamental document EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which was to be signed by the President of Ukraine and Leaders of States of the European Union in Vilnius, November 21, 2013. However, the interference of the Russian Federation, this event was disrupted. Disruption of the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU has caused dramatic events in Ukraine ended escape the incumbent President and open war the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which led to the occupation (Anschluss) of Crimea and intervention in eastern regions of Ukraine.

Completing the signature of the Association took place in two phases and completed in 2014 against the background of open aggression against the Ukrainian state. European integration choice of Ukraine was confirmed by the majority of citizens of Ukraine, who own valuable life even defended and continue to defend it.

Implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU today is a chance for Ukraine not only integrate to powerful integration association in the world, but also a chance for their own development based on democratic principles and laws, which are successfully used in 28 EU countries, providing progressive economic and social development balancing the continent and the world political and economic processes shaping global economic, political and security order.

What will be achieved, as a result of the Association Agreement with the EU? First of all, it is a complete reform of public administration, the judiciary, fighting corruption and transparent decision-making at the state level. The agreement provides for a continuous dialogue on foreign and security policy. The sides will hold regular consultations in improving public financial management and technical assistance in establishing public finance management.

It is important the Agreement on Trade between Ukraine and the EU as part of EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which provides for a gradual opening of markets and providing initially increased quotas and preferences for Ukrainian goods on the Common European market. This applies particularly sensitive list of headings that are always under international trade were protected items listed trading restrictions. These groups include products of agricultural commodities and food industry, metallurgy and production of large chemistry.

The agreement spelled out in detail the terms of cooperation and collaboration in the field of energy development and adaptation of Ukrainian energy to power w foundations for Energy Europe, energy efficiency, new energy technologies, the usage of alternative and renewable sources of energy savings and reduce energy use per unit of GDP.

The agreement also provides for cooperation in all sectors of the economy: industry, transport infrastructure, construction, development of services, innovation and educational activities.

The agreement also provides for the free movement of people and capital flows, cooperation and assistance in the financial and investment fields.

The selected path Ukraine's integration with the European Union provides a range of activities of national and regional character, which can be described as the implementation of the strategy development.

The measures to reform the institutional framework, regulatory and fiscal policy, improving public financial management framework is the only changes that include improving governance through simplification and transparency of public administration. In this context, the question arises as to areas of the country as a whole and identify areas of a country and its regions. It is necessary prioritization based on natural conditions and economic potential, the presence and quantity of labor resources, their qualifications, and availability of industrial, transport and social infrastructure. It should be developed in line with forecasts and models of economic development of Ukraine as a whole, industries and regions, and international development projects and the need for integrated development within the economic area with the European Union.

For medium and long-term development, it is necessary to create the model of development that involves setting a global medium and long-term multifunction tasks and involves the concentration of efforts on the development of the country one of the elements that provide the functionality of the economy and for a while increasing market capacity, allowing the start date boost to the economy and in the short term by creating the maximum number of jobs, providing a full development of the maximum number of industries and regions.

This may be the impetus intensive development of transport infrastructure through involvement in the maximum number of companies and branches of engineering, construction, design institutes and offices. The development of transport infrastructure be national, based on the total scheme developed for the whole country and with the participation of relevant enterprises, industries and manpower from all regions of Ukraine. Implementation of this plan will help improve transport infrastructure to the European level will provide orders of machine building, chemical industry, construction industry, etc., and create millions of jobs. The plan of transport infrastructure development will increase the capacity of the domestic market for many industries and gain competitive experience in implementing large-scale infrastructure projects that can later be exported as individual items or complete solutions.

Ukraine is in the initial implementation is really the way to a market economy and standards that meet European and at this stage need technical assistance. However, the successful integration provides, as agreed during the formation of the European Economic Community, the free movement of persons, goods and capital. Achieving all these components and successful security policy will make it possible quickly and accurately reform the socio-economic complex of the country and adapt it to the European system of relations.

Conclusion

This publication analyzes the experiences and stages of integration processes in Europe and Ukraine. The analysis also mentioned Ukraine for the development of Europe as geographically neighbor state, which has important international transit location and favorable economic geographical location.

Based on the analysis of the Association Agreement EU and Ukraine highlighted areas for reform of public life in Ukraine and some of its regions. The model of development, which includes priority development of transport infrastructure as an engine run industrial complex of Ukraine, development of individual regions and increasing capacity of the domestic market.

Priority infrastructure will create millions of jobs and reduce the pressure on the fund to support the unemployed. The result of such a medium model development is to improve transport infrastructure to the European; activation of the internal market; development of relevant industries and enhance their competitiveness.

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Russian-Turkish cooperation in the Black Sea region: geo-strategic aspect

Abstract: The article contents the analysis of the post-Soviet trend of Russian-Turkish relations. The role of the Black Sea region as a priority area of cooperation between Russia and Turkey is accented within the article. It is shown that the “return” of Russia into the Black Sea region is not only projected on Russian-Turkish relations, but also leads to increase of the meridional connectivity of the Black Sea regional space.

Key words: Black Sea, Russia, Turkey.

Introduction

In the modern geo-strategic context the metaregion of Black Sea becomes the space of increasing priority, it is one of the most important Eurasian “crosshairs” and traditionally important (and sensitive to bilateral relations) habitat for the Russian-Turkish cooperation. For the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey the Black Sea region is not only “natural” communication corridor and, at the same time, the barrier space, but also the most “close” (geographically, historically, mental) area where Russian and Turkish current geostrategic interests overlap (it can be considered as the their “pendulum” redominance), as well as the most important component of an extensive joint geohistorical heritage of the two countries (Druzhinin, Ibragimov, Baseman, 2013). The situation in the Black Sea, as well as the positioning of the leading world and regional centers of power in this metaregion is increasingly dependent on Russian-Turkish dialogue resulting from a complex, spontaneously evolving Eurasian context (that is occasionally under the encountered turbulence (Ferit, 2014), but, nevertheless, in the last quarter of the century it seems to be, in general, positive, demonstrating upward trend).

Since the early 1990's Turkey plays increasingly active and important role in the Eurasian geopolitical and geo-economic structure. It seems to be not only one of the priority Russia's partners in Eurasia, but also its strategic ally, rival, hypothetical "alternate" (in the long term, depending on the direction of the trend, specific geopolitical, geo-economic, geodemographic and geocultural context).

Post-Soviet evolution of Russian-Turkish relations: the "Black Sea component"

The intensity (and tone) of the Russian-Turkish dialogue in recent years has consistently been worked influenced by:

- "historical track" of the bilateral political and economic cooperation; commitment previously allied unions with third countries and their associations;
- pragmatic economic (foreign) interests;
- the extent and effectiveness of both native Eurasian geopolitical and geo-economic activity, and similar actions of the "opposite side";
- balance of political forces in each country, the possibility of exposure to it by using the "external" events and their images;
- planetary and Eurasian geopolitical and geo-economic architectonics, the presence of common threats and challenges, as well as the degree of solidarity with the opinion (and behavior) of the dominant geopolitical actors.

Characteristically, it was the collapse of the USSR and the ensuing short period of greatest geostrategic passivity (and weaknesses) of Russia to be clearly perceived by Turkish researchers as a significant transition from the "busy" nature of relations between Russia and Turkey (Muzaffer, 2010) to "friendly and warm" relations (Ayhan, 1997). Under the Agreement dated may 25, 1992, Russia and Turkey have declared each other as "friendly countries"; the same year signed agreement on Black Sea economic cooperation (initiated earlier, in 1990, by Turkish President Turgut Ozal). Russian "shuttle business" began to develop at this background. It can be viewed as the actual forerunner of the later (from the turn of the 2000s) "explosive" expansion of bilateral trade relations, which also accelerated "diffusion" of previously existed pre-emptive "barrier" of the Black Sea geo-political boundaries. In parallel, the "Eurasian vector" of Turkey's interests performed clearly. In 1992 Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was organized under the Ministry of foreign Affairs; it was followed by the establishment of International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY), aimed at dissemination in "Turkic" (on the dominant ethno-linguistic component) regions and States Turkish schools, the Latin alphabet and the Turkish language; 30–31 October 1992 in Turkey was held the first Turkic summit, which was attended by the heads of all Turkic republics. In the same period the channel "TRT Eurasia" was created; Turkish Eximbank was founded with the purpose to provide investments in this metaregion, and Turkish Airlines started regular flights to Azerbaijan and the capital of the Central Asian Turkic republics. Characteristically, many Western States, especially the USA, explicitly or implicitly supported this initiative of Turkey, as it fully corre-

sponded with the strategic guidelines for the re-establishment of Soviet “geopolitical heritage” that was declared later (second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s).

Appeared in the second half of the 1990s, a short “cooling” in Turkish-Russian relations seems to be not only the result of the Turkey’s actions in 1994 and 1998, changes in national Regulations of navigation in the Straits, either the Russian trend to defend its positions and interests in the North Caucasus, but also important circumstances (symptomatically fixed by Turkish authors (Muzaffer, 2010)) connected with the efforts of the Turkish Republic to provide expansion and construction of the “Turkic world from the Adriatic to the great wall of China”, that could not make the expected effect in the short-time perspective. Moreover, as the actual invasion (it was “invasion” to be the term for the assessment of such situation used by the prominent expert on Mediterranean-Black Sea themes, A. A. Yazkova (2009) of the external forces (primarily the United States and the European Union) took place in the Black Sea-Caspian geopolitical space (and beyond). It caused the situation in which “the Eurasian vector” of geopolitics of the southern neighbor of Russia noticeably lost its attractiveness for the most of the post-Soviet Turkic States and has departed in their foreign policy agenda to the “second plan”. On the contrary, Russia, acquiring the status of one of the leading global energy exporters and becoming attractive to migrants, has increased the potential economic (and therefore political, cultural) cooperation with neighbor countries, including the Turkish Republic, where, meanwhile, also significant, two-fold in its vector changes took place.

On the one hand, against the background of tangible demographic growth Turkish Republic has demonstrated an enviable (from other Eurasian “power centers” second only to China) economic development. Only for the last eight years, the population of Turkey has increased by 10 million or 14.3%; its total demographic potential increased from 12.5 to 76 million people, i.e., 6 times since the inception of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Since 2000 average annual positive dynamics of Turkey’s GDP was 4.8%. It must be emphasized that in recent years, population growth (forecasted and perspective; according to the Turkish Statistics Institute data, the population of the Republic will vary in the range from 94 to 110 million people by mid-century) supported the growth of income and effective demand, which creates significant endogenous foundation for sustainable socio-economic development, expansion of Turkey’s economic ties, its increasingly confident positioning as a “de facto” major regional power center.

On the other hand, the geo-economic growth of Turkey’s influence from the middle of the 2000th years was accompanied by “dewesternization” of its foreign economic relations, increasing the change of its orientation from traditional markets of the “Euro-Atlantic countries” to the East, North and South, gaining thereby obvious “Eurasian” vector. For example, if in 2004 the total shares of Germany, the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Holland and the USA in Turkish exports accounted for 51%, in 2013 – only 33%. Similarly the dependence of the Turkish economy on the Western countries’ import decreased. In 2012, the traditional economic (and geopolitical) partner of the Turkish Republic – Germany – in ex-

ports to Turkey lost to China, which eventually became the second (after Russia) supplier of goods to Turkish markets.

New geo-economic trends, predetermined increasing dependence of the Turkish Republic on the scale and nature of interaction with the Russian Federation and other significant exporters of energy resources, strengthened the background for partial reislamization of Turkey. The protracted for many decades pause in the process of the acceptance into the EU (since 1963 it became “an associate member”; in 1987 – has filed a formal application for membership; 1999 – was included in the list of candidates for membership in the European Union) has created a favorable environment for symptomatic, significant progress in public consciousness: according to the Center for European studies of the Boğaziçi University, in 2003, the number of Turkish citizens positively related to Turkey’s accession into the EU amounted to 69.3%, while in 2012 this figure had dropped to 47.1%; the number of persons negatively related to the idea of Turkey joining the EU, however, growth from year to year. At the same time fewer and fewer of the Turkish respondents perceive their country as the part of Europe: in 2003, 70% of respondents believed Turkey to be geographical part of Europe, to the present time this figure had fallen to 46% (Druzhinin, Ibragimov, Baseman, 2013). It is characteristically in this connection that in the spring of 2011 Turkey has applied for membership in the SCO, and in 2012 received the status of “dialogue partner” in this organization. The idea of integration into the Eurasian processes, awareness of the increasing values of the “Eurasian vector” in the politics of the country, as well as in the selection of geo-economic and geopolitical orientations, attunement of “Eurasianism” to national interests, becomes increasingly popular in the Turkish Republic (Ferit, 2014). The consideration of the Turks and the Russians as a “sister community” with a common “Eurasian identity” also takes place (the Holy Quran, 2011).

In the context of the above-mentioned geopolitical and geo-economic transformations, since the turn of the third Millennium the “constructive policy language and the elements of trust” entered into the Russian-Turkish bilateral relations (Göktürk, 2013), supported by high dynamics of escalating foreign trade relations. The volume of Turkish exports to Russia had been increasing until the global crisis of 2008.

2008 was the culmination in the growth of the value of Russian exports to Turkey (in particular, providing two-thirds of its needs for natural gas for the expense of Russian supplies). On this basis, the shapes of the “strategic cooperation” between Russia and Turkey became more and more visible (mainly in such sectors as trade, tourism and energy). The Black Sea positioning and interaction of the two countries played a more significant role in such “strategic cooperation”. It is not the will of case that the Russian-Turkish geo-economic (partly geopolitical) “convergence”, and appeared since 2010 “pause” in the progressive dynamics of interstate relations – almost chronologically correlated with the gradual (but consistent) “return” of Russia into the Black Sea region (we can agree with I. M. Busygin (2011) that in the first post-Soviet decade, this metaregion actually stayed on the periphery of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation).

The “return” of Russia in the Black Sea region: the perspective of Russian-Turkish relations

From the late 1990s – early 2000s due to “explosive” increase the volume of Russian supply at the world energy market, exports of metal, grain, sunflower (and the parallel increase of import dependence) in the Black Sea there were implemented major investment projects such as Caspian Pipeline Consortium, “Blue stream”, reconstruction of the Novorossiysk sea port and other. While by the mid-1990s, the cargo turnover of Novorossiysk (the dominant in scale not only in the South of Russia, but in Russia in the whole) was only slightly more than 52 million tons, by 2012 it reached 159 million tones (in 2013 – 141 million). There are about 30% of total Russian exports of oil and petroleum products that come through the port terminals of the South of Russia at the present time.

Russia’s efforts to make the coastal South-Western borders not only a major transport and logistics complexes, but a kind of “Black Sea arc of advanced development” – supported investments in organization and holding of the XXII Olympic winter games in Sochi (thanks to the “Olympic project” Krasnodar region for the whole five years has been able to double the annual volume of investments in fixed capital; during this period the population of Sochi steadily increased on average by 2% per year) (Druzhinin, 2014).

Finally, the Black Sea region has gained not only transport, logistics and communication value for the modern Russia, but became one of the few real “poles” of population and socio-economic growth, increasingly asserting itself (within the process of transition to a “post-secular society” (Habermas, 2011)) as an integral (and important) part of the national geographical, historical, economic, cultural and sacred space.

The return of the Crimea into the Russian jurisdiction not only significantly changed the situation in the Black Sea, but also exposed the general fundamental progress in Eurasian and global geopolitical architectonics.

Modern “Russian Black Sea coast” (geographically expanded and supported by the government through the financial, infrastructural and military support) objectively “wedged” into the Euro-Atlantic Black Sea region (considered by the strategists of the West as the part of the increasingly “acquired” part of the Eurasian space, the link between the EU and the “Greater Middle East” (Aliboni, 2006)), becoming its distinct controversies. It caused, in turn, the further geopolitical fragmentation of the metaregion (with the formation of new barriers, “fault lines” and output of several alternative geoconcept of the “Black Sea”). Also it has significantly reduced the effectiveness of the interstate formats of the Black Sea cooperation (such as the BSEC, the “Black Sea synergy”, and so on) formed in the previous two decades. In addition, the Ukrainian crisis marked the appearance of another major focus of military-political confrontation in the Black Sea region (that previously has been living in the situation of “inherent instability” (Yazkova, 2011)). Finally, during the March events of 2014 the deeper mutual “unconformity” took place between the spheres of Russian geo-strategic interests and the Black Sea segment of the so-called “Turkish World” (Turk Dunyasi).

How believes (not without reason) Tarakji (2012), Professor at Izmir University of Pampering: “Turkish foreign policy is now defined only by national interests”. Seeking to establish itself as a “regional power”, a transit country and a mediator, and probably not wanting to lose the new positive dynamics of foreign trade interactions with the Russian Federation (since 2009 from year to year Turkey export volume in Russia has been increasing steadily, exceeding pre-crisis level), Ankara has not aligned itself with the policies of the West even in the situation of the Ukrainian crisis, refusing to enter the anti-sanctions (although have endorsed a resolution of the UN General Assembly in Crimea in March). Against this background, (unfortunately!) there are replicated judgment in the publications of some Turkish think tanks, which contain the thesis that the strengthening of Russia is “historically unprofitable for Turkey” (Ayhan, 1999), and the activity of Russia does not leave any “space in the whole of Eurasia” for the Republic of Turkey (Göktürk, 2013), and “the search for union-axis between Turkey and Russia... obviously would drown in the deep waters of the Black Sea” (Mehmet, 2014). However, as it was convincingly demonstrated in early December 2014 by the State visit of the President of the Russian Federation to Ankara, Turkish-Russian geostrategic “link” already has a substantial “margin of safety”, while Turkey has the desire (and political will) to make productive use of its geo-economic interests within the new geopolitical situation.

Conclusion

The abandonment of the “South stream” construction in favor of “Turkish route” for Russian natural gas significantly increases the meridional communication in the Black Sea space and brings to importance growth of the Russian-Turkish Black Sea coast (as a special geo-economic concept). The gas transportation system (intended to increase in potential) is to become its “axial element”. As well as the biggest settlement centers are to become its economic-urban dominants: Istanbul megametropolis (together with other territories of the Sea of Marmara region containing 23 million inhabitants and concentrating 45% of Turkey’s GRP) and its transequatorial “counterweight” – “scattering” of the Russian Black Sea-Azov group of settlement systems (Rostov, Krasnodar-Novorossiysk and Simferopol-Sevastopol-Yalta, Sochi) with aggregate demographic potential in 6.0–6.5 million people. In fact, there are important preconditions for the subsequent formation of the cross-border (and transequatorial) metaregion, that is complex in structure and spatial configuration, asymmetric in its economic and demographic potential of individual components. This metaregion in the full sense could be called “Eurasian”, because it provides the further reinforcing of the historical significance of the Black Sea as one of the most important and complex spatial projections of relations between Russia and Turkey.

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Chapter 2.

Economic aspect

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Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union as a factor of integration into economic space

Abstract: This article analyzes the foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union for the period of 2000–2013 years. Conclusions about the dynamics of the foreign trade balance, geographical and sectoral structure of exports and imports of goods and services are made based on official statistics; differences within the regions of Belarus are detected. Problem areas of Belarus' foreign trade development in general and with the European Union and priorities for further development of foreign trade relations are identified.

Key words: foreign trade, economic specialization, sectoral structure of trade, the geographical structure of trade, regional differences.

Introduction

In Belarus, as a small country with an open economy, foreign trade occupies a central position in the system of international economic relations and foreign trade strategy is intended to improving the efficiency and competitiveness of exports. Active foreign economic activities in conditions of limited resources, small domestic market capacity and favorable economic and geographical location aimed at expanding the geography and the searching for new trade markets becomes a priority in the country, determines the overall development of the economy and causes a significant involvement of Belarus into the international exchange.

A number of European Union states have been the leading trade partners of Belarus historically since the acquisition of sovereignty. However, in recent years, a mutual interest in expanding trade relations with European Union partner coun-

tries has activated. In this regard, the analysis of the geographical and sectoral structure of foreign trade with world leading international association is important. The study of various aspects of the external trade of the Republic of Belarus have a great importance in the scientific community, which is reflected in the publications of leading economists, sociologists, geographers and others: Antipova E.A., 1996; Reshetnikov D.G., 2002; Davydenko E.L., 2008a, b, c; Motorina O., Goncharik N., 2008; Dajneko A.E., 2010; Jurik V.V., 2010; Sukach O.A., 2010; Dajneko A.E., 2011a, b; Shmarlovskaja G.A., 2012; Antipova E.A., Fakeyeva L.V., 2014; Dajenko E.A., 2014.

This article is based on the analysis of the main indicators of foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union for the period of 2000–2013 years, which is presented in four sections. In the first section authors define ranking positions of the country by of foreign trade indicators on the background of the European Union states. The second section presents the development factors of foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus. The third section is devoted to the identification of temporal and geographical shifts of foreign trade in general and for goods and services in particular. In the fourth section, the authors focus on the distinctions of Belarus foreign trade by administrative regions. For the analysis, the authors used the method of historical approach, time series and groups, graphic-analytical method and other. The informational base for the study was the official statistical data of the National Statistics Committee, which formed the basis of all tables and graphs presented in the article (Vneshnjaja..., 2014).

Belarus in the rankings of international trade

Estimation of the place of the Republic of Belarus in the international trade structure was carried on the following parameters: volume of foreign trade of goods, the volume of goods export, the share of country in world exports, volume of goods import, the share of country in world imports, balance of foreign trade. During the period of 2000–2013 years a fivefold increase in the volume of foreign trade in Belarus was registered – from 16 to 80 billion dollars. At the same time the state's position in the ranking with the European Union states has changed slightly: in 2000 Belarus was ranked on 22nd position, in 2013 – 20th.

In terms of *volume of exports*, which is increased during the study period in the Republic of Belarus for more than five times – from 7 to 37 billion dollars, in 2000 the country was ranked the 22nd position. At the present time, the country's rank changed slightly, but it has improved somewhat. Now it is the 19th place, and Belarus is in the same group with Greece by the volume of exports. Analysis of the rating of the Republic of Belarus by the *share in the world exports* showed that the proportion of the country remains low, however, for the period of 2000 – 2013 years this parameter was doubled – from 0.11 to 0.20%. In 2000, Belarus was ranked on 22nd position by the share in world exports, now it is 19th place. According to this indicator, Belarus is in the same group with such countries as Greece, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovenia.

Analysis of the *volume of imports* dynamics shows fivefold increase also – from 9 to 43 billion dollars. According to this indicator in 2000, Belarus was ranked on 22nd position and was in the same group with Croatia and Slovenia. In 2013 Belarus' position improved somewhat – up to the 20th place. Belarus share in *world exports* is low, despite the fact that due to the significant increase of exports, this parameter increased from 0.13 to 0, 23%. Lithuania and Bulgaria are characterized by similar rates. Belarus is currently ranked 20th in the world by the share of imports of goods.

The Republic of Belarus for the period of 2000–2013 years was characterized by a *negative balance of foreign trade*, which has increased by more than 4 times – from 1.3 to 5.8 billion dollars. In 2000 20 countries of the European Union were characterized by a negative balance of foreign trade also. Similar as Belarus figures were typical for most of the former socialist countries – Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania. Currently, with the increase of the volume of negative balance of foreign trade in Belarus 18 states of the European Union have the excess of exports over imports, and the corresponding figures are peculiar to Austria and Belgium.

Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus development factors in the XXI century

Development of foreign economic relations between the countries is affected by a range of factors: economic and geographical location, natural resources potential, historically formed structure of the economy and the current level of development of individual industrial branches, geo-economic, geopolitical and other factors. For the Republic of Belarus, located at the intersection of major trans-European communication routes connecting the East and West, North and South of Europe, a factor of economic and geographical location have a great importance in determining the structure of foreign trade and specialization of services export in transport services.

Belarus is a country where through the main energy supply from Russia to Western Europe by oil and gas pipelines is carried out. Central and transit position of Belarus on the shortest and convenient ways from Russia (the largest supplier of energy resources and raw materials) to Western Europe (the largest consumer of imported energy resources and raw materials), as well as from the Black Sea region to the Baltic countries, had a positive impact on the development of economic ties with Russia, CIS and Baltic countries as well as with other countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe.

Peculiarities of the natural resource potential of the Republic of Belarus (relative poverty of fuel and ore mineral resources on the one hand, and a wealth of raw materials for the chemical industry on the other) define a significant share in total imports of crude oil and natural gas, and in exports – potash. Agroclimatic resources of the Republic of Belarus do not hinder the development of agriculture. As a result of many years of successful agricultural policy, agriculture pro-

vides not only the republic's population with food, but also provides a basis for the export of food products.

For the historical reasons the structure of economic complex of the Republic of Belarus is characterized by a significant share of the industrial sector in the economy (42% of GDP) and specialization on oil refining and petrochemical industry, as well as transport and agricultural engineering – 23.1% and 20.6% of the industrial output and 21.6% and 17.9% in the export structure respectively. Action of geo-economic factor is manifested in the fact that the Republic of Belarus is situated between two powerful geo-economic centers – the European Union and Russia. The Russian market is used primarily for imports of intermediate goods. The European market has a large effective demand and is a major consumer of Belarusian petrochemical products. However, access of Belarusian finished goods to this market is virtually closed due to low competitiveness of these products. Geo-economic situation in Belarus shows that the investment and technological potential of the Western vector is not using in the full extent for the moment. Our country has not become yet a kind of innovative “bridge” connecting the western technologies and eastern resources (Dajneko A.E., 2011).

In general, Belarus has a number of competitive advantages for the development of external trade: favorable geographic and geopolitical position and significant potential in transit; diversified industrial complex; significant scientific and technical potential; high educational level of the population on the background of low cost of labor force and multi-system training of qualified personnel; developed system of transport communications; multi-vector foreign economic relations and well-developed commodity distribution network abroad.

Foreign trade as the main form of foreign economic relations of the Republic of Belarus

Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus in the XXI century is developing under the influence of a number of socio-economic and political external and internal factors, to which it should be included the impact of the global economic crisis, the situation on the major world markets of goods and services, market reforms and reforms in the foreign economic activity in the country and other.

A multi-vector character is one of the main features of the foreign trade of Belarus, as confirmed by trade relations with more than 180 countries and increasing capacity of foreign trade turnover of the country. However, the global economic crisis has affected a number of trends in foreign trade. In this regard as justifiable claim seems the allocation of foreign trade trends in the *pre-crisis and post-crisis period*. Belarus' foreign trade during the period of 2006–2008 years was characterized by the following: 1) the formation of product groups, composing a “strategic export” of the country (oil, chemical products, potash fertilizers, textiles, ferrous metals, trucks, milk products) and “economically important export” (repair parts, furniture, oil, heavy haulers, sugar, timber, meat); 2) increasing export and import growth rates (export growth rate in 2005 was 15.9%, in 2008 – 34.2% and imports respectively 3.8 and 37.1%) was the reason that foreign

trade balance turned from positive to negative values; 3) maintenance of major trading partners – the CIS and the European Union countries (the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, UK, Latvia); 4) export orientation of the countries economy, which resulted in an increase in the foreign trade, mainly in exports, share of non-CIS countries (including CEE), that has reduced the country's dependence on the CIS market situation and ensure a positive trade balance of good with a number of countries (Netherlands, UK, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden). Increasing the share of developed countries in the structure of imports, especially in the group of industrial equipment, has become a prerequisite for economic growth; 5) development of geographic and product diversification of exports and imports; 6) enhancing the role of services exports, which is becoming a priority for the Belarusian foreign trade development.

For the period of 2009–2010 years characteristic trends of Belarus' foreign trade were: 1) reducing of turnover, both exports and imports; 2) change of commodity export diversification, including the decline in exports to foreign non-CIS countries due to reduction of petroleum products, nitrogen fertilizers, polymers, ferrous metals export; 3) the further growth of the foreign trade negative balance due to goods trade deficit on the background of maintaining a positive balance in foreign trade of services (Shmarlovskaja G.A., 2012).

In general, the foreign trade volume during the period of 2000–2013 years increased more than 2.5 times - from 35 to 90 bln USD. The nature of the foreign trade balance for this period has undergone fundamental changes. The best result of foreign trade in terms of its equilibrium was achieved in 2005, when the goods and services foreign trade balance of the Republic of Belarus was positive in the amount of 341.8 mln USD. A negative balance of foreign trade has been forming since 2009, which persists today. The main reason of the negative foreign trade balance of Belarus is the growing demand for imports of intermediate goods, which in turn is generated by a high rate of growth of gross domestic product and its high level of import capacity. At the same time, as experts note, there are a number of reasons that influenced the dynamics of negative balance. The first reason is that increasing the volume of merchandise exports was extensive – mainly due to the price factor, occasioned in favorable pre-crisis market conditions with small changes in the physical volume of deliveries. The second reason is inefficiency of export commodity structure that is determined by a high degree of concentration by types of goods. Almost 50% of exports are provided by 4–5 commodity items that indicates a strong dependence of country's foreign trade from the world market conjuncture. The third reason is low diversification of foreign trade, coupled with the high level of risks that arise in the case of force majeure decline in exports to traditional partner countries and exclusion of Belarusian producers from these markets (Dajneko A.E., 2011).

A significant predominance of goods over services is presented in the structure of Belarus foreign trade. If in 2005, the share of goods was 90%, and services – 10%, then at the present time, on the background of post-industrial trends manifestation in the Belarusian economy, the share of services in the structure is beginning to increase – at a ratio of 86% to 14% (Table 1).

Table 1. Dynamics of the main Republic of Belarus foreign trade indicators, mln USD

Indicators	Years		
	2005	2010	2013
A. The foreign trade balance in goods and services	342	-7,500	-2,429
Export	17,536	29,302	43,897
Import	17,194	36,802	46,326
B. Goods	-859	-9,289	-4,593
Export	15,194	24,506	36,540
Import	16,053	33,795	41,133
C. Services	1,201	1,789	2,164
Export	2,342	4,796	7,357
Import	1,141	3,007	5,193

The total exports and imports foreign trade structure of Belarus is characterized by three major trends: firstly, there is the predominance of goods over services; secondly, in the structure of export the share of services is to 1.5 times higher (17 and 11%, respectively); thirdly, the increase of services exports during the period of 2000–2013 years in value terms is significantly higher than the increasing of goods exports volume – in three times.

The commodity structure of Belarusian exports and imports of goods is forming in accordance with the theory of comparative advantages. Low supply of fuel and raw materials results a high share of mineral products in imports. The relatively high labor resources qualification and favorable geographical position of Belarus determined the development of large industrial complex, focused on the final goods production (Reshetnikov D.G., 2002). In the commodity structure of foreign trade of Belarus a relatively stable commodity groups have formed. In 2000, in the structure of exports of goods three main groups of goods were identified – machines, equipment and vehicles (26.3%), mineral products (20.1%) and chemical products (19.7%). Along with this, about 7% of the exports were accounted for food products, ferrous and non-ferrous metals and their products, as well as textiles and textile products. In 2013, the commodity structure was changed. The predominant place is occupied by mineral products (33%), the share of machinery and equipment decreased to 19%, production of food and chemical industries have had 15% in the structure (Vneshnjaja..., 2014). Structure of imports of goods to Belarus in 2000 was represented in 31% by mineral products, 18.3% – by machinery, equipment and vehicles, and 15.3% – by products of the chemical industry. Prominent position in the structure is occupied by food products – 13%. In 2013 significant changes in the ranking positions in the structure did not happen. But an increase up to 27% the share of machinery, equipment and vehicles was shown up.

Foreign trade of goods of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union

The volume of foreign trade with the European Union countries within the period of 2000–2013 years increased in five times – from 4 to 21 bln USD. These figures indicate strengthening in bilateral and multilateral trade relations and expanding the geography of the process. However, while maintaining the upward trend in foreign trade volumes, the foreign trade balance has changed its character from positive in the early 2000s to negative after 2008, due to among other things the effects of the global economic crisis. Dynamics of volume of exports and imports of goods are different. If export volume for the period of 2000–2013 years increased more than five times, the import – six times (Table 2).

Assessing the place of the European Union in the structure of foreign trade of goods with Belarus, it should be noted that on average, the region's share is about 25% and for the period of 2000–2013 years did not changed significantly. The share of exports of goods was 29% in 2000 and 28% in 2013. This stand for almost one in three of goods produced in Belarus is exported to the EU. The share of imports from EU countries increased an average in 10% during the period of 2000–2013 years. In 2000 it was 21%, i.e. one in five of goods imported to Belarus, was manufactured in the European Union, at the present time, the share of imports form EU is 24%. This means that almost every one in four goods imported to Belarus is from the EU.

Geography of Belarus foreign trade with the EU countries as wide as possible and presented by all states of the integration association involved in the trade

Table 2. Dynamics of goods foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with European Union the countries, mln USD

Indicators	Years		
	2000	2010	2013
Foreign trade turnover	3938	15,150	20,970
Export	2085	7600	10,462
Import	1853	7550	10,508
Foreign trade balance	232	50	-46

Table 3. Top 5 countries importing goods from the Republic of Belarus, mln USD

2000		2010		2013	
Latvia	467	Netherlands	2845	Netherlands	3330
Lithuania	349	United Kingdom	935	Germany	1753
Poland	277	Latvia	929	Lithuania	1072
Germany	231	Poland	886	Italy	902
Estonia	147	Germany	461	Poland	781

process with Belarus in different extent. However, historically and during the study period a stable group of states – traditional trading partners of Belarus has formed.

Analysis of exports of goods from the Republic of Belarus to the European Union showed the following trends in geographical and commodity structure. In the geographical structure among the leading countries importing goods from Belarus after 2010 should be noted the Netherlands, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Poland (Table 3).

The share of exports from Belarus to the *Netherlands* is 32%, and export to this country is considerably presented by oil products (3247 mln USD), synthetic filament yarn (14), hand saws and saw blades (10), timber (6), the product of unvulcanized rubber (5.7). To the Germany, with a share of this country in the structure of exports about 17%, primarily crude oil (1241), timber (35), non-alloy steel wire (31), stranded wire (23), steel pipes (20), nitrogen fertilizers (19), furniture (18) are selling. Lithuania, where is brought in every tenth item from Belarus, imports oil (471), rapeseed oil (65), non-alloy steel rods (48) non-alloy steel wire (28), mixed fertilizers (24), electricity (23) and others. Italy is also characterized by import of petroleum products from Belarus (774), as well as semi-finished products of non-alloy steel (32), potash fertilizers (29) seamless pipes made from ferrous metals (11), non-alloy steel wire (11), tanned leather from cattle hides (8), and others. Poland buys in Belarus basically liquefied natural gas (139), potash fertilizers (119), petroleum products (73), wood (68), insulated wires / cables (34 mln USD).

Commodity structure of Belarusian exports is less diversified than imports. Two main products should be marked – oil products and crude oil, which account for 56% and 12% respectively. The transformation of Belarus to the active export-

Table 4. Top 5 exports commodities of Belarus to the European Union, 2013

Commodities	Countries	mln. USD.	% of export to the EU countries
Oil products	Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, UK, Finland, Estonia	5900	56
Crude oil	Germany	1241	12
Fertilizers	Belgium, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland	758	8
including potash	Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Croatia, Czech Republic, Sweden	437	4
Products of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy	Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Romania, Czech Republic, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia	471	5
Timber and particleboard	Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Sweden, Belgium Netherlands	221	2

er of oil products in the 1999–2000 is largely determined by the financial attractiveness of Russian raw materials processing scheme in Mozyr and Novopolotsk refineries with further export of products to neighboring European countries without paying export duties applied in Russia. A significant part of the exported oil products was owned by Russian legal entities and increase of this position in Belarusian exports was the cause of the current statistics system (Reshetnikov D.G., 2002). Overall, in 2013 the share of oil products, oil and related products was accounted in structure 79%. Second place in the structure belongs to fertilizers – 8%. The third position is occupied by the production of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy – 5%. In the list of important goods in the export structure of Belarus should also be marked products of forest and wood industry, machinery and equipment, chemical products and food products (1–2%) (Table 4).

Analysis of import of goods into the Republic of Belarus is characterized by a number of distinctive features from exports. In the geographical structure among the leading exporters of goods to Belarus should be noted Germany, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, France and the UK. During the period of 2000–2013 years, Germany occupied the first stable position in the ranking with a share of imports to Belarus about 30% (Table 5).

The main goods that imported from *Germany* to Belarus are trucks (179 mln USD), machines and mechanisms for harvesting crops (80), machinery and equipment for special purposes (974), pharmaceutical products (67), pork (61). *Poland* occupies the second position with a share about 14%. Basic commodities imported from Poland are pork (95), fruits (83), polymers, paper and cardboard (by 29), pharmaceutical products (26), trucks (20 mln USD).

About 10% of the Belarusian import belongs to *Italy*. The main goods that arrive to Belarus from this state are trucks (43 mln USD), pharmaceutical products and woodworking machines, cork and plastics (by 27), pumps for liquids (25), pipe fitting (23), machinery and mechanical appliances for special purposes (22 mln USD). A distinctive feature of the foreign trade with Italy is extremely diversified export structure, represented more than 90 trade units. The main types of export goods from *France* are pharmaceutical products (39 mln USD), trucks (30), insecticides and herbicides (27 mln USD). From *Czech Republic* Belarus is importing computers for automatic data processing (38 mln USD), cars (28) and pipe fitting (22 mln USD).

Commodity structure of Belarusian imports is characterized by high diversification and a wide range. However, the analysis allowed to define five main

Table 5. Top 5 countries exporting goods to the Republic of Belarus, mln USD

2000		2010		2013	
Germany	588	Germany	2385	Germany	3035
Poland	224	Poland	1080	Poland	1581
Italy	163	Italy	772	Italy	1112
Czech Republic	132	France	385	France	496
United Kingdom	106	Czech Republic	317	Czech Republic	495

Table 6. Top 5 types of imported products from the Republic of Belarus to the European Union, 2013

Products	Countries	mln. USD	% of import from EU countries
Machinery and equipment	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, France, Sweden	2860	48
including automotive vehicles, trailers and repair parts	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, France, Sweden	660	11
Chemical products	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, UK, Finland, France, Croatia, Czech Republic, Sweden	800	13
Food products	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, France, Spain, Norway, UK, Latvia, Italy	480	8
Pharmaceutical products and vaccines	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Finland, France, Croatia, Czech Republic	441	7
Products of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and metal products	Germany, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden	405	6

product groups, which composed in descending order by value – machinery and equipment (48%), chemical products (13%), food products (8%), pharmaceutical products and vaccines (7%), products of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and metal products (6%) (Table 6).

It should be noted that great importance in Belarus attaches to import substitution, this sphere can reduce the country's dependence on imports of certain goods. At the same time material-technical base of enterprises have to be updated to enhance the competitiveness of domestic products. For this purpose many Belarusian producers forced to buy equipment abroad.

To achieve the strategic objective of integration of Belarusian enterprises with international companies and transnational corporations it is necessary to create organizational and economic conditions enabling increase of attractiveness of Belarusian enterprises. Taking into account the economic specialization of Belarus in the International geographical division of labor, and expert analysis (Dajneko A.E., 2012), it is advisable to interact with the following TNCs headquartered in the European Union: Electrical Engineering (EFACEC, Portugal; BOSCH, Siemens, Germany); Pharmaceuticals (Bayer, Germany); Chemical industry (BASF, Germany); automobile manufacturing (Scania, Sweden; Iveco, Italy).

External Trade of Services of the Republic of Belarus with the European Union

Foreign trade turnover of the Republic of Belarus in services was in 2013 12.6 bln USD. And unlike the trade of goods, trade services balance is steadily positive. The volume of foreign trade of services increased an average for the period of 2009–2013 years in 15% per year, while with the CIS countries – in 18%, and with non-CIS countries – in 13.8%. Foreign trade balance of services in recent years is relatively stable on the background of almost uniform growth in both exports and imports and accounts 2.2–2.3 bln USD (Fig. 1).

Great significance in the Republic of Belarus has transport, which plays an important role in a foreign trade. The transport services in the *structure of exports* is the dominant type of services, and its share in 2013 was 51.5%, which is in 5.8% lower than the share of this type of services in the structure in 2005 (Fig. 2). Among types of transport, the most developed in Belarus are pipeline, railway and automobile transport. An import of transport services has a relatively strong position in the structure and accounts about 27% (Fig. 2). The import of transport services is dominated by the same types as in the export structure, except for pipeline transport.

In the export structure one of the most developed types of services is construction services. The share in the export structure of this type was 12.6% in 2013, reflecting the almost five-fold increase in comparison to 2005. Exports of construction services mainly directed outside the CIS (81% in 2013). An export of computer services was increased sharply, and almost entirely directed to non-CIS countries (80.8% in 2013). The share of this type of services increased sevenfold in the structure of export – from 1.1% in 2005 to 7.5% in 2013, which in monetary terms account about 552.2 mln USD. The share of trips in exports is

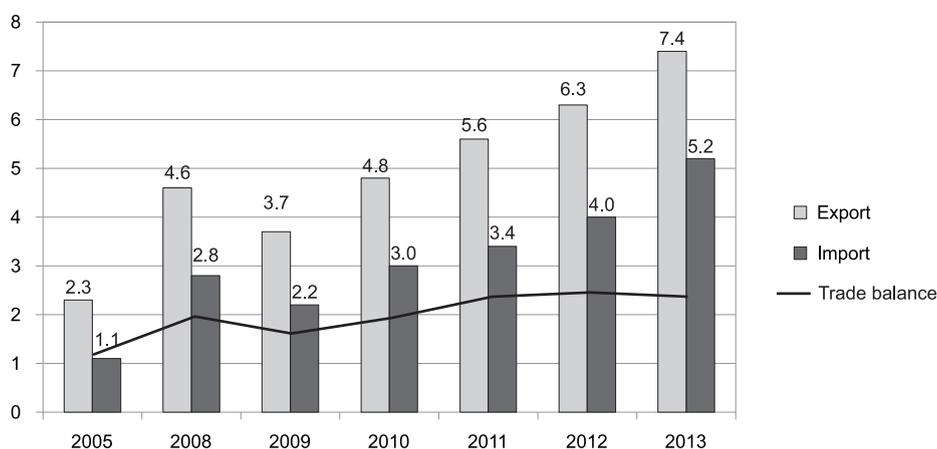


Fig. 1. Dynamics of the foreign trade of services of the Republic of Belarus for the period of 2005–2013 years, bln USD.

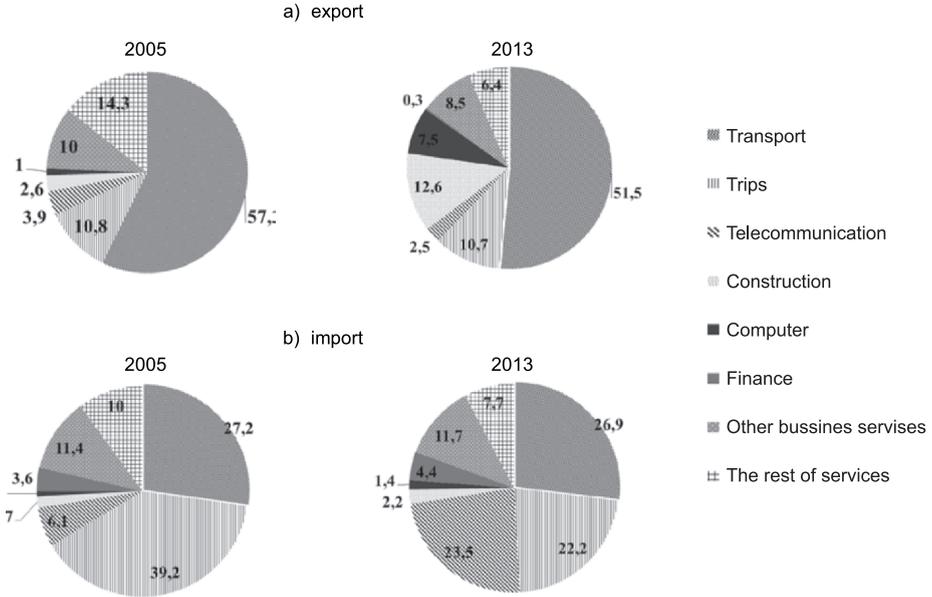


Fig. 2. Dynamics of foreign trade in services of the Republic of Belarus, 2005–2013 (%).

traditionally high and stable – about 11%, which are mainly sold to CIS citizens (68% in 2013).

A high proportion in the *structure of import* of services have trips and this type of services accounted about 22.2% in 2013 and reached 1,153.1 mln USD, that is comparable to certain types of transport services. In general, the proportion of trips as compared to 2005 decreased by 17%. The import of construction services is sharply increased, and in 2013 amounted to 1,219.2 mln USD (or 22.2% of the imports of services), demonstrating a twofold increase compare with the last year (from 637 mln USD in 2012).

At the present stage of economic development, the role of business services is increasing. In international trade they are distinguished by high dynamism. These services provide other industries by knowledge-intensive resources and contribute to the spread of technology, creating for their growth favorable conditions (Dajneko A.E., 2011a). At the present stage of economic development of the Republic of Belarus export of business services distinguishes slow steady growth with increasing differentiation by types of business services, but their share in the export structure is still insignificant.

Regional foreign trade differences of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of the European Union

Foreign trade turnover, commodity structure of exports and imports, geography procurement and supply has significant differences within the regions of the Republic of Belarus. Determinants of regional differences of foreign trade are the

Table 7. Dynamics of regional indicators of foreign trade activity of the Republic of Belarus, 2000–2013) compiled from regional statistical yearbooks of the Republic of Belarus)

Regions	2000					2013				
	export (mln USD)	share (%)	import (mln USD)	share (%)	trade balance (mln USD)	export (mln USD)	share (%)	import (mln USD)	share (%)	trade balance (mln USD)
Brest region	377.0	5.1	358.7	4.1	18.3	2,525.1	6.8	2,338.0	5.4	187.1
Vitebsk region	601.9	8.2	534.5	6.2	67.4	2,154.7	5.8	4,316.4	10.0	-2,161.7
Gomel region	1,084.5	14.8	924.9	10.7	159.6	4,936.0	13.3	4,746.8	11.0	189.2
Grodno region	476.2	6.5	347.2	4.0	129.0	2,361.3	6.3	1,624.5	3.8	736.8
Minsk City	2,430.8	33.2	3,547.1	41.0	-1,116.3	14,662.8	39.4	17,732.6	41.2	-3,069.8
Minsk region	1,076.8	14.7	834.8	9.7	242.0	7,028.9	18.9	5,717.1	13.3	1,311.8
Mogilev region	594.5	8.1	494.3	5.7	100.2	2,470.2	6.6	1,841.3	4.3	628.9
Belarus	7,326.4	100.0	8,646.2	100.0	-1,319.8	37,203.1	100.0	43,022.7	100.0	-5,819.6

features of the economic complex of the region, availability of certain types of natural resources and the specific economic and geographical position.

The main export potential is concentrated in the capital Minsk city and volume of export in 2013 amounted about 14,662.8 mln USD or 39.4% of the total Belarus level. The second place occupies Minsk Region with share in export volume of 18.9% or 7,028.9 mln USD. On the third place have the Gomel region with the share in total Belarus export of 13.3%, than with the shares about 6–7% are going in descending order Brest, Mogilev, Grodno and Vitebsk regions (Table 7).

Regional import structure is more concentrated and more than 40% of Belarus imports accrue Minsk city, than going in descending order Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk regions with shares from 13, 3 to 10.0%, and Brest, Mogilev, Grodno are round out the ranking with shares from 5.4 to 3.8%.

Brest region. The volume of foreign trade of the Brest region organizations in the 2013 is amounted to 4 863.1 mln USD, including export – 2,525.1 mln USD and imports – 2,338.0 mln USD. The leading place in the structure of industrial production of the region is occupied by the food industry, mechanical engineering, woodworking, with about 70% of the products produced in the private sector (Dajneko A.E., 2011a). The main export commodity positions are traditionally food products: meat, sausages, canned fish and seafood, milk and dairy products. Region occupies the 1st place in the country in terms of exports of agricultural and food products. In the field of export structure of Brest region in 2013, Russia accounted for 79.7%, other CIS countries – 11.8%, non-CIS countries – 8.5%.

Import from Russia amounted to 17.4% of total imports, other CIS states – 5.8%, non-CIS countries – 76.8%.

Leaders of foreign trade in the region are: JV “Brestgazoapparat” (gas and electric stoves), “Pinskdrv” (furniture, particleboard, plywood), Pinsk Production Association “Polesie” (knitwear and yarn), JSC “Brest Stocking Mill” (hosiery), a structural unit of JSC “Atlant” (Baranovichi Machine-Tool Plant (refrigerant compressors)), JSC “Brest Electric Plant”, JSC “Savushkin product”, Joint Belarusian-German Venture «Santa Bremor», SP “Inco-Food” (sausages and meat products), “Gefest” (Household Appliances), JV “Involux” (furniture), and others. By the end of 2013 the enterprises of the Brest region were exporting their goods to 76 countries. The most active trading partners during this period were the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Germany, Poland, Lithuania.

Vitebsk region. Objective factor of the Vitebsk region export potential development is a favorable geographical position, which opens opportunities for sustainable economic and trade cooperation, especially with the regions of Russia and the Baltic countries. Average annual exports of Vitebsk region with the oil products is about 3.6 bln USD, without oil and petroleum products is about 1.3 bln USD (Dajneko A.E., 2011a). The share of Vitebsk region in the republican export volumes is within 6–12%. More than 55% of the region production is exported.

In the commodity structure of exports in 2013 chemical industry was dominated – 54, 8% of all foreign sales, food industry – 13.1%, mineral products – 11.5%, textiles and textile products – 4.7%. Export potential of the region is represented by the following main enterprises: JSC “Vitebsk carpets”, “Marko” and JV “San Marco” JV “Belwest” (footwear production), JSC “Pastavy dairy plant”, OJSC “Glubokoe dairy-canning factory”, JSC “Vitebsk Meat Packing Plant”, Unitary Enterprise “Vitebsk confectionery factory “Vitsba”, JSC “Orshastroymaterialy”, JSC “Naftan”, the plant “Polymir”.

Trade turnover of the Vitebsk region with the Russian Federation reached 4,619.8 mln USD in 2013, of which exports – 1,430.8 mln USD. On this market practically all exporting companies of the region are presented. Quarter of export accounted for meat and dairy products, 13% – textile production, 12% – machinery and equipment, the share of construction materials account for 11%, the same for the supply of footwear production (Dajneko A.E., 2011a). The main trading partner of the region is traditionally the Russian Federation – more than 70% of the total turnover, followed by the Netherlands – 8.5%, UK – 8.1%, Ukraine – 3.9%, Germany – 2.3%, Poland – 2.2% China – 2.2%.

In the field of export structure of the region in 2013, Russia accounted for 66.4%, other CIS countries – 6.9%, non-CIS countries – 26.7%. Import from Russia amounted to 73.9% of total imports, other CIS states – 1.8%, non-CIS countries – 24.2%

Gomel region is one of the most powerful industrial regions in the country, having a high industrial, scientific and technical potential. Over 70% of the Gomel region production is exported. This is due to a high degree of orientation of the major industries to the foreign markets and significant dependence on imports raw materials and fuel. The basis of the export potential of the Gomel region

constitute industrial giants such as Mozyr Oil Refinery, Belarusian Steel Works, the production association “Gomselmash” and OJSC “SvetlogorskKhimvolokno”, JSC “GomelGlass”, which accounted for over 70% of the products manufactured in the region.

In the Gomel Region all Belarusian finished rolled iron is producing, as well as harvesters, window glass, phosphate fertilizers. All Belarusian oil and gas extracting located in this region also. In addition to mentioned positions the region produces more than 90% of all Belarusian steel, white salt, half of gasoline, diesel fuel, cardboard; one third of chipboard, almost 25% of plywood and paper. More than half of all production is supplied to the foreign markets. The main items of Gomel exports are traditionally mineral products, ferrous metals and their products, wood production, paper, cardboard, machinery, and chemical products (Dajneko A.E., 2011a).

The current structure of production of the Gomel region, in particular – the existence of two industrial giants (Mozyr Oil Refinery and Belarusian Steel Works) – defines the main import volumes of crude oil and steel scrap. These two items, as a critical import, take one half of the total imports of the region. In addition, the region imports machines and equipment, plastics, certain types of chemical products and food products (Dajneko A.E., 2011a).

The main partner is the Russian Federation, the share of which in 2013 accounted for 56.4% of foreign trade. In the field of export structure Russia accounted for 43.4%, other CIS countries – 9.2%, non-CIS countries – 47.4%. Import from Russia amounted to 69.8% of total imports, other CIS states – 4.8%, non-CIS countries – 25.4%. In addition, the share of total exports share of Germany is 27.4%, Ukraine – 5.8%, Poland – 3.4%, Latvia – 2.6%, Kazakhstan 2.3%. In the field of import volume, Germany accounts for 7.6%, Ukraine – 4.5%, Italy – 2.8%, China – 2.6%.

Grodno region. Production and export potential of the Grodno region represented by such major companies as JSC “Grodno Azot”, JSC “Grodno Khimvolokno”, JSC “Belkard”, “Grodno Tobacco Factory “Neman”, Grodno Plant of Automobile Units, Grodno trade engineering factory, Gronitex, Elod, JSC “Krasnoselskstroy-materialy”, JSC “Lakokraska”, JSC “Skidelsky Sugar Plant”, JSC “Smorgonsilikatobeton”, JSC “Lidagroprommash”, JSC “Slonim Worsted Spinning Factory”, JSC Glassworks “Neman”, JSC “Mostovdrev”, JSC “Shchuchin plant” Avtoprovod”, JSC “Novogrudok Gas Equipment Plant”.

The assortment of products in the region include: fertilizers, chemical fibers, paints, agricultural equipment, including harvester, autobuses and components for automobiles and tractors, building materials, medicines and vitamins, tobacco products, production of light and wood processing industry. The greatest weight in exports has chemical production and related industries, livestock products, textiles and textile production, machines, and sound-recording equipment, food products and wood. The main imports are mineral fertilizers, raw tobacco, synthetic fibers, amino resins, ferrous metals.

Organizations of the region are carrying out trade with 123 countries of the world. Products from Grodno region were exported to 87 countries in 2013 and

Grodno region organizations imported products from 113 countries. Within the total export of region Russia accounted for 61%, other CIS countries – 10.0%, EU countries - 18.8%. Imports from Russia amounts up to 23.6% of total imports of the region, other CIS states – 6.8% and EU countries – 53.0%. The most important trade partners of the region are (as of 2013) Russian Federation – 46% in the structure of foreign trade, Poland – 8.2%, Germany – 7.9%, Ukraine – 4.6%, China – 4.1% Lithuania – 4%, Italy – 2.5%.

Minsk City. The modern economy of Minsk is based on the rich scientific, technical and industrial potential. There are 25,000 business entities of different ownership forms located in Minsk. Core of scientific and technological potential of Belarus is concentrated in Minsk. Minsk is the largest exporter, which provides about 40% of the entire Republic of Belarus foreign trade turnover. Minsk enterprises produce more than one fifth of industrial output in Belarus, more than 60% of which is exported. Main export positions are tractors, trucks, trailers, machine tools, flagstones. Goods from Minsk exported to more than 100 countries. The main consumers of Minsk products are Russia, United Kingdom, the Baltic countries, Germany, Ukraine and Italy. The volume of external merchandise trade in 2013 amounted to 32.4 bln USD, including export – 14.7 bln USD. The largest city enterprises, whose products are known in many countries around the World, are “Minsk Car Plant”, “Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant”, “Integral”, “Minsk Aircraft Plant”, “Minsk Tractor Works”, “Minsk Motor Plant”, “Amkodor”, “Keramin” and several others.

The main import positions are raw materials, components (up to 49%) and up to 30% – products for technical re-equipment of enterprises. Minsk is leading city on the number of established organizations with foreign investments. More than 2.5 thousand joint ventures and foreign enterprises are registered in the city (60% of the total number in Belarus). Leading positions among the countries that have developed in Minsk their business has the United States, Germany, Russia and Poland (Antipova E.A., Fakeyeva L.V., 2014). In the field of export structure of Minsk in 2013, Russia accounted for 32.0%, other CIS countries – 23.6%, non-CIS countries – 44.4%. Import from Russia amounted to 49.9% of total imports, other CIS states – 6.4%, non-CIS countries – 43.7%

Mogilev region. In the structure of industry of Mogilev region leading place takes chemical and petrochemical industry. The share of two largest chemical companies – OJSC “Mogilevkhimvolokno” and “Belshina” – more than 25% of the total industrial output of the region. Mogilev region is the main producer in the Republic of Belarus of tires, motors, centrifugal pumps, cement, silk fabric, curtain lace, rubber footwear.

Industrial infrastructure of Mogilev region and its production possibilities significantly exceed the needs of the domestic market of the Republic of Belarus. In general volume of industrial production sales exports have an average share of 30–40%. The largest share of exports of the region accounts for production of joint stock companies “Mogilevkhimvolokno”, “Belshina”, “Mogilev Metallurgical Works”, “Bobruisk Machine Builder-Tool Plant”, “Bobruiskagromash”, “Mogotex”, “Vjasnjanka”, OJSC “Slavianka”, “Belarusrezinotekhnika”, “Lenta”,

RUE “Mogilevliftmash”, JSC “Mogilevsky zavod “Electrodvigatel”, “Mogilev “Strommashina” Plant, “Belarusian Cement Plant”, “Krichevceментoshifer”, JV “BelPAK”, Glassworks” Elizovo “and others.

Main export commodities in the region are textiles and textile products (chemical fiber); plastics and rubber products (tires, polyethylene terephthalate); machinery, equipment and mechanisms (electric engines, elevators, scrapers, bulldozers, pumps); ground transportation vehicles (trucks, trailers and semi-trailers). Significant share in export have products of light industry, wood processing, building materials and food. In the structure of imports chemical products; ferrous metals and articles thereof; rubber and rubber products are dominated.

The main partner is the Russian Federation, which accounts for 60.8% of the total external turnover, including 73.1% of exports, other CIS countries in exports – 15.3%, non-CIS countries – 11.5%. Import from Russia amounted to 44.3% of total imports, other CIS states – 8.8%, non-CIS countries – 46.9%. In addition, in the export in 2013 the share of Ukraine was 7.0%, Kazakhstan – 5.3%, Germany – 2.3%. In the import Germany accounts for 9.7%, Ukraine – 8.2%, China – 4.4%.

Minsk region. In the region all potash fertilizers production in the Republic of Belarus is concentrated, as well as 77.4% of the total country industrial output of products from metal powders, 78.9% of macaroni products, 59.3% sugar, 44.9% of knitwear. The largest shares among the branches occupy chemical and petrochemical industry, machine building and metalworking, food, timber, woodworking, pulp and paper, construction materials and light industry.

The basis of the commodity structure of exports in 2013 were represented by: production of chemical and related industries – 32.5%, including potash fertilizers – 29.3%; mineral products – 20.9%; livestock products – 10.9%; vehicles – 10%; production of food industry – 5.2%. In the structure of imports in 2013 machinery, equipment and apparatus (24.7%); mineral products (15.4%), including crude oil (14.2%); base metals and articles thereof (12.5%); products of the chemical and related industries (10.2%); transport vehicles (7.9%); plastics and plastic products (7.5%); food industry (4.9%) were dominated.

More than half of the regional exports accounted for 9 major producers in the region: Belarusian Potash Company, “RN-West”, OJSC “BelAZ”, JSC “Slutsky Cheese Plant”, group of companies “Alutech”, JSC “Gorodeya Sugar Refinery”, JSC “Belaruskaliy”, JSC “Slutsk Sugar Refinery”.

Export of services in 2013 was amounted around 506.0 mln USD, imports of services – 472.1 mln USD. The main share of exports accounted for transport services – 73.1% of total exports of services provided by enterprises of the region. In 2013, the organizations of the region were carried out foreign trade with 167 countries of the world. The main trade partners are Russia (39.6% of total turnover), Ukraine (8.7%), Germany (5.9%), China (5.5%), the Netherlands (4.4%), Brazil (4.1%), Poland (3.4%), Italy (1.8%), Kazakhstan (1.7%), India (1.5%).

In the total export share of Russia was 39.9% in 2013, Kazakhstan – 2.7%, other CIS countries – 14.4% of the EU countries – 18.1%, other countries outside

the CIS – 24.9%. Import from Russia amounted up to 39.2% of total imports, Kazakhstan – 0.4%, other CIS states – 4.2%, the remaining non-CIS countries – 19.5%, the EU countries – 36.7%. By volume of export from Minsk region to European countries outside the CIS largest share have Netherlands, Poland, Norway and Lithuania.

Conclusion

All European Union countries are partners of Belarus in the foreign trade due to the multi-vector foreign policy. However, in the development of foreign trade there is a problem of commodity imbalance. Due to openness of the economy of the Republic of Belarus, the important problem is also choosing model for Belarus of the entering into the world economy. Within four main types of these models the modern world – total, sectoral (by branches), “point” (at the level of individual enterprises) and territorial – the most appropriate option, according to experts, is the “point” entry into the international division of labor. The base for it is in the differentiation of the economic structure, lack of development of market relations, the limited investment resources (Sukach O.A., 2010).

Development of strategic partnership between Belarus and the European Union is advisably to carry out in the following areas: 1) involvement into the Belarusian economy the largest European international companies for technical renovation and modernization of Belarusian enterprisers and access to distribution system of TNCs; 2) the purchase of new and emerging technologies in European countries and the expansion of scientific and technological cooperation with Belarusian high-tech companies and the development of intra-branches trade between Belarus and the EU; 3) the development of cross-border cooperation in the framework of the Euroregions “Neman”, “Bug”, “Lake District”, “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” to promote trade relations, modernization of infrastructure facilities, efficient use of recreational resources and development of cross-border tourism; 4) increasing of EU interest to enlargement the transit flows through the territory of Belarus by improving transparency of transit regime, the development of road infrastructure, the provision of security guarantees of Belarusian transport arteries; 5) the expansion of international cooperation in education, science, culture, energy, experience exchange in the field of privatization and attracting foreign investment, especially with the neighboring countries of Belarus – Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, which already have gained positive and negative experience of participation in these processes and organizations (Davydenko E.L., 2008a, b, c).

Solving the problems of export competitiveness, reduce of GDP import capacity, market expansion, improvement of legal, informational, financial and technical support of foreign economic activity are priorities of foreign economic policy and will contribute to the economic growth of the country and strengthen its position in the European Economic Area.

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Economic and geographical aspects of the participation of Georgia in the integration processes

Abstract: This paper analyzes the current state of Georgia's participation in the integration processes within the framework of BSEC and GUAM, considered the geographical and economic aspects of regional cooperation, the prospects for Georgia's accession to the EU, mentioned the positive and negative sides of Georgia's integration into the EU.

Key words: Integration, regional cooperation, Georgia, EU, BSEC, GUAM, CIS.

Introduction

As you know, the modern system of world economy develops under the influence of globalization and in the face of increasing economic interdependence of countries. In turn, globalization is characterized by a combination of processes of regionalization and integration. Integration involves the transformation of quantity into quality, not mere aggregation of an arbitrary set of elements connected only situationally. This is opening of new connections and relationships between participants by including them in new relationships. As a result of regional integration processes separate groups of countries provide for themselves more favorable terms of trade and the movement of factors of production than for all other countries.

Given that the interdependence of countries has become an axiom of the modern world, and the integration and disintegration is a way of transformation of complex political and socio-economic systems, Georgia actively cooperates with other countries in the composition of regional groupings, which are the Organi-

zation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, called GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova). Georgia was also included in the CIS, but after the war with Russia in August 2008, it left it. On June 27th 2014, Georgia signed an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU).

In foreign and domestic economic literature considerable attention is given to the study of the integration processes. Also sufficiently studied some aspects of Georgia's participation in these processes. However, after the signing of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union, country's integration capabilities should be redefined. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent of Georgia's participation in the processes of regional economic integration and the strategic direction of these processes.

The methodological basis of the work made on the integration of scientific concepts. Studies are based on well-known scientific methods: induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, statistical, comparative and others.

The current state of Georgia's participation in integration processes

Located at the junction of two continents – Europe and Asia, between West and East, Georgia has always been and now faces the need to choose their political and economic orientation. Development of the national economy of sovereign Georgia was accompanied by disengagement of former Soviet republics and orientation to the countries, so called far foreign countries, desire to integrate by their own to the world, European and Asian structures. However, the path that focuses only on its own strength and interests conjugate complex vicissitudes of world politics: the desire of small and poorly developed states to be independent in the choice of partners is faced with the ambitions and interests of the major powers, which have their own goals and objectives. In this regard, for a sustainable economic development, Georgia needs to intensify the country's participation in the integration processes. As a result of the integration, the country is becoming a part of big geospace and a new, more advanced and broad subject.

From the theory of international regional integration it is known that (Tinbergen J. 1954; Wiles D. 1968; Booth K., 1995; Korganashvili L. 2004; Molle W. 2006; Combes P.P., 2008) the development of integration processes requires certain conditions which primarily include: the existence of common geographical boundaries (neighborhood factor), historical economic ties, about the same level of economic development, etc. On the basis of these conditions at the present stage the most appropriate regional integration for Georgia can be considered is within the framework of the BSEC.

Georgia's participation in the BSEC as an essential factor of economic development is conditioned by the following circumstances:

- Elimination of barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and labor creates a single geographical and economic space, which causes an increase in the efficiency of economic development of countries;

- Compliance with the terms of geographical proximity (proximity factor) – BSEC includes all of Georgia's neighbors: Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia and Armenia. As a result, conditions are created for quick and easy movement of goods, people travel from country to country, reducing the costs of shipping goods, deepening intercultural relations and so on.
- Many countries of the BSEC (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and others) are main foreign economic partners of Georgia;
- BSEC includes countries – which are EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania), with which economic ties will allow Georgia to intensify cooperation with other EU countries.

Established in 1992, BSEC now comprises of 12 countries and is a qualitatively at new stage in its development. It actively creates a climate of stability and confidence, without which the solution of large-scale economic problems is unthinkable. States – members of the BSEC cooperate in the following areas: trade and economic development; banking and finance; communications; energy; transport; agriculture and agribusiness; health care and pharmaceuticals; environmental protection; tourism; science and technology; exchange of statistical data and economic information; cooperation between customs and other border authorities; contacts between people; fight against organized crime, drug trafficking, weapons and radioactive materials, all acts of terrorism and illegal migration, or in any other related areas. Population of BSEC member countries is about 340 million (for comparison: As of July 1, 2014 the population of the EU amounted to 511 million people (The World Factbook). The region is rich in resources and has a fairly strong industrial base, as well as skilled labor. All these contributes to a significant effect of functioning of the BSEC.

The main characteristics of the territory of the integration space is the area and distance. By overcoming the distance there is a realization of geographical ties of economic cooperation among the BSEC, and in relation to the integration process, the growth of such ties. It is proved that the more developed some indicators of geographic and economic space, the higher will be their combined potential.

The largest country of BSEC is Russia. It accounts for 89% of the total area of the BSEC countries, 42% of the population and 51% of GDP. According to these indicators (respectively 4%, 24% and 23%) Turkey occupies the second position, and Georgia's role is negligible – respectively 0.36%, 1.46% and 0.55% (Table 1). On this basis, even under the conditions of equality of economic partners, their status in the BSEC is different. The difference in the economic development of member countries also prevents getting effects obtained by integration in the BSEC. As can be seen from Table 1, the highest level of GDP per capita has Greece – 23,600 USD, which is 1.3 times higher than in Russia and almost 4 times than in Georgia. A significant difference is observed in other indicators as well (Table 1).

The main form of manifestation of integration into the BSEC is the foreign trade turnover of which in 2013 amounted to 1,816,034 mln \$. Almost half (47.14%) of this revenue comes from Russia. In its export share is 88.67%, while

Table 1. Some indicators of the countries of BSEC, 2013

Country	Area		Population		GDP		GDP-per capita,\$
	sq km	share (%)	# of people	share (%)	mln \$**	share (%)	
Albania	28,748	0.15	3,020,209	0.89	28,340	0.57	10,700
Armenia	29,743	0.15	3,060,631	0.90	20,610	0.41	6,300
Azerbaijan	86,600	0.45	9,686,210	2.86	102,700	2.06	10,800
Bulgaria	110,879	0.57	6,924,716	2.04	104,600	2.10	14,400
Georgia	69,700	0.36	4,935,880	1.46	27,300	0.55	6,100
Greece	131,957	0.68	10,775,557	3.18	267,100	5.35	23,600
Moldova	33,851	0.18	3,583,288	1.06	13,250	0.27	3,800
Romania	238,391	1.24	21,729,871	6.40	288,500	5.78	14,400
Russia	17,098,242	88.63	142,470,272	41.99	2,553,000	51.16	18,100
Serbia	77,474	0.40	7,209,764	2.12	80,470	1.61	11,100
Turkey	783,562	4.06	81,619,392	24.05	1,167,000	23.38	15,300
Ukraine	603,550	3.13	44,291,413	13.05	337,400	6.76	7,400
Total	19,292,697	100.00	339,307,203	100.00	4,990,270	100.00	14,707

*Date of information: July 2014; **purchasing power parity.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/rankorderguide.html>.

imports – 41.99%. In Turkey, these figures are respectively 22.6%, 17.91% and 27.60%, and in Georgia – 0.55%, 0.28% and 1.46% (Table 2).

Analysis of international experience shows that integration processes are activated as a result of the intensification of trade and economic relations. As can be seen from Table 3, in 2014 the export and import of Georgia in the BSEC countries were, respectively, 58.6% and 50.7% (in 2013 – 61.1% and 50.3%) of their volumes. Despite the deterioration of relations between Georgia and Russia after the 2008 war (known as Georgia's withdrawal from the CIS due to its unwillingness to cooperate with Russia), in 2014 Russia took the third position among the major trading partners of Georgia, while exports to the CIS significantly (almost 2.4 times) exceeds exports to the EU. On the development of the countries participating BSEC affects a single geographical and economic area, but achieving a balance of their national interests, especially between Georgia and Russia is possible only on the basis of a reasonable compromise, finding such non-imperial and non-confrontational strategies of cooperation which will ensure the development of regional integration processes, accelerating the pace of economic growth, increased international competitiveness, reducing inflation, employment growth and other positive economic developments.

In addition to BSEC, Georgia has strong trade ties with GUAM countries: in 2014 the export of Georgia in GUAM countries amounted to \$ 689 million (24.1% of exports), while imports – \$ 1,197 million (13.9% of total imports of the country). In comparison with 2013 year exports of Georgia to GUAM decreased by 7.4%, and imports from GUAM decreased by 2.2% (Table 3). It should be noted that the establishment of GUAM largely determined negative attitude towards Russia. The priority objective of this intergovernmental organization

Table 2. Indicators of foreign trade of the BSEC countries, 2013

Country	Export		Import		Turnover	
	million \$	share (%)	million \$	share (%)	million \$	share (%)
Albania	2,323	0.25	4,835	0.55	7,158	0.39
Armenia	1,653	0.18	3,459	0.39	5,112	0.28
Azerbaijan	34,460	3.68	10,720	1.22	45,180	2.49
Bulgaria	27,900	2.98	32,880	3.74	60,780	3.35
Georgia	2,618	0.28	7,064	0.80	9,682	0.53
Greece	30,390	3.25	50,580	5.75	80,970	4.46
Moldova	2,399	0.26	5,493	0.62	7,892	0.43
Romania	65,840	7.03	73,420	8.34	139,260	7.67
Russia	515,000	55.02	341,000	38.75	856,000	47.14
Serbia	14,610	1.56	20,540	2.33	35,150	1.94
Turkey	167,600	17.91	242,900	27.60	410,500	22.60
Ukraine	71,140	7.60	87,210	9.91	158,350	8.72
Total	935,933	100.00	880,101	100.00	1,816,034	100.00

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/rankorderguide.html>.

was to reduce energy and economic dependence on Russia and the implementation of projects of construction of the Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum gas pipeline bypassing Russia (Tinbergen J., 1954). GUAM reflect the interests of the European Union, NATO and the United States.

GUAM countries have convenient locations (mostly with good access to sea ports), favorable climate conditions for the development of agriculture and transport (transit), a certain level of physical infrastructure, industry, educational and

Table 3. Export and import of Georgia by groups of countries, 2009–2013

	Million \$						%					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Export	1,134	1,677	2,189	2,375	2,908	2,861	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
CIS	416	677	1,053	1,244	1,621	1,465	36.7	40.4	48.1	52.4	55.7	51.2
BSEC	697	898	1,185	1,329	1,777	1,675	61.5	53.5	54.1	56.0	61.1	58.6
GUAM	251	374	578	805	917	689	22.1	22.3	26.4	33.9	31.5	24.1
EU	238	310	424	353	608	621	21.0	18.5	19.4	14.9	20.9	21.3
Import	4,500	5,257	7,058	7,902	7,885	8,596	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
CIS	1,298	1,588	1,942	2,057	2,178	2,127	28.8	30.2	27.5	26.0	27.6	24.7
BSEC	2,288	2,620	3,553	3,821	3,967	4,354	50.8	49.8	50.3	48.4	50.3	50.7
GUAM	835	1,050	1,323	1,297	1,267	1,197	18.6	20.0	18.7	16.4	16.1	13.9
EU	1,341	1,471	2,057	2,430	2,270	2,369	29.8	28.0	29.1	30.8	28.8	27.6

Source: http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=134&lang=eng.

scientific institutions, relatively high levels of human capital. Efficient use of these resources is a prerequisite for economic development GUAM. However, all these countries are members of the BSEC and therefore, in our opinion, it would be wise to concentrate and develop in a single, larger units. In this case, you can avoid duplication, fragmentation of resources and efforts.

Georgia's integration strategy

Regional economic cooperation further stipulates the following types of integration: Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), Free Trade Area (FTA), Customs Union, Common Market, Economic Union and Monetary Union (Suranovic S. 2010). BSEC and GUAM are actually in the early stages of their integration. In this case, despite the presence of a multilateral contracts between the member countries of these organizations relations are mainly regulated by bilateral inter-governmental agreements. In connection with this the strategic goal of Georgia is the integration into European structures, which means that EU membership should be considered the integration strategy of Georgia.

EU-Georgia relations date back to 1992, shortly after Georgia declared its sovereignty following the break-up of the Soviet Union. On April 22nd, 1996 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in Luxembourg, which entered into force in 1999. During the short period of cooperation between the parties significant changes have taken place both in the EU and Georgia. EU has grown to 28 members out of 15. The EU accounts for more than ¼ of the world's GDP. According to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank EU is on the first place in the world in terms of 2013 GDP.

Georgia has close trade and economic ties with the EU. In 2014 the external trade of Georgia with the EU countries amounted to USD 2,990 million, up by 4 percent compared to the corresponding indicator of the previous year. Exports amounted to USD 621 million (2 percent higher), while imports amounted to USD 2,369 million (4 percent higher). The share of these countries in the external trade of Georgia amounted to 26 percent, 22 percent in exports and 28 percent in imports (in 2013 26, 21 and 28 percent correspondingly). 30 percent of the trade deficit came to the EU countries (32 percent in 2013). In 2014, from EU countries among the top 10 trading partners in terms of trade were only Germany (sixth place, 4.7%) and Bulgaria (ninth place, 3.3%), the volume of exports – Bulgaria (sixth place, 5.7%) and Italy (tenth place, 3.0%), and imports – Germany (sixth place, 5.4%), Romania (eighth place, 3.6%) and Italy (tenth place, 2.6%). Things are no better on foreign direct investment. The main investors from EU countries are: Netherlands (first place 26%), United Kingdom (fourth place, 9.0%) and Luxembourg (fifth place, 6.7%).

Georgia's indicative financial allocation for 2014 – 2017 is € 335–410 million. The country received a total of € 452.1 million in EU assistance between 2007 and 2013. Most EU assistance to Georgia is channelled through Annual Action Programmes under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The thematic assistance programmes focusing on specific sectors such as

human rights or civil society are another source of funding. Georgia has also been part of the Eastern Partnership since its launch in 2009. This initiative promotes closer political association and economic integration with the EU by encouraging governments to reform and by strengthening the role of civil society in development (EU-Georgia relations).

In June 2014 the EU and Georgia signed an unprecedented Association Agreement, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA). The Agreement significantly deepens political and economic ties with the EU in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. It follows the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the previous basis for EU-Georgia bilateral relations since 1999. An EU-Georgia Association Agenda was also agreed in June to help implement the AA/DCFTA through joint priorities for 2014–2016. It replaces the EU-Georgia ENP Action Plan of 2006 (EU-Georgia relations).

The main EU cooperation objectives, policy responses and priority areas are set out in the Single Support Framework of June 2014. The main sectors for EU assistance are: 1. Justice reform; 2. Agriculture and rural development; 3. Public sector reform. This is complemented by support for: aligning Georgia's laws with EU legislation across all sectors; implementing the Association Agreement / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area; support to organisations making up civil society (EU-Georgia relations).

The Association Agreement with the EU is a major step towards integration into the EU. Georgia's membership in the EU means:

- formal confirmation that it has a high level of political, economic and common-civilization maturity, development and stability;
- that it is one of the standard European countries recognized by the international community. This is the signal for the beginning of a new life;
- that it recognizes the liberal values of the country, has an opportunity for the free movement of human, material and financial resources;
- participates in solving global issues. Although it should be noted that under the existing bureaucracy in the EU, the level of participation in decision-making will not be too high;

Along with the positive aspects of Georgia's accession to the EU, this integration is also characterized by certain problems. Among them, first of all, the following should be noted:

- partial loss of national sovereignty. As is well known, always involves the integration of a single process management and delegation to supranational bodies right decision. Accordingly, in the case of Georgia to join the EU, it will lose part of its sovereignty, the amount of which will grow in the future;
- Georgian companies will have to go to the European standards and they will have to operate in a competitive environment, in which case many of them will not survive. Upgrade of production requires investment, which for many businesses are not available;
- Increasing migration and the emergence of the problem of brain drain, which could pose a serious threat to the existence of the Georgian state;

- The problem in relationship with the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC), as this organization apart from economic pragmatism has political, social and other components.

Despite these challenges, in cooperation with the EU, Georgia will have political, economic and social benefits: it will be protected by national security, ensuring political stability, new investment and European standards, expansion of the market, increase in the standard of living and social protection, and so on. Consequently, the prospects of cooperation between Georgia and the EU will create conditions for secure and sustainable development while minimizing the problems specific to this cooperation.

Conclusion

Regional economic integration is one of the major trends in the development of the world economy that facilitates the synergies of the creation of a single geographical and economical space. Integration is particularly important for small countries, for which it is difficult to survive in a competitive environment.

Analysis of Georgia's participation in modern integration processes shows that it still has many untapped resources for economic development within the BSEC and GUAM, but after the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union its integration strategy was joining the EU. Naturally, the developed and well-structured EU will give Georgia many advantages, however, along with the advantages this integration has its disadvantages. Therefore, the cost-effectiveness of development of Georgia based on activation of integration processes can increase only with the balance of national and supranational interests.

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http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/english/bop/FTrade__2014_ENG.pdf
GUAM <http://guam-organization.org/en/node>
FDI in 2014 (preliminary) http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/english/bop/FDI_2014Q4-2014-ENG.pdf

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Georgia's trade relations and euro integration

Abstract: Georgia's trade relations have been analyzed in the article by geographic regions, parts of the world and integrated unions. It is said that main trade partners of Georgia are its neighboring countries and it due to their nearby location. The authors have found out that more than half of the export falls on CIS countries. The percentage of Euro Union in import is gradually increasing and amounts to about 1/3. The authors believe that the reactive motives such as psychological similarities between consumers of different countries and attractive legislation aspires Georgia to Euro Integration. It has also been shown that economic relations with Euro Union and other countries can affect Georgia in a positive way only if these relations help small and medium business to develop and the country manages to maintain the values, Georgians recognized for centuries.

Key words: Georgia, Euro Union, Geography, CIS, Trade Relations, Export, Import, Integration.

Trade relationships between countries play an important role in their economic development. On the other hand, trading between nations is a vital factor helping them to get closer to each other. Thought, different representatives of economic theory appreciate the role of trade differently. Liberals prefer free trade, whereas nationalists believe economic protectionism is more important. Despite the differences the affect of international trade on the relations between the countries is clear and it is steadily increasing. It is the same in Georgia. The country, which became independent only a little more, than two decades ago, is actively engaged in international trading. However, its trading balance at present is negative, the geography of Georgia's external trade is changing, though at a low rate.

The leading role in Georgia's trade relations falls on its neighboring countries and this is because of their nearby location. On the other hand, this reactive motive does not necessarily mean that there are psychological similarities between Georgians and the consumers of these countries. This is the case In Georgian-

Turkish trade relations. The socio-economical values in these two countries differ from each other, but the trade relations between them has developed rapidly recently. It is, naturally, caused by geographical location as well as by other factors.

According to the opinion of international marketing specialists, in spite of distant location of some countries, sometimes there are psychological similarities with their consumers and the legislation is attractive too. This encourages development of their economic relations. In our opinion it is because of these factors that Georgia aspires to Euro Integration.

As it was mentioned above, the geography of Georgia's export-import is gradually changing. This is shown in Table 1.

We see that between 2009 and 2013 the percentage of European countries in Georgia's export increased from 32.2 to 36.1. A slight increase was shown also on the part of Asian countries. The percentage of America decreased from 13.7 to 8.5. The structure of imports is different. The percentage of European countries between 2009 and 2013 decreased from 47.3 to 45.2; whereas the percentage of Asian countries increased from 44.1 to 48.7. The percentage of America and Africa decreased too.

The changes in the geographical structure of export, as well as of import does not show any special trend. From time to time the characteristics increase or decrease. This is due to fluctuation of trade relations.

The Geography of Georgia's export and import is a little different by country groups, though, even here, we can't find any trend. Table 2 shows that the percentage of Euro Union in Georgia's exports between the years 2000 and 2013

Table 1. Geographical structure of Georgia's export and import in the years 2009–2013 (percentage)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
E x p o r t					
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Of which: Europe	32.2	29.0	29.4	26.3	36.1
Asia	53.3	50.6	55.4	55.9	53.9
America	13.7	19.0	14.4	16.1	8.5
Africa	0.8	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.5
Oceania	–	0.1	0.05	0.04	0.03
I m p o r t					
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Of which: Europe	47.3	45.8	46.1	46.0	45.2
Asia	44.1	47.0	47.2	48.0	48.7
America	7.4	5.9	5.7	5.0	5.3
Africa	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.4
Oceania	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.4

Source: The table is made up by us on the basis of analysis of the data of National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 2. The Percentage of EU and CIS in Georgia's export and import in 2000–2013

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Export						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Of which: EU countries	21.4	19.1	18.5	19.4	14.9	20.9
CIS countries	39.5	40	40.3	48.1	52.4	55.7
Other countries	39.1	40.9	41.2	32.5	32.7	23.4
Import						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Of which: EU countries	22.8	25.2	27.9	29.1	30.3	28.3
CIS countries	32.3	40.0	30.2	27.5	25.6	27.2
Other countries	44.9	34.8	41.9	43.4	44.1	44.5

Source: The table is made up by us on the basis of analysis of the data of National Statistics Office of Georgia.

sometimes increases, while at other times it decreases. The percentage in 2013 (20.9) is a little lower than that of 2000 (21.4). As for CIS countries, their percentage in export was steadily increasing and in 2013 it was 55.7 instead of 39.5 in 2000.

The changes are quite different in the structure of imports. The percentage of Euro Union in the same period increased from 22.8 to 28.3, but the percentage of CIS countries decreased from 32.3 to 27.2.

Though the percentage of Euro Union in the exports of Georgia decreased between 2000 and 2013, its volume increased significantly. If in 2000 Georgia's export to EU countries was 78.9 million USD, and 2005 – 216.8 million USD, in 2010 it increased to 309.6 million and in 2014 to 620.2 (estimated). Within this period significant changes took also place in Georgia's imports from EU countries. In 2000 Georgia exported to EU countries the products, costing 218.7 million USD, in 2005 this characteristic was 744.6, in 2010 – 1,470.6 million and in 2014 this figure reached 859.6 million USD. So, Georgia's export, as well as import from EU countries in absolute figures tends to increase. In the years between 2000 and 2010 Georgia's export to EU countries increased 3.5 times and between 2010 and 2014 increased twice. Within the same periods imports increased 6.7 and 5.8 times respectively. As a result of this, Georgia has a negative trade balance. In 2000 total imports from EU countries exceeded exports 2.8 times. In 2005 the negative trade balance increased. The situation was the same in 2010. Imports exceeded exports 4.8 times. In 2014 (estimated) import from EU countries was 13 times bigger than export (total export – 620,806 thousand USD, total imports 8,596,270 thousand USD). The only conclusion that could be made on the basis of these figures is that Georgia's relationship with EU countries is one-sided. Such relations will not help Georgia's economy to develop. In such conditions it will be impossible to increase employment in the country and the rates of migration (open or hidden) will be hard to reduce.

Table 3. Changes in trade turnover with EU countries in 2000–2014

	2000	2010	2014	Coefficient	
				2000–2014	2010–2014
Total with EU countries	297.5	1,780.2	3,017.1	10.1	1.7
Of which:					
Countries of Former Socialist System	49.1	548.0	999.2	20.4	1.8
Among them: Poland	3.9	61.0	104.0	26.7	1.7
Former Soviet Republics	49.1	72.3	50.4	1.03	0.7

Source: The table is made up by us on the basis of analysis of the data of National Statistics Office of Georgia.

On the basis of the analysis of Georgia’s trade turnover it is clear (Table 3) that in 2000–2014 trade with the countries of Former Socialist System increased more rapidly than with the EU on the whole. For example, trade with the countries of Former Socialist Systems (except Baltic Countries) increased 20.4 times, but with EU countries only 10.1 times. The growth of trade was rapid with Poland as well. Between 2000 and 2014 trade turnover increased 26.7 times.

During the same period trade turnover with the Former Soviet Republics, that are EU members at present, remained almost the same. The percentage of growth of trade turnover with EU on the whole, with the countries of Former Socialist System and Poland, among them, was approximately the same. As for the Former Soviet Republics, Georgia’s total trade turnover with them even decreased.

With Poland Georgia has negative trade balance. In 2000 our country’s trade balance was –3,051 thousand USD. In 2010 this figure increased to –50,453 thousand USD. It is estimated that in 2014 the trade balance with Poland was –83,802 thousand USD.

As it was mentioned above, Asian countries are Georgia’s main trading partners. They dominate in export as well as in import. Since 2000 Turkey and Azerbaijan have been leading the list of Georgia’s 10 top trading partners. For example, in 2011 Turkey held the first position on this list with its percentage of 16.2. Azerbaijan was the second with 11.2. The Ukraine was the third (9.2%). The similar situation was in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 (estimated) only the Ukraine, that held the third position, was replaced by Russia.

Since 2012 Germany and Bulgaria have always been among Georgia’s 10 top trading partners. Since 2012 this list includes Italy as well. In 2013 Romania also became one of the 10 top trading partners.

The changes in the structure of Georgia’s 10 top trading partners have taken place in favor of Asian countries. In 2012–2013 in this list appeared China and in 2014 Japan as well as China.

Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of Georgia’s external trade has shown, that geographical location plays an important role in developing these relations, along with other

factors. Despite Georgia's attempts to develop relations with EU countries, its closest neighbors – Turkey and Azerbaijan still remain its top trading partners.

Nevertheless, Georgia's trade relations with EU countries has great prospects. The relationship between Georgia and EU in the format of 'eastern partnership', that has been initiated by Sweden and Poland and has been carried out since 2000, from our point of view, is supposed to improve Georgia's trade relationship with EU. We also believe that enforcement of DCFTA will help our country to develop its trade relations with EU countries. But, in our opinion, development of its trade relations with EU will bring Georgia fairly positive results only if these relationships help small and medium business to develop and the country manages to maintain the values, Georgians recognized for centuries.

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Chapter 3.

Social aspect

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The cohesion of European post-Communist countries in terms of selected parameters determining their societies' situation

Abstract: The aim of the study was to determine the diversity of the social situation among the former Communist countries. The analysis was conducted for year 2014 (in case of the absence of data for 2013 or 2015). It includes almost all the former European post-Communist countries (excluding the former GDR). In the course of analysis, it was found that social cohesion of the analysed states is low. The best conditions appeared in Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, Latvia, and Croatia; the worst ones in Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine, Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, and Moldova. Furthermore, the following was found: (1) a relatively small influence of recent history on the societies' situation, (2) a secondary nature of the impact of the fact of being a EU and NATO member, (3) a major impact of cultural determinants on the situation of women and LGBT persons.

Key words: European post-Communist countries, cohesion of social situation.

Introduction

Changes in European post-Communist countries, initiated by the emergence of the first non-Communist government in Poland in December 1989, started a whole series of changes (cf. A. Ágh, 1999; M. Bąk, 2006; M. Lavigne, 2000; B. Mach, 1998; A. Örkény, M. Székelyi, 2000; K. Metelska-Szaniawska, 2008; A. Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006; J. Wojnicki, 2005). These changes have led to a great diversification of the then already former Communist countries. As a result, these countries greatly differ from one another, not only with regard to the social, economic or political situation, but also in terms of civil liberties and free-

doms, health, etc. (cf. P. Abbott, R. Sapsford, 2006; W. C. Cockerham et al., 2006; G. Kraaykamp, 2000; D. Popova, 2002; L. Shelley, 2003; S. Szemesi, 2006).

The aim of the study was to determine the degree of the diversity in the situation between the former Communist countries in terms of selected parameters describing their populations' situation. The temporal scope encompasses year 2014, but in case of the absence of data for the given year, data from a year earlier or later were used. The spatial range covers almost all the former European Communist countries (without the former GDR, which is now part of unified Germany). From among the countries of the former USSR, the Russian Federation, the former European and Caucasian federal republics were included in the analysis, while the Asian ones were omitted.

Variables, data sources and the method

The analysis of the population's situation has been based on 8 variables, of which 6 are stimulants, and 2 are destimulants:

1. Legatum Prosperity Index.
2. Social Progress Index.
3. Human Development Index.
4. Index of Economic Freedom.
5. World Press Freedom Index.
6. Corruption Perceptions Index.
7. Gender Development Index.
8. Gay Happiness Index.

The first three variables are comprehensive indicators holistically describing the quality and conditions of living. The next three indicators also have a comprehensive character, but they describe selected aspects related to the functioning of the society: economic freedom, freedom of the press, the perception of corruption. The last two concern the so often currently raised topics related to gender and equal treatment in that respect. Still, the so often used in comparisons GNI per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP) has been omitted. This is because it is believed to depict the population's situation in a worse way than the previously enumerated indicators. This opinion is supported by not only by literature studies, but also by the author's own experience of travels in the analysed countries.

The Legatum Prosperity Index is a synthetic indicator of a destimulant nature. It is calculated on the basis of variables (89 in total) grouped in 8 categories: Economy, Entrepreneurship & Opportunity, Governance, Education, Health, Safety & Security, Personal Freedom, Social Capital. The variables are weighted. On this basis, the overall rank of the country is determined. The index is developed by the Legatum Institute (<http://www.prosperity.com/#!/>).

The Social Progress Index is also a synthetic indicator but of a stimulant character. It includes 52 variables, which are broken down into three groups (Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, Opportunity) within which 12 subgroups are distinguished. The index is calculated by a non-profit organisation, the Social Progress Imperative (<http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/>).

The Human Development Index is also a synthetic indicator of a stimulant nature. It is a summary measure of average achievements in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions. The index is developed by the United Nations Development Programme (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>).

The Index of Economic Freedom is also a synthetic indicator of a stimulant character. It includes 10 quantitative and qualitative factors, grouped in four categories (Rule of Law, Limited Government, Regulatory Efficiency, Open Markets). The index is created by the Heritage Foundation (<http://www.heritage.org/>).

The World Press Freedom Index also has a character of a synthetic indicator but of a destimulant nature. It is partly based on a questionnaire sent to NGOs, correspondents, journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. The query results are grouped in six overall criteria (Pluralism, Media Independence, Environment and Self-Censorship, Legislative Framework, Transparency, Infrastructure). The index is developed by a non-profit organisation Reporters Without Borders (<http://en.rsf.org/>).

The Corruption Perceptions Index is a composite index, a combination of surveys and assessments of corruption, collected by a variety of reputable institutions. It has a stimulant character. The index is created by Transparency International (<http://www.transparency.org/>).

The Gender Development Index is a synthetic indicator of a stimulant nature. It measures the gender gap in human development achievements in three basic dimensions of human development. The index uses the same methodology as the Human Development Index and is developed by the same organization as the Human Development Index: the United Nations Development Programme (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>).

The Gay Happiness Index is also an indicator of a stimulant character. It is developed on the basis of three main topics: Public Opinion, Public Behaviour, Life Satisfaction. It is based on online surveys filled out by LGBT persons living in different countries, and therefore its results do not fully meet the rigors of scientific research (being rather survey feedback). The index is created by the PlanetRomeo Foundation (<https://www.planetromeofoundation.org/>).

To specify the degree of diversity of situations in the studied group of post-Communist countries, relative standard deviation (RSD) was used separately for each analysed variable. This is a measure that specifies what percentage of the arithmetic mean constitutes the standard deviation. The lower the RSD value, the less diverse is the situation in the analysed group of countries, and thus it is more cohesive. However, determining the average level of the analysed variable has been disregarded, as in this case one would have to assign weight to every country based on its population. In such a case, Russia would have a disproportionately great impact on the final value. When distinguishing groups of countries with similar values of a given variable, Hellwig's critical interval method was used (Hellwig, 1968).

Analysis for comprehensive indicators

As mentioned, the indicators comprehensively defining the conditions and the quality of life include: the Legatum Prosperity Index, the Social Progress Index, and the Human Development Index.

In 2014, the highest ranking of the Legatum Prosperity Index, i.e. the best situation, was reported in Slovenia, and the worst one in Armenia. Kosovo was left out of the analysis. The studied countries have been divided into three groups (Fig. 1). In the first one, with the best situation, there are mainly those which after 1989 successfully carried out social, political and economic reforms: Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Belarus. Almost all of these countries are members of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Belarus is an exception in the group having an authoritarian system with suspended reforms. The second group (Romania, Ukraine, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Macedonia) and the third one (Serbia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Albania, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia) comprise countries which in recent years have not carried out reforms or have abandoned them quickly. Also most of them experienced war in the past. Only Romania, Albania and partly Montenegro are exceptions here. Compared to the entire studied group of countries, cases of Belarus, which was in the first group (although in the last place), and Romania, which as the only country belonging to the EU and NATO is not included in this group (although it was close), are symptomatic.

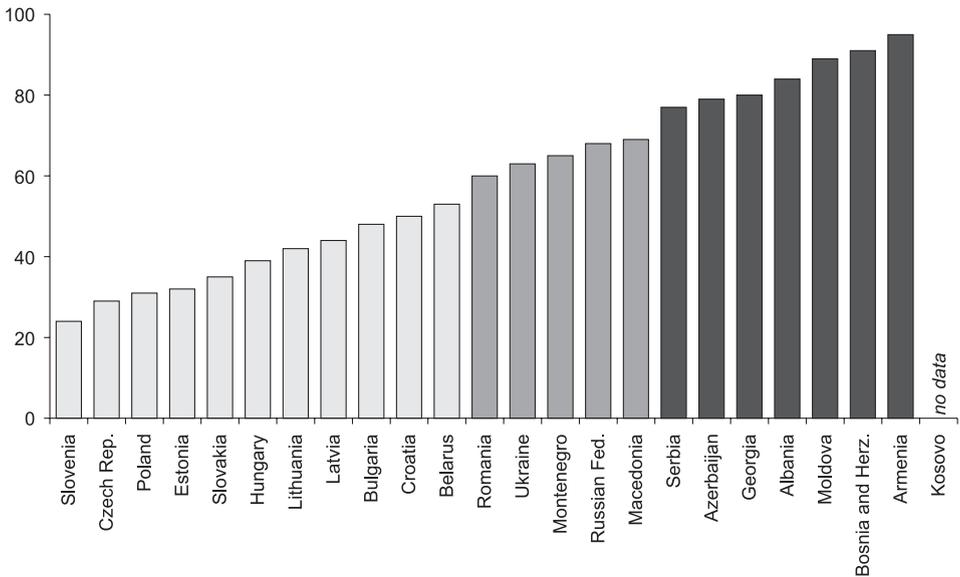


Fig. 1. Overall rank of the country according to the Legatum Prosperity Index in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://www.prosperity.com/#/>

Looking at the cohesion of the situation in 2014, we can conclude that it was relatively low in the tested group of countries assessed through the overall rank of the Legatum Prosperity Index, because RSD amounted to as much as 36.7% (Kosovo was excluded from the analysis).

The situation is partly similar if the value of Social Progress Index for 2014 is taken into consideration. The best situation was reported in Slovenia, the worst one in Moldova. Kosovo was excluded from the analysis. The studied countries have again been divided into three groups (Fig. 2). The first one comprises almost all countries that have enacted social, political and economic reforms the fastest and with the greatest determination (Slovenia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland). Estonia deserves special attention here as the only post-Soviet country in that group. Countries in the second group (Latvia, Hungary, Lithuania, Croatia) can also be counted as “winners” of the transformation process after 1989. All countries from the first two groups are now members of the EU and NATO. The third group includes all the other countries (Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, Romania, Montenegro, Belarus, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Moldova) which are not members of the EU (except for Bulgaria and Romania) and NATO (except for Albania, Bulgaria, Romania). Their characteristic feature is abandoning or slow implementation of social, political and economic reforms.

Looking at the cohesion of the situation in the analysed group of countries assessed by means of the Social Progress Index values for 2014, it can be concluded

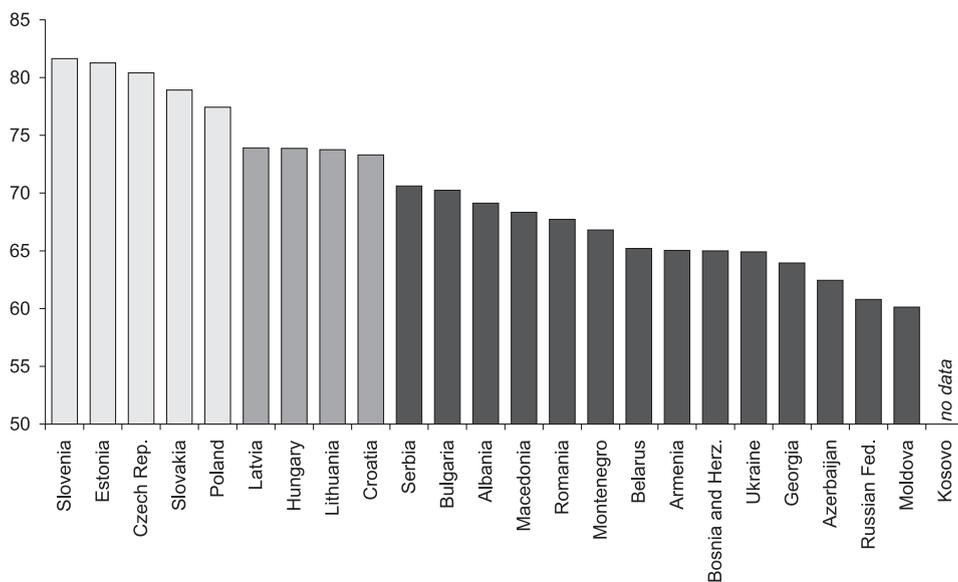


Fig. 2. The value of the Social Progress Index in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/>

that it was significant, because RSD amounted to 9.2% (Kosovo was excluded from the analysis).

In the case of the third indicator comprehensively evaluating the populations' situation, i.e. Human Development Index, the best situation in 2013 was reported in Slovenia, the worst one in Moldova. Once again Kosovo was excluded from the analysis. The analysed countries have been divided into five groups (Fig. 3). The first one, with the best situation, includes Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Their characteristic is not only quick and effective implementation of reforms, but also a high level of development even in the period before 1990 and shared history (both were part of Austria in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). The second group consists of seven countries: Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Latvia. These countries, similarly to those from the first group, implemented reforms with great determination and success. Countries from both of these groups are now members of the EU and NATO. The third group, which can be called "transitional", includes Montenegro, Belarus, Romania, Russia, and Bulgaria. There is no common feature for these countries. Two further groups include countries with a relatively bad situation. The fourth one comprises: Azerbaijan, Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, and Albania. Moldova is classified in the fifth group. Countries of these two groups are mostly characterised by a weak economic situation, little advanced reforms, and furthermore, in most of them there currently is or was in the past warfare.

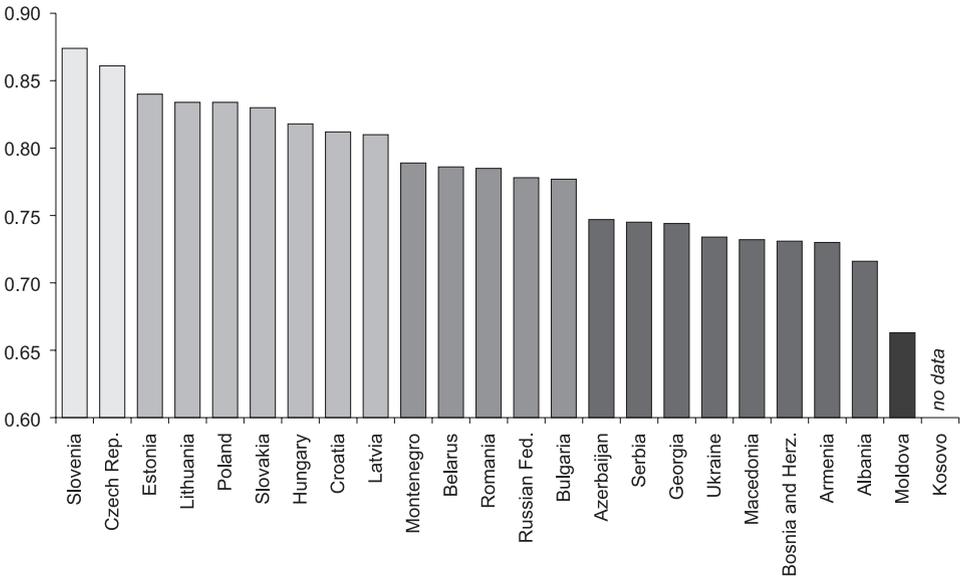


Fig. 3. The value of the Human Development Index in European post-Communist countries in 2013

Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en>

Analysing the cohesion of the characterised group of countries assessed by the value of the Human Development Index for 2013, we can conclude that it was the largest of the three tested so far, as RSD reached 6.6% (Kosovo was excluded from the analysis).

Analysis for specific indicators in terms of liberties

Specific indicators, characterising selected individual liberties and management conditions, include three indicators: the Index of Economic Freedom, the World Press Freedom Index, and the Corruption Perceptions Index.

Looking at the Index of Economic Freedom in 2014, we conclude that it was the highest in Estonia, while the lowest in Ukraine. The study does not include Kosovo. The analysed countries have been divided into four groups (Fig. 4). By far the best situation occurs in Estonia. In the second group there are Lithuania, Georgia, and the Czech Republic. In the fourth, the worst one, there are Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Other countries are placed in the third group, with a relatively favourable level of economic freedom. It is symptomatic that the first two groups with the best situation and the last one with the worst situation comprise only post-Soviet countries. This seems to show that, given the enormity of economic difficulties in those countries, it is difficult to choose and continue the way of intermediate economic policy. What remains is either very explicit “breaking”

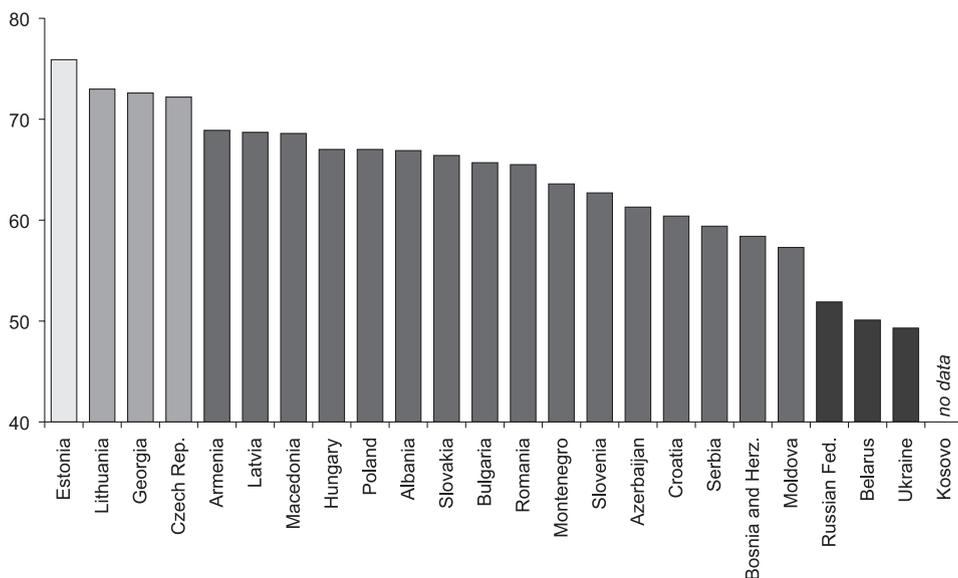


Fig. 4. The value of the Index of Economic Freedom in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://www.heritage.org/>

from the past of centrally controlled economy or “falling” into an authoritarian or an oligarchic system.

Analysing the cohesion of the situation in 2014 in the tested group of countries assessed by means of the Index of Economic Freedom, we can say that it was rather high, because RSD amounted to 11.0% (Kosovo was excluded from the analysis).

With regard to the World Press Freedom Index in 2014, there is a very large diversity of situations, ranging from a very good one in Estonia to a very poor one in Azerbaijan. The entire analysed group of countries has been divided into three subgroups (Fig. 5). The best situation occurs in Estonia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. Except for Estonia, all three countries have a similar history and culture. On the opposite side there are authoritarian countries (Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan), in which there has been a clear withdrawal from reforms and progressing limitation of civil liberties. Most of the remaining countries are placed in-between these two extreme groups of countries. In this middle group the causes of a greater or lesser level of civil liberties and freedom of the press are very diverse, as on the one hand, there are countries with a similar level of freedom and factors shaping it (e.g. Lithuania), and on the other hand, there are countries dangerously approaching members of last group, which is due to similarly authoritarian ambitions of the authorities (e.g. Macedonia). Somewhere in between there are countries torn by internal, more political, conflicts (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina) or more economic and criminal ones (e.g. Ukraine).

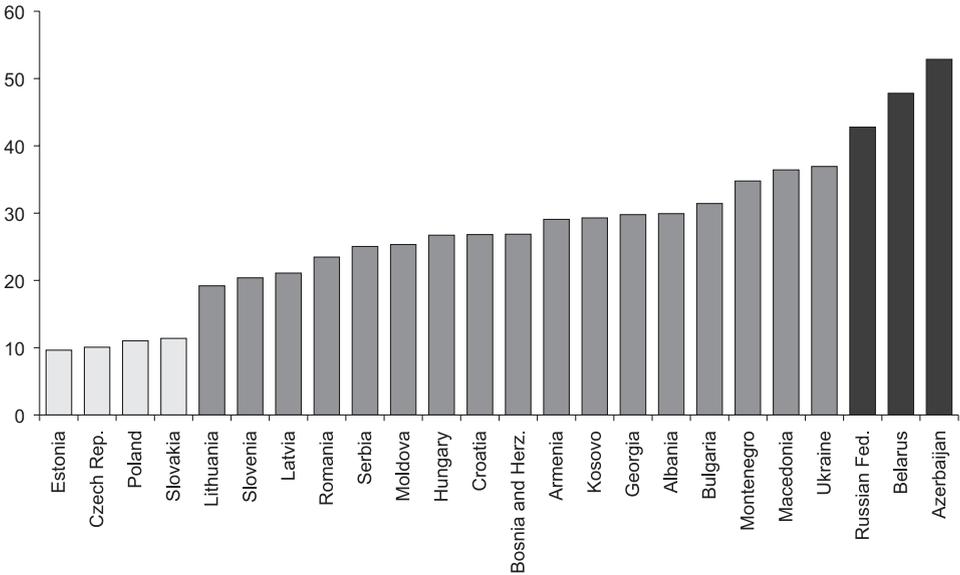


Fig. 5. The value of the World Press Freedom Index in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://en.rsf.org/>

The level of the RSD for the World Press Freedom Index in 2014 reached the value of 40.0%, so the cohesion level of the surveyed states can be considered small in this regard.

Corruption is a huge problem in the tested group of countries. The best situation, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2014, was in Estonia, the worst one in Ukraine. The analysed countries have been divided into five groups (Fig. 6). The first three with the best situation are not numerous. Estonia is in a single-element group with the best situation, followed by Poland in the second group. In the third group, with a relatively favourable situation there are Lithuania and Slovenia. The situation was ranked as average in Latvia, Hungary, Georgia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Croatia. It is difficult to find a common feature linking these countries. Other Member States were in the last largest group characterised by high levels of corruption. Trying to find some spatial regularities in such a diversification of the Corruption Perceptions Index, one can only conclude that generally a better situation prevails in countries located in the north, and a worse one in southern states (of course, except for the Russian Federation). There appears an unavoidable analogy to the spatial distribution of the current economic situation of the member states of the “old” EU.

Looking at the cohesion of the situation in 2014 with regard to the Corruption Perceptions Index in the analysed group of countries, we find it rather low, because the RSD shaped at the value of 25.8%.

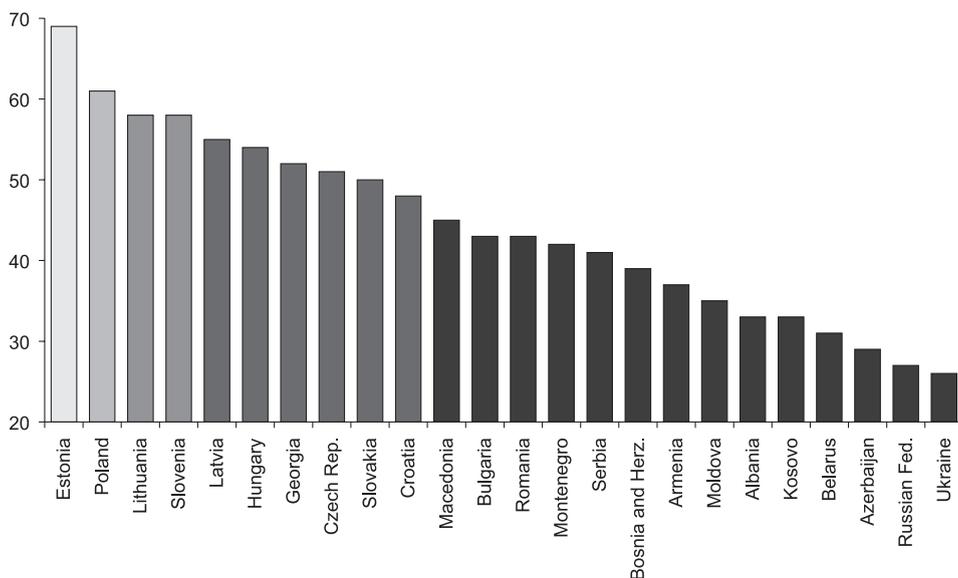


Fig. 6. The value of the Corruption Perceptions Index in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://www.transparency.org/>

Analysis for specific indicators with regard to gender equality and tolerance

The Gender Development Index can be defined as an indicator depicting adherence to principles of gender equality. In 2013 among the analysed countries, its highest value (and therefore the best situation) was reported in Estonia, and the worst one was in Georgia. However, it should be noted that the analysis did not include four countries of the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia). The analysed countries have been divided into four groups (Fig. 7). The most advantageous situation prevailed in four countries of the former USSR: Estonia, the Russian Federation, Lithuania, and Latvia. The worst situation was in countries with a significant percentage of Muslim population (Albania, Azerbaijan, Macedonia) and Georgia. In between them, there are two groups of countries with an intermediate situation. The most surprising are large differences in women’s equality between close to each other Slovakia and the Czech Republic (to the detriment of the latter).

Considering the cohesion of the countries in 2013 in terms of the Gender Development Index, we can say that it was quite high (RSD equal to 3.1%), but on the other hand, it should be noted that the analysis does not include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The issue of equality for LGBT persons (the abbreviation stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) is nowadays strongly emphasised in the European Union. Hence we also decided to analyse this issue. For this purpose, the Gay

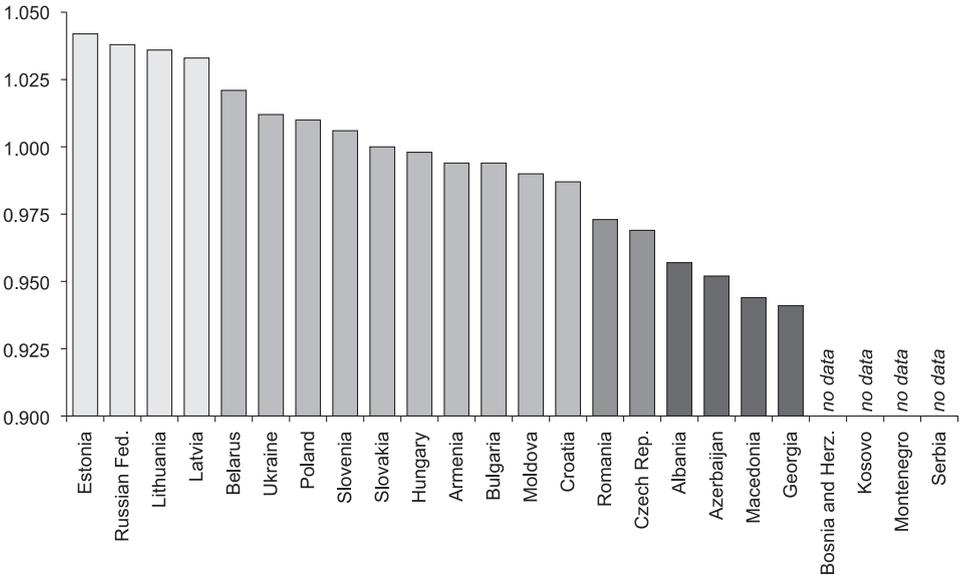


Fig. 7. The value of Gender Development Index in European post-Communist countries in 2014

Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en>

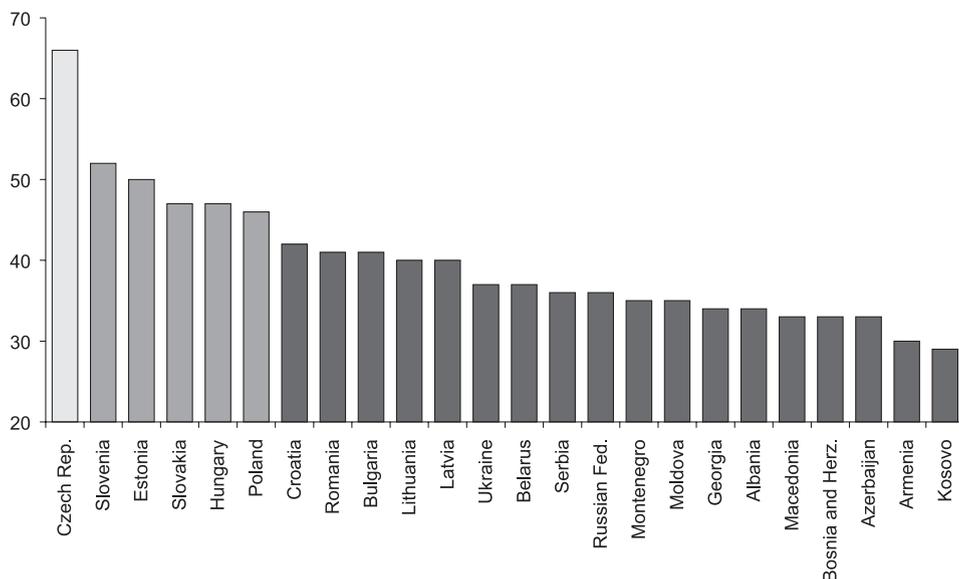


Fig. 8. The value of Gay Happiness Index in European post-Communist countries in 2015
Source: <https://www.planetromeofoundation.org/>

Happiness Index was used. In 2015 the best situation prevailed in the Czech Republic, the worst one in Kosovo. The analysed countries have been divided into three groups (Fig. 8). A clearly very favourable situation was in the Czech Republic. A relatively good one can also be seen in Slovenia, Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Other countries are placed in the third group with a bad or very bad situation of LGBT persons. Such spatial diversity of the situation of LGBT persons seems to be determined first and foremost by local factors of a cultural nature. The only regularities are associated with the force of the impact of the so-called *homo sovieticus* (which can be indirectly linked to the fact of belonging of a particular country to the former USSR) and with Islamic influences.

The cohesion of a characterised group of countries with regard to the value of the Gay Happiness Index in 2015 was rather low, because the value of the RSD reached 20.5%.

Conclusion

The summary has been conducted in two stages. First, in order to attempt a comprehensive assessment of the quality and conditions of living in European post-Communist countries, a new variable which is a combination of three general indicators: the Legatum Prosperity Index, the Social Progress Index, and the Human Development Index was used. It was obtained as follows: first, ranking was calculated for each of the indicators separately so that a country with the best situation was given the rank of 1, the next one 2, and so on. Finally, the rankings of all three primary indicators were summed up. The obtained result is presented in Fig. 9.

Due to differences in the value of the new variable, the analysed countries have been divided into four groups (Fig. 9). The first one, with the best situation, includes Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, Latvia, and Croatia. These are all countries that not only successfully implemented reforms, but also they all belong to the EU and NATO. A certain impact of recent history is also visible here, as in the same group there are post-Communist countries which in the near past: (1) were part of the USSR, (2) although theoretically independent, were actually dependent on Moscow, and (3) were not directly dependent on Moscow. The second group (Bulgaria, Belarus, Romania, Montenegro, Serbia) can be called intermediate because it includes countries with a very different path of transformations after the fall of communism. There are Bulgaria and Romania belonging to the EU and NATO (but with a relatively poorly conducted process of reforms), and there is Belarus (in which there has even been a strengthening of the old systems under a new form of authoritarianism). The two remaining groups include countries with the worst situation of the population. A bad one was reported in Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine, Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, and a very bad one in Moldova. These are all countries with a different way of transformation after 1989. The only thing they have in common is the lack of effective reforms or launching them too late. It is symptomatic that the country (the Russian Federation) regarding itself the heir of the former empire (i.e. the USSR) which controlled the vast majority of the surveyed here countries is characterised

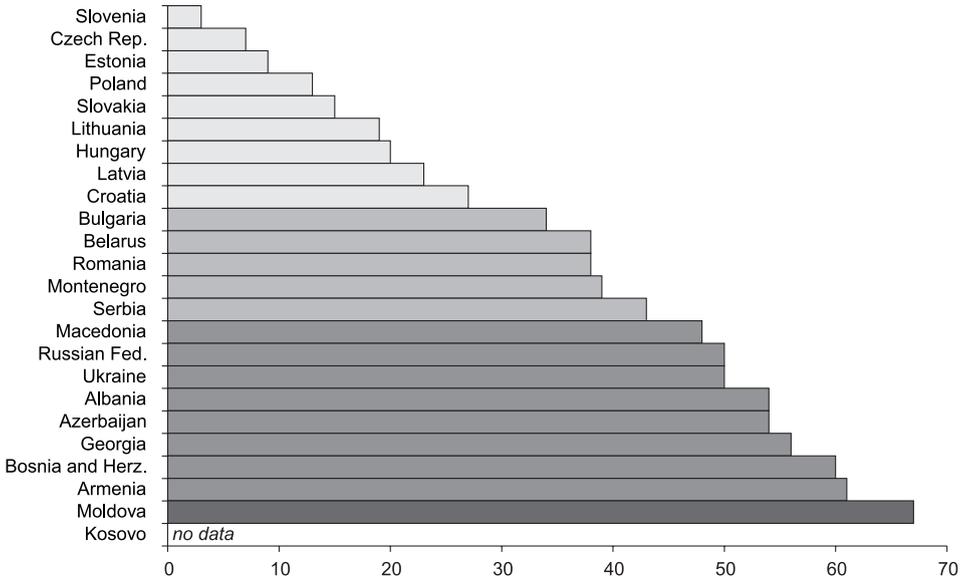


Fig. 9. Synthetic evaluation of the quality and conditions of living in European post-Communist countries in 2013/2014

Source: own elaboration based on distributed data.

by fairly weak conditions and the quality of life of its citizens (because usually the situation of the population in the former colonial empire is better than of its former colonies).

On the basis of the high value of the RSD (52.6%), it was concluded that the cohesion of European post-Communist countries in the population's situation was very low.

The second part of the summary contains general conclusions. In terms of the spatial distribution of the described populations' situation, we can observe:

1. An indisputable success of Estonia, which at the beginning of the transformation process had a bad situation due to a number of very negative social, economic and political phenomena related to its long-term occupation. Despite this it is now among the top countries with the best situation. To a lesser extent, the same can be said about Latvia and Lithuania.
2. The weakness of Russia – usually a country which is a successor of the former empire has better conditions and quality of life than its former colonies. In the case of the Russian Federation is not so, because the countries of the Baltic Assembly from the so-called near abroad and the majority of countries from so-called far abroad have a better situation than the former invader.
3. Bulgaria and Romania clearly have worse conditions and the quality of life than other former Communist countries which are now members of the EU.
4. Simply put, it can be concluded that a better situation prevails in the north of the analysed group of countries than in the south (apart from Russia due to its huge size). This corresponds with the current situation in the European Union, where countries of the south, PIGS, have the biggest economic problems.

Looking at possible factors that may have led to such a diversity of spatial conditions and the quality of life, one can observe:

1. A relatively small influence of recent history (i.e., the fact of being part of the Soviet Union, a pseudo-independent State dependent on the USSR or a realistically independent one). Apparently, this is confirmed by the presence among the countries with the best the situation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which until 1990 were under direct occupation of authorities in Moscow and the absence of, for instance, Serbia in this group.
2. Membership in the EU and NATO does not guarantee excellent conditions and the quality of life; it is rather secondary in relation to reforms conducted in the country. This is especially noticeable in Bulgaria and Romania.
3. Cultural determinants strongly affect gender tolerance and equality. Notable here is the impact of two factors: of the so-called *homo sovieticus* in reducing differences in the status of women and men (particularly small differences in most of the countries of the former USSR) and of Islam on the lower position of women and a worse situation of LGBT persons.

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When a minority is in majority. Areas of population prevalence of ethnic and national minorities in the post-Soviet region¹

Abstract: The aim of this article is to identify first-tier territorial units in post-Soviet countries in which the titular nations of a given country make up a minority. The authors discuss the main causes of these imbalances as well as describe the current situation within the region. Emphasis has been placed on migration issues and specific characteristics of the distribution of ethnic minorities in each country.

Key words: USSR ethnic groups, ethnic structure, Russia, post-Soviet region, migration, border changes.

Introduction

The diversity within the Soviet Union and the (subsequent) post-Soviet countries have been providing opportunities to study the processes of political, cultural (social) and economic (dis)integration, for many years. According to Marciniak (2004), a creation of fifteen new states is the most obvious but by far not the only manifestation of disintegration. One of its most significant layers is the one of ethnicity and nationality. W. Zajączkowski describes the situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union as ‘at the battlefield, remained nations and nationalism’ (2015, p. 247)

The national (ethnic) politics and the development of the, universal, multi-ethnic ‘Soviet man’ were some of the USSR unrealistic projects. These attempts

¹ The project was funded by the National Science Centre allocated based on the number of decision – DEC-2011/01/B/HS4/03234

were met with resistance as they stood in contradiction to ethnic and national distinctiveness based on the elementary dichotomy of ‘us vs them’². When analysing an ethnic group of a specific society in the context of this dualism, we can identify many criteria (race, origin, language, religion, organisation of social and family life, et c) that, being quite comprehensive in themselves, fall within specified limits. These attributes, however important, give way to two aspects of identification: self-identification and the acceptance of the group to which we aspire. For the purposes of this article we shall concentrate on the first one.

Self-determination, understood as identification of one’s own identity (here: ethnic or national), is one of the primary reason for conducting population censuses in any country, also in Soviet Union and nowadays, in the post-Soviet states. There were eight censuses carried out in the USSR: 1920 – incomplete, due to unstable political and territorial situation; 1926, 1937 – results classified due to the magnitude of the Great Famine losses; 1939 – executed on Stalin’s orders and heavily falsified; 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989 – seen as generally reliable (Eberhardt 2002)³. In spite of some objections, these censuses depict (although a better word here would be ‘create’) the ethnic composition of the entire region within specific time periods. The censuses carried out after the breakup of the

Table 1. Censuses’ dates in the Soviet republics and the post-Soviet countries

Country	Year							
	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2001	2011
Armenia	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2001	2011
Azerbaijan	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2009	–
Belarus	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2009	–
Estonia	–	–	1959	1970	1979	1989	2000	2011
Georgia	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2002	2014
Kazakhstan	–	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2009	–
Kyrgyzstan	–	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	1999	2009
Lithuania	–	–	1959	1970	1979	1989	2011	–
Latvia	–	–	1959	1970	1979	1989	2000	2011
Moldova	–	–	1959	1970	1979	1989	2004	–
Russia	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2002	2010
Tajikistan	–	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2010	–
Turkmenistan	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2012	–
Ukraine	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2001	–
Uzbekistan	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2011 ^a	–

^amini census (based on 10% of the total population of the country).

Source: own elaboration based on <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/censuses/2010+Population+Census+Round>; www.demoskope.ru.

² More on ‘us vs them’ bias in: Posern-Zieliński, 1987, Bauman, 1996.

³ Although mostly seen as reliable, censuses carried out after 1959 still raise some doubts. For example, after their deportation, Crimean Tatars had not been included in any of the censuses for many years to come; the 1959 census ignored a 600 thousand Germans settled in Kazakhstan and the Turks were not to be found even in the census of 1979 (Szykiewicz 1993, Mądry 1999).

USSR do not have this advantage. They were carried out in different years and separately for each (Table 1).

Additional difficulties result from the method of data aggregation and reporting. In some countries, censuses' results are generalized with no individual reports per administrative unit. This policy aims to hide the spatial ethnic heterogeneity and factual majority of ethnic minorities in specific regions.

The purpose of the article is to identify regions existing within post – Soviet countries, where the national majority constitutes minority⁴. As shown by the example of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Chechnya, Crimea, Transnistria, Eastern Ukraine, etc., such situations can generate feelings of nationalism and separatism, as well as become grounds for territorial claims or armed conflict. This, in turn can result in disintegration of territorial social systems such as states⁵ and loss of jurisdiction. A large number of such cases in the post-Soviet region demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the Soviet ethnic policy and shows how the situation has escalated in the last 26 years. The main objective of this analysis is to identify the reasons for the emergence of ethnic structures within the specific regions and, where possible, to describe the state of the present inter-ethnic relations.

The scope of the study includes 15 post-Soviet states in the first-tier territorial division. Due to the data aggregation method and its nationwide, not unit-specific publication, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, any territorial units for which there is no reliable data were omitted. These include Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria. The first three, according to unofficial data, are almost mono-ethnic and the last one is a conglomerate of many groups, where percentage of Moldovan, Russians and Ukrainians oscillates around 30% (per group).

The time range of the article is determined by censuses' dates, taking into account the relevant historical perspective. The census of 1989 has been chosen as the point of reference. This census can be seen, on one hand, as an accounting point after the dissolution of the USSR, and on the other – as a point of emergence of the new states. Explaining the causes of certain states and phenomena required deeper historical references.

The analysis was performed using mostly secondary data sources such as censuses' results, public statistical and administration data, previous research and literature. These were supplemented by primary data: information gathered on site and obtained during observation. Indicative, cartographic and historical-descriptive methods were used.

⁴ For the purposes of this paper, regional division correspond to first-tier administrative division units.

⁵ More on the of a Territorial Social System in: Chojnicki 1989. More on the use of the concept in political systems research: Mađry, 2014.

The Regions with Minorities Making up a Majority of the Local Population

East-European States

In times of Soviet Union, most of the territory was dominated by Slavic population (Maryński, 1974). In 1959, the total population of USSR was 208.8 million, 54.6% of which were ethnic Russians, 17.8% Ukrainians and 3.8% Belarussians. Even though the absolute number of the population and the above mentioned nationalities has risen, the ethnic proportions have changed significantly. The latest population census (1989) has shown much lower percentage values for individual ethnic groups (50.8% Russians, 15.5% Ukrainians and 3.5% Belarussians) with the total population number established at 285.7 million people (Table 2).

Among all the republics, the most ethnically differentiated were RSFSR and USSR (128 different nationalities), as well as Kazakh and Uzbek SSR's (127 different national groups in each). Belarus SSR has been found to be the least ethnically diverse. However, it has to be noted that, even though past censuses are

Table 2. National composition of the Soviet Union according to the results of population censuses in 1939, 1959, 1979, 1989^a

The ethnic group	1939		1959		1979		1989	
	Population size (total)							
	170,557.1		208,826.7		262,084.7		285,742.5	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Russians	99,591.5	58.4	114,113.5	54.6	137,397.1	52.4	145,155.5	50.8
Ukrainians	28,111.0	16.5	37,252.9	17.8	42,347.4	16.2	44,186.0	15.5
Uzbeks	4,845.1	2.8	6,015.4	2.9	12,456.0	4.8	16,697.8	5.8
Belarusians	5,275.4	3.1	7,913.5	3.8	9,462.7	3.6	10,036.3	3.5
Kazakhs	3,100.9	1.8	3,621.6	1.7	6,556.4	2.5	8,135.8	2.8
Azerbaijanis	2,275.7	1.3	2,939.7	1.4	5,477.3	2.1	6,770.4	2.4
Tatars	4,313.5	2.5	4,918.0	2.4	6,185.2	2.4	6,648.8	2.3
Armenians	2,152.9	1.3	2,786.9	1.3	4,151.2	1.6	4,623.2	1.6
Tajiks	1,229.2	0.7	1,396.9	0.7	2,897.7	1.1	4,215.4	1.5
Georgians	2,249.6	1.3	2,692.0	1.3	3,570.5	1.4	3,981.0	1.4
Moldovans	260.4	0.2	2,214.1	1.1	2,968.2	1.1	3,352.4	1.2
Lithuanians	32.6	0.02	2,326.1	1.1	2,850.9	1.1	3,067.4	1.1
Turkmens	812.4	0.5	1,001.6	0.5	2,027.9	0.8	2,729.0	1.0

^a For ethnic groups larger than 1% of the total population in 1989.

Source: own elaboration based on www.demoskope.ru. Nacionalnyi sostav nasielienia... 1991.

Table 3. First-tier administrative units with the non-Russian population making up a majority of a local population^a

Russian Federation							
Unit	Population size (total)			The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population		
	1989	2002	2010		1989	2002	2010
Republics							
Chechnya	no data available ^b	110,3686	1,268,989	Chechens	–	93.5	95.1
Chuvashia	1,338,023	1,313,754	1,251,619	Chuvashes	67.8	67.7	65.1
Dagestan	1,802,188	2,576,531	2,910,249	Avars	27.5	29.4	29.2
Ingushetia	no data available ^c	467,294	412,529	Ingushes	–	77.3	93.5
Yakutia	1,094,065	949,280	958,528	Russians ^d	50.3	41.2	36.9
				Yakuts	33.4	45.5	48.7
Kabardino-Balkaria	753,531	901,494	859,939	Kabardins	48.2	55.3	57.0
Kalmykia	322,579	292,410	289,481	Kalmyks	45.4	53.3	56.2
Karachay-Cherkessia	414,970	439,470	477,859	Russians ^e	42.4	33.6	31.4
				Karachays	31.2	38.5	40.7
North Ossetia	632,428	710,275	712,980	Ossetians	53.0	62.7	64.5
Tatarstan	3,641,742	3,779,265	3,786,488	Tatars	48.5	52.9	53.2
Tuva	308,557	305,510	307,930	Tuvinians	64.3	77.0	81.0
Autonomous okrugs							
Komi-Permyak ^f	158,526	136,076	–	Komi-Permyaks	60.2	59.0	–
Agin-Buryat ^g	77,188	72,213	–	Buryats	54.9	62.5	–

^a The units in which the non-Russian population constituted a majority in the last census were shown

^b During the Soviet rule the republic of Chechnya was combined with Ingushetia. The total population of Chechens-Ingush ASRR in 1989 was 1,270,429. Of which 57.8% were Chechens.

^c In Russian times, the region of Ingushetia was for administrative reasons, combined with Chechnya.

^d The Russian population in 1989 was larger than the endemic population of Yakutia.

^e In 1989, the Russian population was larger than the endemic population of Karachay who constituted 31.2% of the local population.

^f The Komy-Permyak okrug has been part of the Perm Krai since 2005.

^g The Agin-Buryat okrug has been part of the Zabaykalsky Krai since 2008.

Source: own elaboration based on www.demoskope.ru, *Nacionalnyi sostav nasielienia... 1991*.

assumed to be falsified⁶, the population census of 1989 has been deemed as generally credible. Although even this one has been causing controversy. For example, according to the census, there had been around 60,000 Polish in Kazakhstan, when, in reality, estimates are of about 100,000).

In RSFSR, ethnic Russian population was mainly concentrated in the centre, west and partially in the north parts of the country (Ławriszczew 1969). This trend continues to this day. While analysing ethnic and national structures of the Russian Federation (taking into account the present administrative division system) the authors have found that the most 'Russian' administrative units are the krajs, special status cities and okrugs as opposed to certain republics and autonomous regions. Regions characterised by a number of national minorities being higher than the Russian population are North Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay–Cherkessia, North Ossetia; Appendix 1), bordering with Dagestan Kalmykia, situated in the west Tatarstan and Chuvashia as well as, located in the Asian part of the country, Tuva and Yakutia. To this group also belong the past autonomous okrugs of Agin-Buryat and Komi-Permyak (Table 3)

The highest number of ethnic minorities has been found in Caucasus. 90% of the population of the Chechen Republic were Chechens. Similarly, Ingushetians, according to the 2010 census, constitute 93.5% of population in their republic. The proportions are different in multi-ethnic Dagestan, though. Examining the data obtained in the most recent census and taking into account the proportions of three largest autochthonic ethnicities within this region (Avar, Dargin, Kumyk), it becomes visible that the 'non-Russian' population makes up a majority⁷.

In this context, especially interesting is the situation of Chechnya. The history of this north-Caucasian region, is characterised by numerous armed conflicts, that resulted from Russian conquest and the following strive for independence.

For Russia, Chechnya has been one of the most economically strategic regions for a very long time. That is mostly due to its significance in transport (main oil route from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and in oil drilling⁸ (Szukalski 2008). The 1989 census was based on one administrative unit, Chechen-Ingush Autonomous ASSR, which makes its results difficult to compare with the most recent ones. In 1989, Chechen population within this region was at 734.5 thousand. Later years saw a significant decrease in this number, caused mainly by the two Chechen Wars. According to the census of 2010, region of Chechnya has a population of 1.2 m. 95% of that are ethnic Chechens. This significant structural change can be explained by the emigration of ethnically foreign groups, post-war migrations and natural population growth. Increased number of endemic population in this

⁶ Most probably the reason was to conceal some uncomfortable (for the Party) information from the society, e.g. the results of the Great Famine in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, war casualties, deportation numbers et c. For years, the censuses have not been including data on Crimean Tatars and Turks were not even mentioned in the 1979 census. Similarly, up to 1959, any information about a German population of 600,000 in Kazakhstan was disclosed from public.

⁷ In 2010, all three ethnic groups, together, constituted 60.9% of the Dagestan population.

⁸ Mostly of regional significance. After two Chechnyan wars, the Grozne oil refinery, has been rebuilt. However, the plant is nowadays processing imported oil.

republic, general islamisation of every-day life, and the cult of the 'head of the nation' – Ramzan Kadyrov, are all issues that, from the central government's point of view, can cause problems in the future. The growing power of Chechnya leader and his actions undermine the viability of the Moscow-Grozny agreement, which at present, consist of supporting the development of the republic by federal funds, in exchange for the stability and relative subordination of the region (Falkowski 2015).

During the process of political and factual disintegration of the USSR, the first two countries to announce their independence were the Republic of Tatarstan (30 August 1990) and the Chechen Republic (1 November 1991⁹). These were also the only entities that refused to sign a federal agreement with Russia on 31 March 1992 (Zuzankiewicz, 2015). Tatars were the biggest ethnic and national minorities of the RFSR. They were also the region's endemic population. The census in 1989 showed a total of 6.6 million Tatars living in the USSR, 5.5 million in the RFSR and 1.77 million in the TASRR (26.6% of ethnic population). This meant that even though, the Tatars were the largest nation in their homeland, they have accounted for less than a half (48.5%) of its total population which makes it only slightly bigger than the Russian (43.3%) population within the region. Since then there has been a systematic increase in the number of the Tartars, accompanied by a decline in the Russian population. In 2002, the titular population was at 2.0 million (52.9%), while Russians accounted for 1.48 million (39.5%). In 2010, it was 2.01 million (53.2%) and 1.5 million (39.7%), respectively (with total population at 3.79 million), with majority of Russians living in Kazan. As a more detailed analysis of population fluctuations and political changes within the region can be found in the publications of A. Wierzbicki (2011) and P. Zuzankiewicz (2015), we shall focus mainly on factors that help strengthen a sense of national consciousness and distinctiveness of Tartars. Among these factors, ones mentioned most often are: racial, linguistic and religious distinctiveness, centuries-old traditions of statehood as well as of organisations and institutions (including Kazan State University¹⁰ or as many as 16 theatres).

One must not forget, however, about a less often named, but equally important factor: economic foundations. Tatarstan is one of Russia's most heavily industrialised regions (chemical and machine industry – including automotive clusters, construction, power engineering et c). It draws considerable profits from extraction and processing of crude oil and has highly developed financial industry. Tartars have their own (not only political and cultural but also scientific and engineering) elite and Kazan, being one of the largest cities of the Russian Federation, plays an important role not only in Tatarstan's but also Russia's economy.

⁹ This was declared on 1st of November by the newly elected president of Chechnya D.Dudayev and was upheld by the Chechnya parliament day later (Grochmalski 2012).

¹⁰ One of the oldest universities in Russia. Funded in 1804.

The history of Moldova has been characterised by frequent border changes and creation of various political units, causing migrations, disorganisation of the ethnic structures and identity confusion.¹¹

The population of the Moldavian SSR in 1959 was about 2.9 million people, of which Moldavians constituted 65.4%, Ukrainians 14.6%, Russians 10.2%, Gagauzes 3.3% and Jews 3.3%. In 1989, the Moldavian SSR was inhabited by 4.3 million people, of which 64.5% were Moldavians, 13.8% Ukrainians, 13% Russians and 3.5% Gagauzes. The census of 2004 showed Moldovians being in minority in two administrative units: Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia and Taraclia District (Table 4).

The presence of Gagauzes and Bulgarians in southern Moldova dates back to the second half of the 18th and early 19th centuries (Socircă, Mytuku 2010).¹² At that time, the areas of today's southern Moldova and Budjak were almost uninhabited. The victory of the war with Turkey and the acquisition of Bessarabia by the Romanov Empire by peace in Bucharest increased the colonization process not only by settlers from Russia and Ukraine, but also from Germany and Turkey. Of the latter country, especially Bulgarians and Gagauzes arrived, settling in southern Bessarabia. Breaking up from Bessarabia Budjak (Budjak) and incorporating it into the Ukrainian SRR divided the Bulgarian community into two parts (Maryński 1994). The census of 1989 showed 165.8 thousand Bulgarians in the Odessa Oblast and 88.4 thous. In Moldova, of which 79.2 thous. beyond Chisinau. The rest live and live in Taraclia. Although Bulgarians in Moldova are cur-

Table 4. First-tier administrative units with the non-Moldavian population making up a majority of a local population

Moldova					
Unit	Population size (total)		The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population	
	1989	2004		1989	2004
Districts					
Taraclia	no data available ^a	43,154	Bulgarians	–	65.6
Autonomous units					
Gagauzia	no data available	155,646	Gagauzes	–	82.1

^aThe last census of the USSR considered the ethnic composition of the Moldovan SSR and its capital as a whole, and did not report data for the individual regional units.

Source: own elaboration based on www.demoskope.ru; <http://www.statistica.md/>.

¹¹ More on history of Moldova bias in: Caľus, 2016.

¹² According to O.K. Radova (2012) first Gagaus families came to this territory in the 16th century, successive stages in 1750-1812 and 1819-1857.

rently treated as foreigners and second-class citizens, no separatism is recorded. However, there is a resentment behind the Soviet Union.

Due to the strong sense of identity, including linguistic distinctiveness (Gagauz language belongs to the Turkish languages), the Gagauzes are characterized by a strong sense of distinctiveness. On the wave of perestroika, in the years 1988–1990 in works and speeches M.N. Guboglo appeared postulates of the political autonomy. Initially, not only the territory of Moldova but also neighboring Ukraine, which would cover both the territories inhabited by this minority and the Bulgarians (Shornikov 2012). 19 VIII 1990 Congress of People's Deputies of the Steppe South of Moldova The SRR adopted the "Declaration on the Freedom and Independence of the Gagarin Nation from the Republic of Moldova", even ahead of Transnistria. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Gagauzia and the President¹³ was appointed. It was S.Topal (his function was from 1 December 1991 to December 1994 and informally until 19 VII 1995). After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the adoption by the Moldovan parliament of a language law that introduced Moldovan as the only official language, the Gagauz increased the sense of threat. The Transnistria war pushed Chisinau to make concessions. On 23 December 1994, the Moldovan Parliament adopted the "Gagauz Yeri Special Law Act", giving the right to appoint a local Parliament and Executive Committee (equivalent to the government). The head of autonomy is Başkan (governor), who also forms part of the Chisinau government.

The rise of political consciousness has led to a revival in other areas of life. A number of organizations and institutions have emerged. On 11 February 1991 Gagauz National University was created (in 2002, renamed by the Chisinau government at Comrat State University).¹⁴ Gagauz World Congresses are held regularly. The Gagauzian authorities emphasize their independence by maintaining contacts among others. With the self-proclaimed republics of Transnistria, Abkhazia or South Ossetia. The local community, however, is divided into sympathizers of rapprochement with Russia and supporters of remaining within Moldavia. In memory of many residents, as well as the official speeches of Başkana, there remains the memory of repression, deportations, forced collectivization and the Great Famine, 25% of the Gagauzis (Makarovich 2012).

Ethnic composition of Ukraine, just like of many other post-Soviet has been historically determined, and in Ukraine, the influence of Russia was relatively long and the Russification process intensive. Since the 18th century, most of Ukraine's present territory had been a part of the Russian Empire. Before that (from the 15th to the 18th century) Ukraine had been under the political influence of Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Turkey. The Great Famine (1932–1933) had drastically diminished population numbers in central and eastern Ukraine, par-

¹³ By the time of the election of the first (and only) president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Gagauzia, the informal role of the mayor was played by the mayor of the largest city and later the capital of Gagauz Yeri – Comrat.

¹⁴ It was established by the agreement of the Russian Education Foundation and the Executive Committee of the Comrat Regional Council of Deputies.

ticularly in the Ukrainian-speaking rural regions¹⁵. According to Ukrainian historians, between 3 and 5 million people died (some suggest this number may be even as high as 10 million). Russian historians estimate this number to be 1.5–2 million (Serczyk 2009). One must also not forget the 2–3 million villagers who were forced to resettle to Siberia (Chojnacki 1987). Additional major changes in Ukraine’s national structure were caused by the events during the WW2:

- repatriation of the Polish minority in western Ukraine;
- Holocaust of the Jewish population;
- deportation of the Crimean Tatars.

Industrialisation in the eastern part of the country, has in turn, resulted in the arrival of many (primarily) Russian nationals.

In 1959, population of Ukrainian SSR was approximately 41.9 million people, 76.8% of which were Ukrainians and 16.9% Russians. The census of 1989 showed an increase in general population to about 51.4 million people. Of that, Ukrainians accounted for about 37.4 million (72.7% of the total) and the Russian minority was about 11.3 million (22.1%). In the 30 years between the two censuses, a number of Ukrainians increased by 5.2 million and Russians by 4.2 million. This means that a growth rate of the Russian population (+59.2%) was significantly higher than that of the Ukrainian one (+16.1%).¹⁶

The 2001 census showed Ukrainians being in minority in two administrative units: the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in special status city – Sevastopol (Table 5).

Since the 18th century, the Crimea region has been predominantly inhabited by Russians. The deportation of Tatars in the 1940-ties has only strengthen this

Table 5. First-tier administrative units with the non-Ukrainian population making up a majority of a local population

Unit	Ukraine				
	Population size (total)		The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population.	
	1989	2001		1989	2001
Autonomous republic					
Crimea	2,430,495	2,033,736	Russians	67.0	58.0
Special status city					
Sevastopol	395,037	379,492	Russians	–	71.1

Source: own elaboration based on www.demoskope.ru, <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/>, *Nacjonalnyi sostav nasielienia... 1991*.

¹⁵ Western Ukraine was then part of Poland.

¹⁶ This may partly be a result of Russification, especially in the cities, or intentionally misleading census takers, who recorded the information on the basis of oral declaration, not documents.

disproportion¹⁷. In 1954, Crimea was transferred from the RSFSR to the USSR. The region has gained full autonomy in February 1991.

Gaining of independence has only escalated the already heated discussion on the spatial differentiation of the population and its national identity. In Russian publications, these differences were down-played and emphasising their distinctiveness Ukrainians described as nationalists, Banderaists, fascists, etc. M. Rabczuk (2005, 2010, 2015) presents the Ukrainian point of view on the matter. He argues that classification of any nationality according to the language used (in this case: Russian or Ukrainian) is unjustified. His thesis is additionally supported by the results of the independence referendum and general elections¹⁸. An extensive analysis of this diversification, in the context of the 2014 presidential election, was conducted by C.M. Mądry (2014). The results strongly suggest that the features of an ethnic crisis are being attributed to a crisis that is, in reality, a political one.

The annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia has only accelerated the process of ethnic identity development in Ukraine. In their work, A. Maryński (1994) and P. Eberhardt (1996) demonstrate the importance of ethnic structures in country destabilisation and formation of separatism. A week after presidential elections (21 November 2004), the deputies of the Regional Council of the Donetsk oblast have announced a possible referendum on the creation of an autonomous republic (in the event of cancellation of results giving victory W. Yanukovich), to be held on December the 5th. Similar resolutions were adopted in the Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts. Separatist tendencies escalated in 2014 resulting in the outbreak of a civil war¹⁹. Such conflicts were prevented in Kharkiv oblast. In Odessa oblast, ethnicity-related tensions and riots have been recorded (Anti-Maidan at Kulikovo and victims of the 2nd of May, 2014). There is also some evidence on disturbances in the Transcarpathian region, where the Hungarian minority (155.7 thousand – 12.5% in 1989 and approx. 12% in 2001) has settled. However, these disturbances seem to have resulted from tensions between several mafia families operating within the region.

After the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2016, there has been a significant increase in the emigration. Basing on Krymstat's data, W. Górecki (2016), reports that about 76 thousand people have left in the first few months after the region had been incorporated into Russia. The seemingly fast growing Russian population within the region, is closely linked to the fact that the inhabitants are being coerced into obtaining Russian citizenship.

¹⁷ The RFSRR census of 1939 showed that before the WW2 (before the deportations) Tartars accounted for 19.4% of the total population. The result of the 1959 census showed that the population of the Crimean region was 1.2 million people, of which the Tatar population constituted only 0.1% of the total population.

¹⁸ In 1991 independence referendum, 90.3% of the Ukrainians voted for independence. General participation was reported at 84.2%. In the Crimea region, the independence vote was cast by 54.2%, in Sevastopol by 57.1%, in Kharkiv Oblast 75.8%, in Donetsk 76.9%, Zaporozhye 80.7%, Luhzniki 83.9%. In all other regions, this proportion exceeded 85%.

¹⁹ More on the causes of separatism in the Donetsk Black Coal Basin can be found in the work of M. Studenna-Skrucka (2014).

In the case of Belarus, the 1999 census indicated, of the total of 10.0 million inhabitants, 81.2% were Belarusians, 11.4% Russians, 3.9% Poles and 2.4% Ukrainians. In 2009, out of 9.5 million people the percentages were, respectively at 83.7%, 8.3%, 3.1%, 1.7%. While it is possible to talk about significant size of Russian and Polish populations in the region, they did not make up a majority in any of the territorial units.

Baltic states

The post-Soviet Baltic states are Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Their current ethnic composition has been is mainly an effect of various historical determinants. The 'non-Balts' (mainly Russians, and Russified Belarussians and Ukrainians) migration, strongly encouraged by the Soviet authorities as well as the population losses resulting from the WW2 have led to changes in these countries' ethnic and national structures. In Soviet times, people were migrating to other regions primarily for economic reasons. They have settled predominantly in larger cities, influencing their spatial development and ethnic composition (Maryański, 1994; Toivo, 2000).

In 1959, the population of the Estonian SSR (the first census after the annexation of the Republic by the USSR) was about 1.2 million people. Of this number, Estonians constituted 74.5%, and the largest national minority – Russians 21.7%. A third biggest nationality in the region were Ukrainians (2.3%). The last Soviet census (1989) showed the increase in the population to over 1.5 million, of which 61.5% were Estonians, 30.3% Russians and 3.1% Ukrainians.

The 1989 census aggregated data by distinguishing only two units within the region: Tallinn and the rest of the country. At that time, the population of the capital was at 499.4 thousand. Of those, 46.8% were Estonians and 41.6% Russians. The region inhabited, in 2011, predominantly by the Russian ethnic group was the north-eastern Ida-Viru County, along with the city of Narva²⁰. The results of subsequent censuses carried out by the authorities of independent Estonia

Table 6. First-tier administrative units with the non-Estonian population making up a majority of a local population

Estonia							
Unit	Population size (total)			The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population.		
	1989	2000	2011		1989	2000	2011
Counties							
Ida-Viru	no data availables	179,702	149,172	Russians	–	69.5	72.5

Source: own elaboration based on <http://www.stat.ee/>.

²⁰ Unverified data suggests that 86.4% of the population of Narva are Russians and only 4% Estonians.

show that, despite a decline in the overall population size, the number of Russians increased significantly (Table 6).

Social and political situation of ethnic minorities in Estonia is complicated partly due to difficulties in obtaining Estonian citizenship. The main requirement here is passing the Estonian language exam, which most of non-Estonians are not able to do. In consequence, especially among the Russian minority a feeling of national distinctiveness is being strengthened and causes ethnicity related tensions. In north-eastern Estonia, the language most commonly heard on the streets is Russian.

In 1959, population of the Latvian SSR was approximately 2.1 million people, of which ethnic Latvians accounted for 62%, 26.6% were Russians, 2.9% Belarusians, 2.9% Poles and 1.4% Ukrainians. The 1989 census showed that the population of the country had increased to approximately 2.6 million people. During the 30 years in the Soviet Union, the ethnic and national structures of the republic had changed significantly. The percentage of Latvians within the general population decreased to 52%. Russians (the main national minority) accounted for 34%, Belarusians and Ukrainians for 4.5% and 3.5%.

Even though, the censuses conducted in independent Latvia show a systematic decline in the overall population, they also show a growing trend in the Latvian population numbers. In 2000, in the population of 2.38 million, Latvians constituted 57.7%, 29.6% were Russian, 4.1% Belarussian and 2.7% Ukrainians. In 2011, the population was registered at 2.07 million, with the percentages at 62.1%, 26.9%, 3.3%, 2.2%, respectively. This situation should be viewed as a result of a strict citizenship laws. A person unable to prove any blood ties to Latvian nationals from before the annexation by the USSR (e.a. where citizenship is not inherited) must, among others, pass the Latvian language exam. As a result, half of Russians and one-fourth of Poles living in Latvia have stateless status. Other difficulties (like a list of professions in which Latvian language is required) result in many people emigrating to different countries. This situation, just as in neighbouring Estonia, results in nationalist and ethnic tensions.

It is interesting to note a wide spatial distribution of Russians in Latvia (Table 7).

In Riga, they form a strong 40.2%, of city's population; in Latgale region – 38.9%; in Pieriga region – 19.3%. The smallest number of Russians live in Vidzeme region – 8.8%. At the level of municipalities, these percentages are often higher. For example, Zilupe county is inhabited in 54.9% by Russians, Daugavpils city in 53.6%, Rezekne in 46.5%, Vilani county in 45.8% and Olaine county in 40.4%. In general, the percentage of Russians is higher in the areas bordering with Russia (this situation has the historical determinants – these areas were, before the partitions, a part of Poland; Maryański, 1994) and in the cities (which is mainly caused by post-war migrations associated with industrialisation).

The census of 1989, showed that the Lithuanian SSR was inhabited by 3.67 million people, of which 79.6% were Lithuanians. Next large groups were: Russians – 344 thousand (9.4%) and Poles – 258 thousand (7%). In 2001, 83.5% of the 3.48 million inhabitants were Lithuanians, 6.7% Poles and 6.3% Russians. Ten

Table 7. First-tier administrative units with the non-Latvian population making up a majority of a local population

Latvia							
Unit	Population size (total)			The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population		
	1989	2000	2011		1989	2000	2011
Cities							
Daugavpils	no data availables	115,265	93,312	Russians	–	55.2	53.6
Rezekne	no data availables	39,233	32,328	Russians Latvians ^a	–	50.7 42.6	46.5 47.0
Riga	910,455	764,329	658,640	Russians Latvians ^b		43.9 41.0	40.2 46.3

^a In 2011, Latvians constituted the highest percentage of the city's population.

^b In 2011, Latvians constituted the a majority of the country capital's population.

Source: own elaboration based on <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en>.

years later, these proportions have changed even further in favour of the Lithuanian group. At present, out of the 3.04 million population, 84.2% are Lithuanians, 6.6% Poles and 5.8% Russians. It has to be noted that these minorities do not form a majority in any okrug. At most in region (Salernočice, where Poles constitute 80% of the population and Vilnius – 61%; *Results of the 2011 Population...*).

While Poles in Lithuania have been part of the population for centuries, Russians arrived after the annexation of Lithuania by the USSR. The largest concentration of Russian inhabitants can be found in Visaginas – on the border with Belarus and Latvia – 51.9% (this high percentage can be explained by the fact that Visaginas is where the workforce of the nuclear plant in Ignalin lives), Klaipin – 19.6%, Vilnius – 11.9%. According to Maryański (1994) this lack of ethnic diversity stems from cultural heritage (Catholic religion and its traditions), losses in the Jewish population during the WW2 and from the assimilation process of the Polish population living in Lithuania during the interwar period. Even though no separatist trends have been recorded in Lithuania, there are some existing nationalist tensions. One of the issues is the original spelling of places (cities, towns, et c) and non-Lithuanian names, as well as constraints put on teaching of minority languages. These actions, being mostly of a political nature, are being strongly opposed by Lithuanian intellectuals.

South Caucasus States

Territorial and ethnic shape of Georgia has been influenced by its geopolitical localisation and historical determinants since ancient times. Situated in a sphere of influence of Turkey and Russia, multiple wars, feudal fragmentation and subsequent forced territorial divisions played a direct role in the process of creating a multicultural, internally differentiated Georgian nation, which till this day, coex-

ists with numerous national and ethnic minorities (Mađdry, Kaczmarek-Khubnaia 2016; Appx. 2).

In 1939, the population of the Georgian SSR had been about 3.5 million, of which 61.4% were Georgian, 11.7% Armenian, 8.7% Russian and 5.3% Azerbaijani. Half a century later, Georgia had an estimated 5.4 million inhabitants, and the ethnic composition changed significantly: Georgian population had increased to 70.1% and the Azerbaijani accounted for 5.7%. The percentage of Armenians decreased to 8.1% and of Russians to 6.3%.

Regaining independence in 1991, led to the revival of nationalist and separatist tendencies²¹. Ethnic conflicts led to the separation of two regions: Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Their territories remain outside the jurisdiction of the government in Tbilisi to this day.

The region where a national minority (in this case Armenian) constitutes a majority is Samtskhe-Javakheti. Established in the 1990s, it was created by merging three historical lands: Meskheti (Samtskhe), Java and Tori (Borjomi region)²² in order to increase Georgian representation in the ethnic structures of the region²³. The origins of this Armenian enclave go back to the period of the Russian-Turkish war, which resulted in the territories of Meskheti and Javakheti being incorporated into the Russian Empire (1829). In 2002, the proportion of Arme-

Table 8. First-tier administrative units with the non-Georgian population making up a majority of a local population

Georgia							
Unit	Population size (total)			The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population		
	1989	2002	2014		1989	2002	2014
Regions							
Kvemo-Kartli	no data availables	497,530	423,986	Azerbaijanis	–	45.1	41.8
				Georgians ^a	–	44.7	51.3
Samtskhe-Javakheti	no data availables	207,598	160,504	Armenians	–	54.6	50.5

^a In 2014 Georgians, constituted the highest percentage of the region's population. Source: own elaboration based on www.geostat.ge.

²¹ These tendencies were accelerated by the election, in 1991, of Zviad Gamsakhurdia for the country's president. He came to power using nationalist slogans, including the famous "Saqartvelo qartvelebistvis" ("Georgia for Georgians"). More about the end of the presidency of Gamsakhurdia, see Furier 2000, Materski 2000.

²² The historic province of Meskheti includes the areas of Adigeni, Aspindza, Akhaltsikhe. Javakheti consists of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda and today's Borjomi district is located in the historical province of Tori.

²³ The 2002 census results confirmed significant differences in ethnic structures of the three units forming Samtskhe-Javakheti. In the region of historic Meskheti, the percentage of Armenians was around 24.8%, in Tori 9.6%, in Javakheti 94.8%.

nians settled in this region was at 54.6%. The most recent census from 2014, shows a decline to 50.4% (Table 8).

One of the remnants of the USSR times was a Russian military base in Akhalkalaki. It was being maintained until June 2007 (in 2002, about 94% of the area was inhabited by ethnic Armenians²⁴). The decision to close the base was met with multiple protests²⁵. Most of the staff members were ethnic Armenians with Russian citizenship and the base has become their main source of income, which, considering a poor economic situation²⁶, was something they were desperate to keep. It is often mentioned that in the times of the Russian base the Ruble was the most popular currency. Additional problem is the unfamiliarity with the Georgian language. This is true, especially for the older generation, who have been using their native tongue and Russian for years (Komoszyńska 2010, Dawitaj 1967).

Another territorial unit characterised by a significant minority group occupancy is Kvemo Kartli. The region is very ethnically diverse, which also has its roots in historical events. The origins of the Azerbaijani settlement in this region dates back to the 11th century, when the Turkish nomads arrived and settled in the area. In subsequent centuries, their population has been steadily increasing. Kvemo Kartli is also a home for, arrived in the second half of the 17th century, Karabakh Armenians and Greeks (Dawitaj 1967, Wheatley 2005).

The 2002 census showed that there was about an equal number of Azerbaijanis (45.1%) and Georgians (44.7%) living in the region. Greeks constituted 1.5% of the population, Russians 1.3%, and Armenians 0.4%. The 2014 census has shown a significant decrease in the Azerbaijani population decreased giving place to an increase number of Georgians²⁷. The percentages were 41.8% and 51.3%, respectively. The Armenian population has increased to 5.1%, and Russian and Greek ones decreased to 0.6% and 0.5% respectively. Added up, the two largest 'foreign' national groups, constitute about 46.9% of the total population. The decline in the Azerbaijani population and regained numerical advantage by the ethnic Georgians were influenced by the migratory waves of Svan and Adjara (1980s, 1990s, and 2004s) caused by natural disasters (avalanches, landslides and floods) in their native areas (Wheatley, 2005).

A difficult situation in the 1990s has influenced the development of new internal policies in the now independent Georgia. After the so-called 'Rose Revolution', Saakashvili government decided to introduce a political project, referring to the national symbols, patriotism and history. And the issue of national minorities played an important role in it. Fearing further disintegration, the ruling party has introduced the position of the Minister for Civic Integration, which was filled by an Ossetian woman. This shows that for the deprived of the regions of Abkhazia

²⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-russia-bases-idUSL1387605220071113>

²⁵ <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9329> [access: 20.03.2017].

²⁶ The area of today's Samtskhe-Javakheti has been always considered one of Georgia's poorest regions. Komoszyńska (2010) notes that the current absence of any form of governmental assistance with internal problems has its foundation in the Soviet period. The first Soviet development project in this area had only been introduced in the 1980s.

²⁷ The general population number has also decreased.

and South Ossetia present day Georgia, the issue of dialogue and integration with ethnic minorities is a priority (Zadura, 2010).

Looking at the ethnic structure of Armenia we can clearly see its mono-ethnic character. In 1989, the Armenians accounted for 93.3% of the population (3.1 million inhabitants), and for 97.9% in 2001 (an increase of 62 thousand). The largest minority were Kurds (1.7% and 1.3%, respectively). A number of Russians living in the region decreased from 1.6% to 0.5%. This was caused by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which forced a large number of people to flee, and by a poor economic situation of the country. In none of the administrative units did national minorities constitute a majority.

Central Asia

Out of the Central Asian countries, due to the data availability, only Kyrgyzstan has been analysed. Significant transformations in this country were initiated by the Russian Empire's conquest of the area (second half of the 19th century)²⁸. During the Soviet period, the influx of foreign population groups was mainly caused by the emigration of Europeans and deportations. Additionally, the endemic population was subjected to sovietisation and persecution, especially during the Stalinist period (Maryański, 1977; Bodio, 2004).

The population of the Kyrgyzstan SSR in 1939 was about 1.4 million people, of which Kyrgyz constituted 51.7%, Russians 20.8%, Uzbeks 10.4 and Ukrainians 9.4%. The census of 1989 showed the growth in the total population to about 4.2 million people, Kyrgyz accounted for 52.4%, Russians 21.5%, Uzbek 12.9%, Ukrainians 2.5%. The region, characterised by a significant national minority population (in this case Uzbek) is the city of Osh (Table 9).

Table 9. First-tier administrative units with the non-Kyrgyz population making up a majority of a local population

Kyrgystan							
Unit	Population size (total)			The dominant group	The percentage of the majority group within the total population		
	1989	1999	2009		1989	1999	2009
Cities							
Osh	no data availables	232,432	258,111	Kyrgyz ^a	–	44.4	47.9
				Uzbeks	–	44.7	44.2

^a In 2009, Kyrgyz people constituted the a majority of the city's population.

Source: own elaboration based on <http://stat.kg/en/>.

²⁸ The Russian population resettled to Central Asia usually chose to live in cities. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, there were also some Russian settlements in rural areas. First Russian-Ukrainian settlements were established in the valley of Chu and Talas rivers, at the end of the 19th century (Maryański 1977).

In 1999, the Uzbeks constituted 44.7% of the total population which has made them a majority. However, this situation has changed. The last census from 2009, indicates that their percentage has decreased to 44.2%. The largest group were Kyrgyz, with 47.9% of the total population. The Fergana Valley with the city of Osh, has been inhabited by the Uzbek minority for centuries. The cultural differences between Kyrgyz nomads and the settled Uzbek farmers (next to ethnic and territorial problems), are causing tensions between the two groups. The decrease in the Uzbek population in Osh, was caused by resettlements and population losses resulting from ethnic tensions²⁹. Resulting conflict is being considered a factor which can potentially lead to future destabilisation of the country (Maryński, 1994; Bodio, 2004).

Conclusion

From a geographical point of view, the distribution of ethnic and national groups in the post-Soviet area, even if strongly determined by historical events, can be reduced to three main factors:

1. Migration – resulting in possible considerable dispersion, including the cluster distribution of a particular ethnic group;
2. Boarder changes of territorial units – resulting in a population growth in the areas located close to the boarders;
3. Ethnogenesis in the same (or similar) territory – resulting in a relatively compact cluster population within a specific territory.

During the times of the Soviet Union, migrations were often forced for many. The main reasons for this were: (1) political – resettlement of entire nations (e.g. Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans or Chechens) on one hand, and, on the other one, “rewarding” of the service for the country in the defence department by awarding a person a retirement or a house on the Black Sea coast, which has strongly influenced the ethnic composition on Crimea; (2) political-economic reasons – work orders requiring people to move across the entire post-Soviet area, (e.g. the development of the virgin lands in northern Kazakhstan and south-western Siberia); Migration for economic (3) reason – mostly in the late Soviet period. The earnings equal to multiple salaries in other regions and additional privileges (early retirement age, material goods, allowances) were attracting immigrants and tearing down at the established ethnic structures, especially in the northern areas (e.g. Yamal), or rarely inhabited ones (Khanty-Mansyisk Autonomic okrug, Mangyshlak peninsula, etc.). As adequately educated staff were mainly Russians, and, to a lesser extent Ukrainians and Belarussians, russification or ‘slavinisation’ of a region was often a consequence. After the dissolution of the USSR, the main causes of migration were:

²⁹ The most serious conflicts took place took place in 1990 and 2010. In the last one, 400,000 people were resettled from Kyrgyzstan. (Source: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/31/ethnic-violence-kyrgyzstan-international-support-needed>, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jun/17/kyrgyzstan-ethnic-violence-refugees-united-nations>)

1. Political:
 - resulting from an armed conflict;
 - related to the ‘nationalisation’ of space by titular nations aimed at increasing the percentage of native nationalities within a region. For example, moving the capital of Kazakhstan to Astana has led to the influx of thousands of official workers, ethnic Kazakhs, to the northern parts of the country, where the Russians were, till that moment, the most numerous nation;
 - related to language policy and introduction of titular languages as official ones which led to the status deposition of the Russian language;
 - repatriation-related (nearly 800 thousand Germans have left Kazakhstan for their native homeland).
2. Economic – caused by the spatial variation in salary levels (the reason for a constantly increasing number of immigrants in Russia), high unemployment rate in a home country (e.g. Tajikistan) or lack of appropriately educated staff (e.g. Lithuanian nuclear power plant).
3. Socio-cultural:
 - family migrations for the purpose of family reunification;
 - caused by ethnocracy and ill will from the side of authorities as well as titular populations (among others to be observed in Kazakhstan and the Baltic States).

While analysing the distribution of ethnic groups in the Russian Federation, it becomes clear that:

1. Some national minorities live in a highly concentrated population groups (and therefore have a numerical advantage). This is especially true of the republics in the Caucasus region and in the eastern part of European Russia. Identification with the place enhances the identity process, especially in the case of endemic populations. One can see this in cluster distribution of such national groups. The prevalence of titular ethnic groups is especially visible in rural areas. Cities, on the other hand tend to be more multi-ethnic;
2. In case of large minority groups, their ethnic distinctiveness is usually institutionally emphasised in the form of different sorts of autonomy. However, less numerous nations, are often abolished. E.g. autonomous okrugs of: Komi-Permyak, Evenk Dolgano-Nenetsky, Koryak, Ust-Orda, Agin-Buryat. Their abolishments were preceded by public debates and local referenda (for formality reasons only). At the same time, an attempt is being made to implement the idea of ‘russkiy mir’ (Russian order) in minorities culture giving way to assimilation, domination of Russian culture and the rise of Russian nationalism (‘Russia for Russians’).

In the other post-Soviet states, the following tendencies can be observed:

1. Endemic minorities are usually found living quite compact populations. Their presence is caused by territorial expansion of individual countries, shaping of the national borders during the times of the USSR, migration of the neighbouring nations resulting from non-specified borders (e.g. Russian settlers in Estonia, Armenian settlers Samtskhe-Javakheti). This migration is a natural phenomenon characteristic for the border regions;

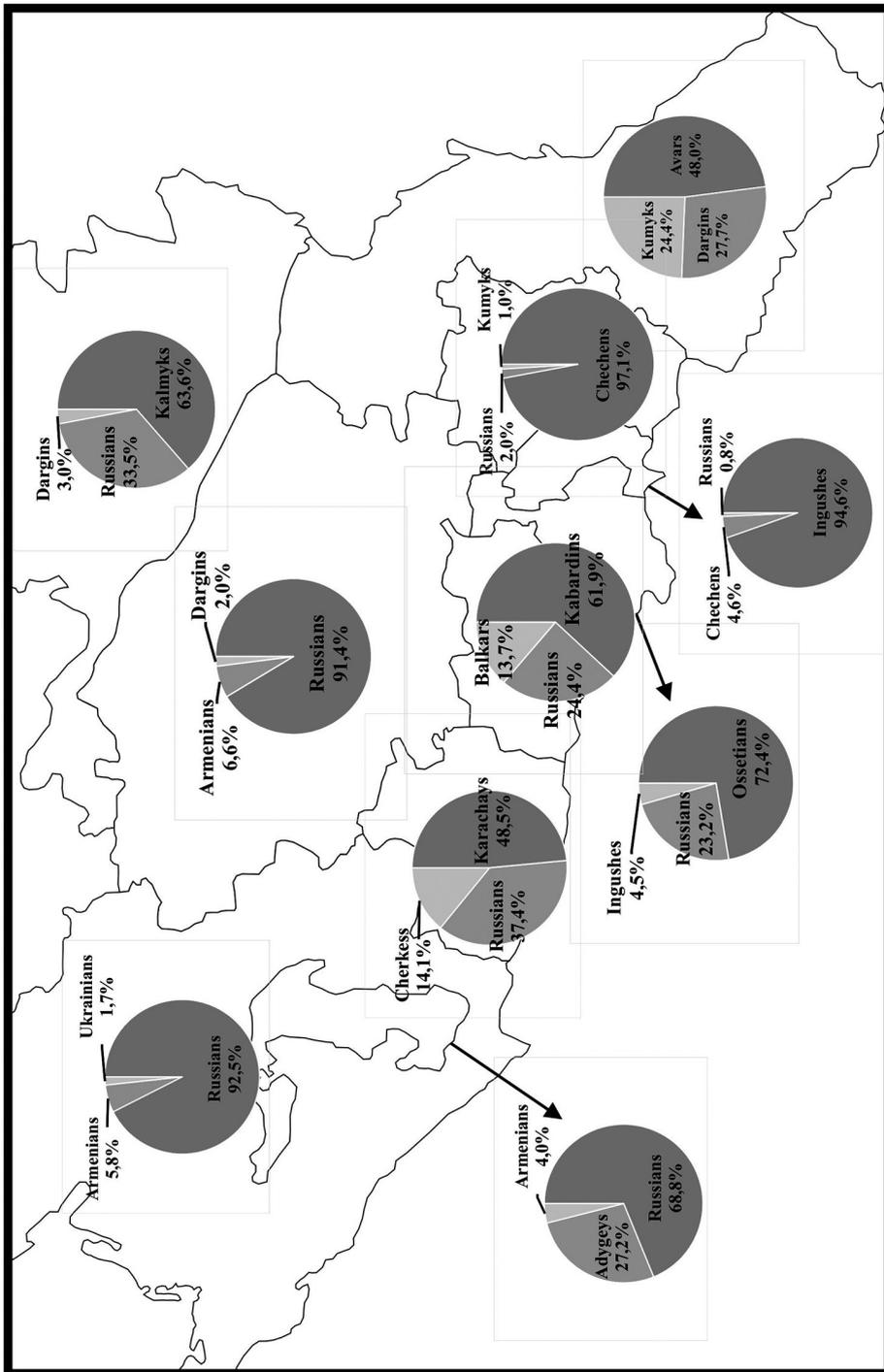
2. The presence of Russians and other Slavic nations in the newly formed countries, is a result of political or economic migration associated with military activity and introduction of new forms of economy or technology. These include:
 - military bases;
 - industrialisation started during the Soviet times, including the development of mining and processing industries (especially heavy industry), energy industry (especially nuclear power plants), space industry (Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan);
 - agricultural development, especially of the virgin lands in northern Kazakhstan and south-western Siberia;
 - development of social infrastructure (schools, research units, health care, cultural facilities, administration, etc.). Individual republics did not usually have appropriate staff (and if they did, they were in small quantities), so most of the positions were usually filled by Russians and, to a smaller extent, Ukrainians and Belarussians. Their population areas are, therefore, either very localised, linked to the location mining resources, industrial plants or other workplaces, or continuous (virgin lands). In other cases, these groups tend to populate cities;
3. T titular nationalities' struggle for numerical dominance which is strengthened by:
 - Pushing of nationalist slogans (e.g. 'Georgia for Georgians');
 - ethnocracy;
 - adopting linguistic laws reducing the importance of the Russian language (especially visible in the Baltic states). Many mistakes concerning this issue led to armed conflicts and loss of jurisdiction over a part of the territory (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria).

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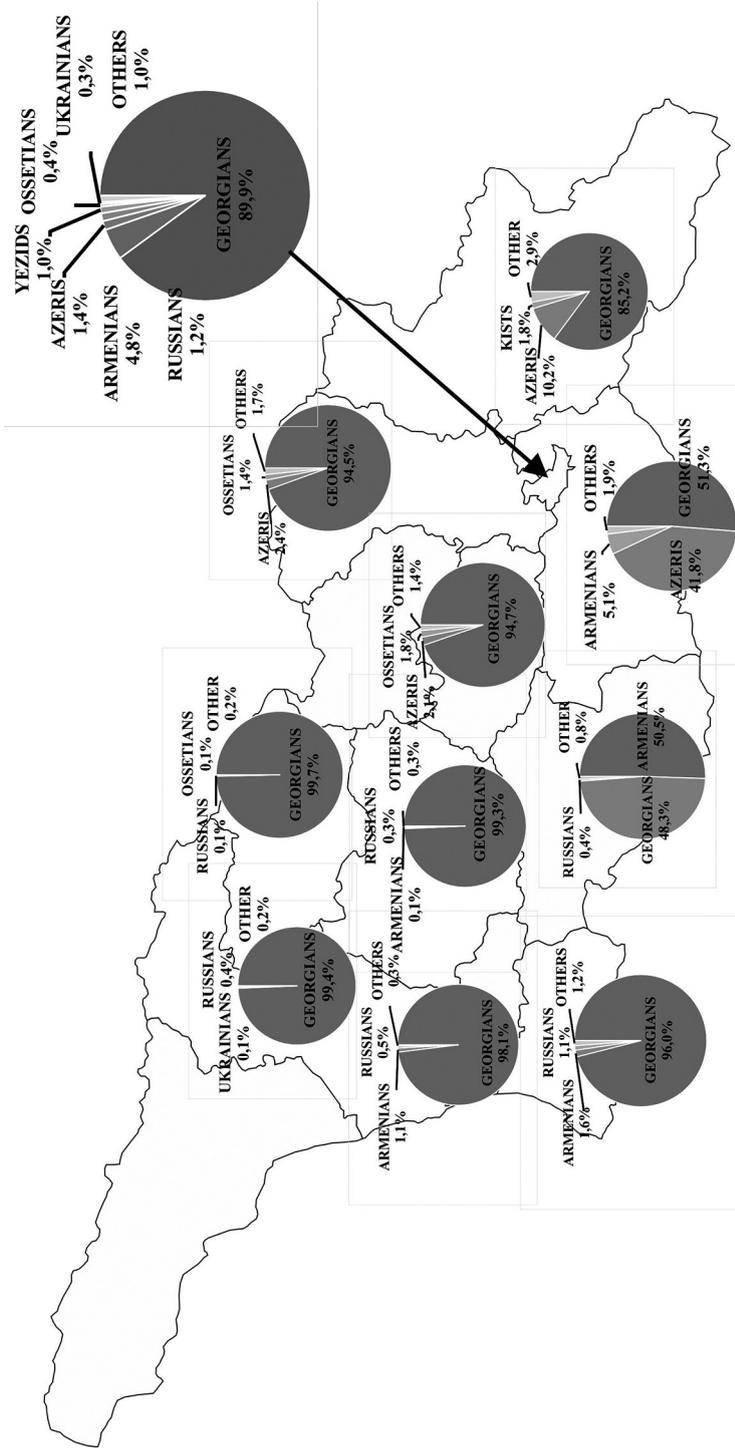
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Appx.1 The ethnic structure of North Caucasus in 2010.



Appx. 2 The ethnic structure of the Georgia in 2014

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National unity and territorial identity in Ukraine: problems of acceptance

Abstract: The events in south-east Ukraine might be perceived as an opportunity to clarify the pressing global, regional, national problems in the functioning of various sectors of government and society in the current configurations, but they generally have civilizational values for Ukraine. Amid the combat actions there are processes the essence of which is estimated ambiguously: on one hand, the population of Ukrainian Crimea and Donbass initiated the process of disintegration which gave rise to domestic political conflict, national confrontation and military aggression of the Russian Federation resulting in the illegal annexation of the Crimea and “hybrid war in Donbass”. At the same time protests of residents of Donbass region are greatly exaggerated, and the need to resist the aggression revealed a strong potential for national consolidation.

Key words: territorial identity, Ukraine, Donbass population, a hybrid war, national consolidation/unity, democratic reform.

Introduction

For Ukraine, like for many European countries, the issues of territorial identification are not without problematic background. Soviet legacy of ethnic policy, including implementation of the idea of forming «single historical community of people – the Soviet people», which was implemented consistently in the USSR, was realized in Ukraine by the most brutal and cynical methods.

Did the regional differences have such powerful protest potential to cause a war?

Regions of Ukraine really differ in socio-economic indicators, ethnic composition, political and geopolitical orientation, assessment of the historical past and

cultural traditions. The analysis of research data are rather ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways; at the same time we should not exaggerate the radicalism of moods and willingness to sacrifice lives for opportunities to consolidate positions by hostilities. Analysis of the data of sociological surveys conducted by authoritative state institutions doesn't give grounds to answer this question positively.

A characteristic feature of state building early in 2000s, according to A. Bereza (2007), was an informal regional asymmetry in which some of the regions had more rights and powers than others, though, under the Constitution, only the Autonomous Republic of Crimea had an autonomous status. However, in practice the possibility of some regions significantly differed from the others, because the level of relations between elite groups was regulated by clan principles, economic interests, and personal relationships. The interaction was based on bureaucratic consensus, specific agreements between the leaders of central and regional elite groups, as well as special, informal status of the regions and their leaders. An important principle of the system of power then was well adjusted vertical circulation of the elite (Bereza, 2007). This term describes the process where representatives of the regions, including the heads of regional administrations, got positions in the central government, and officials from the Centre were appointed or elected as local officials. Often influential people from the regions were invited to take responsible positions in the central government. Gradually control over regions weakened and a tendency to introduce the regional elites into the context of central politics emerged. Generally, as the researchers note, the strengthening of regional bureaucracies is an integral part of post-Soviet political reality in Russia and Ukraine (Turovskiy, 1999). Thus, according to R. Turovsky (1999), under different institutional shells – federalism and unitarianism – similar principles of relations “center-regions” and regional regimes were formed in Russia and Ukraine (Turovskiy, 1999). Common to both countries was building a relationship based on political consensus, clash of bureaucratic and economic interests, which was causing institutional conflicts.

The differences in the views of the population existed and continue to exist in the evaluation of the past, especially regarding the reasonability of restoring the Soviet Union, the realities of the struggle against fascism, the terms “Great Patriotic War” and “The Second World War”, heritage of history and culture of Kievan Rus... At the same time in relation to ethnic composition, despite its heterogeneity, according to the 2001 census:

- 77.8% of the population identified themselves as Ukrainians (in 1989 – 72.7%);
- 67.5% called Ukrainian language native (in 1989 – 64.7%).

Positive dynamics in ethnic Ukrainian and Ukrainian-speaking population is evident at that period (Materialy..., 2001).

According to research by KIIS (Kiev International Institute of Sociology) in 2003:

- concerns about the state independence was expressed by only 9% of respondents,

- relations between the West and the East of the country – 7%
- the conditions of the use of Russian language – 7%
- the conditions of the use of Ukrainian language – 5%.

The majority of respondents in all regions of Ukraine – an average of 63% – had generally positive attitude towards the residents of other countries:

- 57% of people in the West have a positive attitude to the residents of the East and the South,
- 50% of the residents of the East and the South expressed a positive attitude towards the residents of the Western regions.

The attitude towards Russia as a foreign state – in the East and South of Ukraine was significantly better (73%) than towards the other regions of Ukraine:

Central (62%) and Western (50%) Ukraine, Galychyna, in particular (50%) (Regional'nyy..., 2003).

Thus, in the early 2000s the population was concerned about linguistic and geopolitical issues to a much lesser degree than it was presented during the next 2004–2005 elections. According to a study of the A. Razumkov Center of Economic and Political Studies in 2006 differences showed in the responses of residents of different regions of Ukraine to questions of identity: the modes of the use of languages, the iconic historical events, the pro-Western or pro-Russian foreign policy priorities, Ukraine's membership in various international organizations of the EU, NATO, etc. (Regional'nyye..., 2006).

Current events in the southeast of Ukraine carried the situation to the point of absurdity, the results of which are mostly natural and expected in the sense that at some point there had to happen painful and tragic, but inevitable and final farewell of Ukraine with the Soviet Union, which, at the end of 2013 – early 2014, gained severe and even tragic forms due to many reasons, including:

- a) preserving southeastern regions in their “Soviet version” of economic, socio-political, cultural realities. Central Ukrainian authorities of all cadences are responsible for conniving with the regional elite at fusion of the crime, government and business on the basis of bureaucratic and clan-oligarchic model, propaganda of the lack of options and the only possible “Russian vector” of economic relations and foreign political orientation of the region and the country as a whole, tactics of pumping budgetary funds into Donbass (grants – for depressed areas and monofunctional industrial and mining centers, investments – for industrial giants of the oligarchs), political speculations on ideological and linguistic issues, the stirring of which in the election campaign gave significant political dividends; cultivation of negative moral and psychological attitude towards the other regions and Ukraine as a whole.
- b) use of regional specificity of ethnic composition, psychological features and world perception of the Donbass population to create the myth about their protest potential. V.Kravchenko particularly emphasizes the use of “artificial separatism as a political tool”, initiated from the inside, but funded and supported by Russia to destabilize the social and political life of the region... Most Donetsk residents do not consider themselves Ukrainian or Russian, they identify themselves as Donbassans (Kravchenko, 2014). Propagandic

promotion of “regional identity” combined with aggressive criticism of “Kiev authorities” against the background of virtually no adequate response of the last considerably facilitated the implementation of dramatic performances by Moscow directors called “Formation of DPR / LPR” (Kravchenko, 2014). Public society, democratic practices, human rights – for much of the population of Donetsk and Lugansk regions are rather unallied concepts, but at the same time not hostile. In fact, initiators and leaders of the conflict are not interested in real positions of the region’s population.

- c) RF special operation to capture and subsequent flash-like legitimization by higher “democratically controlled” Russia institutions of the Crimea annexation had been prepared and implemented over the years, including the cultivation among the population of the Crimea and Donbass for more than 20 years of Ukrainian independence of the only alternative opinion about Russian economic and political hegemony and lack of prospects of European integration contrasted with “antycrimean and antydonetsk position of the Ukrainian leadership” the culmination of which was the massive brutal treatment of public opinion within the propaganda projects “Novorossia” and “Russkiy Mir” and further inspiration of armed confrontation against the background of the dramatic events of Euromaidan armed suppression by Viktor Yanukovich’s power in late 2013 – early 2014, with the following change of government in Kiev, then – encouragement and support of militants, simulation of “elections”, their instant recognition by RF and deliberate military aggression by Russia and its consistent escalation, seemingly “sufficiently motivated” by Russophilism of the majority of Donbass people. The idea of compatriots’ protection allegedly oppressed in the foreign country as a pretext for armed intervention and its justification even now can be perceived as having not exhausted its potential for the plans of ruling Russian elite.
- d) active combination by RF of military aggression against Ukraine with economic and energy blackmail; this tool is used to manipulate restriction or suspension of deliveries to the EU.

Globally, the annexation of the Crimea and the situation in the east of Ukraine can be considered in the context of special operation conducted by military and political leadership of Russia, held in Ukraine as part of a global strategy for restoring geopolitical and geostrategic position of Russia in Europe and the world, lost by Russia as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe in the late 80 – early 90-ies XX century. This situation is the vestiges of the collapse of the USSR, the end of the bipolar system of international relations and finding its most adequate replacements, tension in determining positions as far as the adequate concept of security in the new geopolitical conditions is concerned.

The principles of peaceful coexistence of modern states within their internationally recognized borders, in Europe, in particular, in the course of events in Ukraine are being reviewed by the country that has the largest territorial and human resource, significant armed potential and leadership, not inclined to interpret the existing system of international relations and international law as some-

thing that requires respect and observance. The country – aggressor is defiantly ignoring all international laws, as if being in a different coordinate system, and is constantly emphasizing this by military demonstrations in various parts of the world. Russia's willingness to have specific economic and military-political position outside the system, because of its hegemonic and revanchist plans and at the expense of significant human toll due to the use of weapons, including modern ones, able to threaten the world, requires the international community to develop effective and efficient position in assessments of situations and approaches to its resolution. This set of problems necessitates handling of the status of the events, prospects for their solution; extent, quality characteristics and algorithms of participation for all actors.

In the most general terms the events in south-east Ukraine might be perceived as a pretext to resolve pressing global, regional and national problems in different areas of functioning of the leadership and society in existing configurations that generally have civilizational significance. Globality of the problems solved sometimes removes Ukraine from their list against the background of the events in Ukraine. The fate of Ukraine on a global scale will depend on how they are resolved by negotiations between the US, EU, Russia and NATO. The mission of Ukraine in this situation – to deter the invaders at the price it can pay. In the triad “problem – capabilities – resources” the key factor is possessing technologies that enable resisting the invaders. Probability that an isolated state can withstand such confrontation equals to zero.

Undeclared war between Ukraine and Russia in this context threatens to turn into a frozen conflict with “zero-sum”, when any solution which satisfies one country will be absolutely unacceptable for the other. Anyway, the actors involved in these events are:

- Civil and military-political leadership of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, military and police contingents and volunteer formations, about 1800 thousand of displaced people...;
- The population of the Crimea annexed by Russia and that part of Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine, where there was a coup and the power was taken by leaders of armed groups of different nature and quality under direct and demonstrative support of the Russian leadership;
- Political leadership of RF, which initiates and actively participates in the events in the Crimea and Donbass, and the escalation of the armed conflict by supplying the militants with weapons and essentials, replenishing their ranks by not only military advisers, but the insurgent groups, various types of adventurers such as Don Cossacks, etc;
- Representatives of global political elite, senior officials, heads of global and regional integration structures, national leaders of European countries, including those that are neighbors of Ukraine of the first or second order, which border Ukraine or are located very close to its border.

Global collision of two approaches to the modern system of international relations.

NATO Strategic Concept in 2010 changed the focus from Europe to the security challenges for the Alliance coming from the globalized world. In general there is a clash of two approaches to the modern system of international relations and the prospects of its development:

- the first one – is an EU approach: under the European Security and Defence Policy (Berlin Plus, 2003) on the principles of cooperation with NATO, turning away from the global arms race EU pursues to resolve possible conflicts with diplomatic, economic and financial instruments which “may be much more effective” (Novak-Kalyayeva, 2014);
- the second approach – an RF approach, which tends to operate by returning to the old system of distribution of spheres of influence and arms race. Revanchist aspirations of Russia against the background of the failure to democratize the government (“controlled democracy”), curtailing the introduction of market conditions in the economy (mixed corporate-monopolistic type with dominance of energy-commodity segment), ideological collapse, solved by rejecting liberal ideas and propaganda of “revival of neo-imperial power”. Russia demonstrates efforts to achieve the satisfaction of their claims conceptually at the level and using the approaches of the XX century, but with the means of the XXI.

As the economy is a high precision weapons, Russia, over the last two decades, has been creating a basis for economic impact not only on its own territory, but also in the economies of Ukraine and especially the EU, where “an extensive network of economic agents was formed”, which is firmly embedded in economic systems of these countries and remains influential and effective now. This is primarily a political project that provided future mechanisms of influence. Russia does not use economic cooperation as a tool of bilateral development, but as a factor of pressure on the counterparts. The need for the European countries to increase the security expenses has become actual. Diplomatic tools, which European countries operate, have to be strengthened by increasing military capabilities. So the position of the Russian Federation has led Europe to engage in upgrading arms, building-up military forces, etc. (Vlasyuk, 2014).

Under the influence of the conflict in Ukraine a recommendatory decision was made at the NATO summit in September 2014 to increase military spending for the Member States to 2% of GDP over the next 10 years. NATO members are also obliged to direct 20% of the defense budget on investment, including new military equipment. This breaks the downward trend in military spending. It's planned to spend \$42 billion to modernize military equipment over the next decade (Haines, 2015).

The concept of economic pressure chosen by US, EU and other countries in response to military aggression of Russia, confirms the strategic importance of economic factors in shaping responses to the challenges of modern geopolitics against the background of Ukrainian events. Active or frozen conflicts with Russia – this is what makes the European Union review and build a common security strategy, the policy of the Eastern Partnership and the EU neighbourhood policy (Zholkver, Grabskaya, 2015). According to V. Horbulin (2015), due to the

actions of the Russian Federation in 2014 the system of global and regional security, as well as the current system of international law was distorted. Almost all international security guarantees for Ukraine (including within the Budapest Memorandum) were invalid in circumstances where the aggressor was one of the guarantors – Russian Federation. Russia used the concept of «hybrid warfare» against Ukraine which structurally and functionally has the form of a «hybrid» war, and by meaning it's «asymmetric» (Gorbulin, 2015).

The term «hybrid» generally describes the phenomena and processes of a mixed nature. In the eighteenth century in Russia, for example, to describe plants and animals of «mixed origin» they used the term «bastard», later replaced by the «hybrid». The term «hybrid warfare», as such, has been understood and actively used in military vocabulary and scientific literature, including the Soviet Union, from the 1980s to define wars and local conflicts mainly in remote regions, particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and so on, with the participation of military advisers and defiladed «great powers» contingents when it came to using them as military force and armed groups of mixed nature that used terrorist tactics of intimidation and destruction of local people. Typically what is meant is a war with the combination of fundamentally different types and methods of warfare used in a coordinated manner to achieve common goals. In this context, hybridity is seen as ambiguity of the essence, legal nature, moral evaluations, objectives, methods and results. Thus, the new is not so much the use of regular and irregular forces, strong links with criminal groups, unclear distinction between civilian and military action in a situation where war is not really declared, but hybrid instruments of attack used by the Russian side (Schadlow, 2014). Army General V. Herasymov (2015), the Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, in January 2013 defined «hybrid war», as overt use of force, often under the guise of peacekeeping and mediation in resolving the crisis, which must be applied at the final stage, typically, in order to achieve complete victory in the war. The emphasis, according to the military top official has shifted to the use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures along using the protest potential of local people. All this should be accompanied by a hidden military operation – for example, methods of information warfare and the employment of Special Forces (Nemetskaya, 2015).

In modern studies the analogue of “hybrid” is “multiple subject/multiple element” or “network” war conducted not only on the battlefield, but in many aspects in different directions and is aimed at different points of society at different geospatial levels, using different, not only military, ways and means, terrorist and sabotage in particular. This war is the war of intelligence, informational, economic, religious and psychological warfare, conducted in waves, in the ratio of non-military to military components being usually 4 to 1. The term “hybrid” war disintegrates perception of its terrible effect, emphasizing the diversity of components and the need to resist many hostile manifestations in many directions in the least expected formats. The fact that casualties in war theaters are not measured in big figures, that victims of information warfare and propaganda are not the patients of surgeons, but misled and emotionally devastated peo-

ple, disoriented and compromised politicians and officials, does not diminish the tragedy of events, especially given the fact that most of the victims are civilians deprived of any prospects to return to their homes and resume normal life, with broken destinies, acquired diseases and lost family and friends.

An ambiguous nature combined with unchanged essence of “hybrid” war is characterized by even more cynicism given the fact that in the “hybrid” conditions it’s practically impossible to apply any legal standards of international humanitarian law to “hybrid” participants. Efforts to resolve the conflict usually stumble upon direct sabotage of unmanaged “hybrid” militants, whose signatures on documents enforcing certain obligations on them “are not worth the paper...” and do not bring any constructive perspective. “Hybrid” character of means and methods of warfare used on the occupied territories shows disregard for any rules, laws and agreements. The result is some “conventionality” of all manifestations and attributes of the situation:

- simulated elections held on simulated democratic principles;
- simulated leaders of simulated state formations endowed with simulated powers.

Only victims in this context are not simulated: the killed, the maimed, the captured, the dead of starvation and gunfire.

Hostilities conducted in «waves», depending on deliveries from Russia in simulated humanitarian convoys of weapons, ammunition and fuel, create waves of «peace» which is also simulated. To some extent, the legitimacy of any, including diplomatic, measures for reconciliation and documents adopted with the participation of militants, not burdened with the obligation to observe them, is also simulated.

Thus, defining events in Ukrainian Donbass as hybrid warfare, given the diversity and globality of motives and its possible implications for European states neighboring Ukraine, including the ones bordering us, requires an understanding of all the threats of the hybrid peace as a possible alternative. «Hybridity» provides such a high level of conditionality that undermines the very essence of all phenomena and processes.

National consolidation as a result of the need to confront the “hybrid war”.

EU states and peoples throughout the ages, based on their respective historical period of technologies of social organization, were able to preserve their national identity and create a common European home based on special unique contribution of each nation (Novak-Kalyayeva, 2013). However, ethno-political sky of european community is not cloudless. Examples of ways to address situations that caused tension were different, including military ones, bearing in mind the dramatic pages of the British, Spanish, French, etc., history. “The revolution of human rights” (A. Hramshy) in the XXI century offered the only mechanism for resolving complex problems through real democratic practices. Referendums in recent years in Scotland and Catalonia have not made impression on leaders of self-proclaimed republics and their Russian curators.

The positions of the countries that are somehow involved in the Ukrainian crisis, which originate from understanding the plans of Russia to return to its po-

sition of “great power” with all its globality and strategic importance are mainly formed with the influence of the current international conjuncture, in particular – in response to dynamics of events in Ukrainian theater of operations, the results of Russian daring air and naval demonstrations and consequences of efforts of diplomatic departments at all levels to reconcile the parties. Note that globality of the problems being resolved against the background of developments in Ukrainian sometimes displaces Ukraine from their list.

Dangerous “conventionality” of both “newly proclaimed” Crimea status and reconciliation in the Ukrainian Donbass, the legal nature of Minsk agreements and prerogatives of the European leaders on the prospects of European security demonstrates the needs to return to the legal framework of the events. The list of countries that found themselves in the radius of Russia claims may be different, situationally covering Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, Transcaucassia, Southwest and Central Asia. B. Nyemtsov expressed the idea that Russia can go on as far as they let her (in the author’s context – they is Ukraine). In general this issue should be solved conceptually, because a “zero-sum conflict” is resolved mostly by “an offer the aggressor can not refuse.”

Thus, hybrid war / peace in eastern Ukraine are the factors of:

- destabilization of European security;
- paradigm of legal relations in the international arena;
- shattering the system of international relations;

Search for effective action algorithm for political elite and collective security structures at global and regional levels is both in the plane of bringing all participants to unanimity in the interpretation of international law and accountability for its violations as well as motivating for such unanimity. MEP A. Plenkovich (2015) suggested that “for a peaceful resolution it is important to have a legitimate government in Donbass, but this requires strong political will of all parties to find ways how decentralization could be implemented in life” (Gnatishin, 2015). However, in this context, the reality of the democratic prospects of Donbass conditions reconstruction and integrity of the state border of Ukraine. Assistance of the EU in general and Eastern Europe in particular makes this a real prospect. Ukraine has a clear goal – to restore the independence of its borders and is prepared to fight for its achievement by all possible legal means, based on respect for the sovereignty and independence of other countries.

Challenges related to the armed confrontation, imposed by destructive forces of society, powerful external political pressure and military intervention, unprecedented for Ukraine refugee flows caused significant rise of public activity. Ukrainian society is responding to the army and refugees needs by launching a volunteer movement, which largely brought together representatives of all regions in the struggle for survival, freedom and independence. A survey done by GfK Ukraine – UN Centre in Ukraine «Volunteering in Ukraine» provides evidence of the main characteristics of volunteer movement as of December 5, 2014:

- 70% of volunteers helped the Ukrainian army and the wounded;
- 62% of Ukrainians recognize the role of volunteers in political changes;
- 87% of Ukrainians believe that volunteerism contributes to peace;

- 74% of Ukrainians donated money for different purposes ever in life;
 - of which 25% have started to donate only in the last 12 months.
- Donations of Ukrainians vary from a few UAH up to 283,000 UAH a year.
- In 2014 Ukrainians most willingly donated to help the Ukrainian army, the wounded and sick children.
- In 2014, the number of Ukrainians who donate money increased – 63% made donations (before 2014, 49% Ukrainian donated money).
- In 2014 the amount of donations was greater than in other years.
- 43% of those who ever donated money did it directly, one-third of them do not remember the name of the charity organization, through which they made their contribution (Volontersskiy..., 2014).
- In November 2014 «People's Volunteer Association» united about 30 organizations dealing with the military, volunteer and law enforcement agencies involved in the area of ATO and help the families of the killed and internally displaced people. There is Volunteers Council at the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, whose members cooperate with almost all the departments of the Ministry in providing urgent supplies, health care, transportation, finding the dead, liberating the captured. Against this background, not surprising are the results of a survey conducted by A. Rozumkov Centre in April 2015: 62.2% of Ukrainians in unoccupied areas are in favor of integration with EU, and only 13.5% with the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (Rezultaty..., 2015).

The democratic potential of reforms in Ukraine

Even in a state of undeclared war with Russia, Ukraine has set itself the ambitious goal not to curtail the democratization of power, administrative-territorial reform is an integral part of which. As part of a much wider program of social transformation, this reform aims to modernize the country through decentralization and strengthening of local authorities. Creation of reforms potential in the region largely depends on the state of its territorial identity, its power and, consequently, the capacity to realize itself under decentralization. So unitary state paradigm shift in Ukraine will take place in the context of imperative of territorial identity and national unity as processes that do not contradict, but condition each other. This is primarily due to the fact that to ensure the prosperity of regions based on acceptance of local identity and increasing the role of local elites in the political process in the country without a strong vertical of power is practically impossible.

Conceptualization of the object of decentralization mainly occurs through the formation of local government infrastructure in parallel with the awareness of the community and a specific person of own position in the institutional, political and party processes. It is in these settings that argumentation of interpreting the decentralization processes from the perspective of alternative approaches takes place: from the central government, regional and local political elites and the local community in circumstances where the latter, from viewpoint of the first two, takes a significant part of prerogatives and responsibilities in the implementation

of state policies. Typical for Ukraine paradigm of a unitary state with a complex administrative infrastructure throughout the country and deep penetration of the state in civil society requires a substantial upgrade in the spirit of democracy, civic consciousness and human rights.

Formation of the Ukrainian system of territorial administration is supposed to be based on the principle of administrative similarities across the country, although this may not be mandatory, given the need to take into account: peculiarities of experience of individual regions, communities, municipal agencies, differences in approach and the willingness of the population to accept democratic practices as organic and able to provide real participation in local governance at all stages.

The dominance of the central state interests over the interests of the parties, groups of interest, localities, local communities usually causes the formation of hierarchical principle with organization of the administration from the top to the bottom. For a long time in independent Ukraine the state policy, formed in centralized institutions and structures of the higher administrative corps, was realized by state agencies and local governments with the meager role of the latter, which leveled their significance and capabilities. The relationship between local political and administrative actors in the bureaucratic system oriented towards central government was supported by politicians and officials of the highest administrative level, who determined the rules regulating center-peripheral relations. At the regional level there was a permanent dialogue between government officials and local politicians on amending national legislation, taking into account local circumstances. Local relationships were limited to the creation of elites of dual character belonging to the political and administrative entities, where there was no room for other participants, including representatives of business with their economic interests, or representatives of associations, foundations, industry activists. This system mainly stimulated ambitious local politicians who had the opportunity to accumulate electoral potential and get access to higher levels of government or consolidated local managerial resources.

Democratic empowerment of rights and capabilities of citizens and local autonomy became the slogan of institutional reforms, which had been developed almost without any practical results during the whole history of independent Ukrainian state from 1991.

Conclusion

Modern decentralization reform in Ukraine should lead to recognition of released from a priori nurturance of the regional authorities and the center, from control of governance processes, local government able to provide a fully operational implementation of state policy locally within its area of responsibility under the relevant authority and sufficient budgetary means. Commitments to make decisions and responsibility for them for the local and regional actors should be increased, with the expansion of sub-national influence in new policy areas such as social affairs, economic development, education and so on.

How the reforms related to decentralization in the occupied territories of Donbass will take place, how to clear these territories from enemy troops and weapons, the number of which is beyond the imagination of common sense, how to reconcile the people with the Ukrainian reality, who for various reasons find themselves in the ranks of separatists – these are questions the answers to which are in the plane of active work of all Ukrainian political nation, which has started to form under the influence of the need to defend Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Objective processes of national consolidation involve acceptance of territorial identity based on tolerance, rule of law and respect for human rights throughout the territory of our country.

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Russia and the European Union in the present-day scientific context – international experience of Aurora Project

Abstract: The primary concern of this study is the present-day scientific context in relations between Russia and the European Union. These relations cover a variety of aspects, resulting in an equally broad research perspective. In order to illustrate the above-named relations the author chose projects implemented on Russian Federation territory and one project concerning the post-soviet area, but carried out in EU member states. More often than not the selection of projects was determined by the subject matter rather than the education profile of the research participants. Next to a description of the scientific aspect of implemented tasks this study provides the stands of people in charge of financing of the collaboration in question. The study is tied together by a description of the Aurora project and the author's correlating experience, which has prompted the author to write this article on international scientific cooperation between Russia and the European Union.

Key words: Russia, European Union, science, Aurora Project.

Introduction

Next to technology, science is one of the foundations of the modern world. While, in times past, attention was mostly confined to successes of science, nowadays the focus has shifted towards its defeats. Science responds to criticism with increasing specialisation and professionalization; it pays more and more attention to investigating the concealed assumptions of research and theories. Issues pertaining to the conventionalism of science have been described by T. Kuhn (2001). We now live in a world of increasing complexity and of dispersion of scientific research. Not closing oneself to other ideas within national science institutions

is an effective way to get to know the abundance of approaches to one and the same matter or phenomenon.

The internationalisation of science takes place in a world in which information is no longer in short supply, whereas its interpretation has become the key to success. A study concerning the present-day scientific context between Russia and the European Union contains, by default, a multitude of data. However, many challenge the research optimism expressed in the opinion that information leads to knowledge, which in turn leads to cognition. Scientific knowledge not always serves the purpose of cognition, but it does serve and more market requirements. The ambiguous relation between information and cognizance is defined by the dispute on the market facilitation and internationalisation of science. These phenomena are being interpreted in differing ways; at times, they are perceived as clearly positive, at other times they are depicted as causing the relativisation of truth.

The purpose of this study is to explore relations between Russia and the EU on a scientific level. Prior to delineating the temporal and territorial range of the investigation and to describing the selection key for projects subject to analysis, it may be of use to present the basic reasons for taking up this topic. The author's own experience from participating in the Aurora project have prompted him to write an article that dwells on the issue of international scientific collaboration between Russia and partners in the EU. The author does not endeavour to present herein the results of research within the framework of that project, but rather refers those interested to his other papers that will be devoted to that issue.

Due to the abundance and temporal diversity of projects implemented in collaboration between Russia and the EU, the author decided to limit the time frame to several years before 2015 and to refer to an already finished project and to those still underway which shall be completed within a few years. Even though under the cooperation schemes Russians are able to conduct research in partner institutions in the EU and, likewise, Europeans are allowed to carry out research in Russia, it was decided for the purpose of this article that the territorial scope of the study would be limited to projects executed in the Russian Federation. Furthermore the author took into consideration a project that applied to post-soviet territory, but which was carried out in EU member states. In terms of topics, this paper depicts projects addressed to geographers and carried out by them, but more often than not the selection of projects was determined by the thematic scope and not by the educational profile of research participants.

Most projects described in this study are being financed by public institutions, rather than by the universities that employ the researchers. That is also why the author decided to present the stance of chosen institutions on issues taken up herein. Due to the fact that, with regard to European countries, the author chose projects that are EU-funded, this study also contains reference to statements of the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science with regard to scientific relations between the EU and Russia. The assumptions of Russian science policy have been exemplified with statements of the Deputy Director of the

Department of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Scientific relations between Russia and the European Union

Cooperation in science holds a very special place in overall EU-Russian relations. Scientific partnership is characterised by common interests and shared goals, and by a belief that it is imperative to work together in the face of common societal, technological and environmental challenges. An interesting insight into identity and international relations between EU and Russia has been provided by I.B. Neumann (1996) in his work *Russia and the Idea of Europe*.

Paradoxes of the Bologna Process and its implications for Russia as the next challenge for EU-Russian relations have been portrayed compellingly by C. Pursiainen and A. Medvedev (2005). The authors discern an ongoing europeanization of standards in different fields of society – it is going on in Russia through several “informal” means of transnational communication. In terms of formal processes, however, the same development takes place, for instance, through the pan-European higher education integration process (the Bologna process) which ultimately will harmonize or at least make comparable, the higher education systems of Russia and the EU, and consequently further academic mobility and convergence of the academic labour market.

Europe and Russia now share a common understanding of the importance of science and its role in our societies and economies. In spite of the difference, we are adopting similar approaches with policy instruments, focusing on the need to boost innovation in our economies and to address other challenges from ‘blue-sky’ science, ‘hands-on’ industrial applications to ageing populations. Russian and European scientists are collaborating in projects funded from dozens of different sources, for example in pan-European and international initiatives like CERN and ITER. From the societal integrationist point of view, one of the main paradoxes is that in spite of its geographic proximity, natural transnational communication between the people of the EU and Russia is still regulated by a rather complicated and expensive visa regime which creates not only cooperation problems in many fields but also contributes to the isolation of Russia from Europe.

2014 was an extremely important year in terms of the development of EU-Russian scientific relations. Russian and European research programmes will be described in more detail below, however, at this point it is worth mentioning the establishment of the EU-Russia Year of Science in 2014. The Year of Science coincided with the parallel start of the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 and the new Russian Federal Targeted Programme for Research and Development in Priority Areas of Development of the Russian Scientific and Technological Complex 2014–2020. The purpose of the Year of Science was to showcase the multifaceted nature of cooperation between the European Union and Russia in science, technology, higher education and innovation, to accentuate past achievements and to point towards future collaboration opportunities for mutual benefit.

M. Geoghegan-Quinn, European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, said during the launch of the EU-Russia Year of Science 2014 that:

Our scientists are collaborating in hundreds of projects funded from dozens of different sources. They are working side by side in pan-European and international initiatives like CERN and ITER and in large-scale infrastructures such as XFEL, the EU X-ray Free Electron Laser, in which Russia has heavily invested. The European Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre, is cooperating with Russian colleagues in many areas, especially nuclear energy and nuclear safety, soil science and agriculture. And the real depth of our relationship is to be found in the complex tapestry that Russia and the EU Member States have woven, with contacts and exchanges between thousands of people in hundreds of institutions (Geoghegan-Quinn M., 2013, pp. 3).

With almost 200 joint European-Russian events having taken place all over Europe and Russia, the Year of Science put into focus the diversity of links in research between the EU and the Russian Federation. These events have provided an opportunity for individual researchers, higher education institutions and enterprises to present their scientific achievements as well as to submit their ideas for future projects to a broader public. The events organized as part of the EU-Russia Year of Science served as a timely reminder that science and innovation are essential ingredients of any approach that seeks to address today's global societal challenges. As a result of the EU-Russia Year of Science, many partnerships between European and Russian researchers have been continued or established.

Both programmes (the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 and the new Russian Federal Targeted Programme for Research and Development in Priority Areas of Development of the Russian Scientific and Technological Complex 2014–2020) share the goal of increasing competitiveness by supporting forward-looking exploratory science and innovative market-oriented research, and offer numerous opportunities for reciprocal collaboration.

Scientific relations between Russia and the European Union – Russian and European perspective

Russia participates in international science via diverse research programmes, taken up within various regional associations. The European Union is an important partner of Russia in terms of scientific collaboration, even though Russia realises these actions also in cooperation with other partners. The regional diversity of scientific relations of Russia with international partners has been comprehensively illustrated by A. Polyakov (2014), the Deputy Director of the Department of Science and Technology of The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. He depicts the EU as one of several priority regions for science and technology cooperation.

The first of those regions are member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC). Scientific collaboration with partners from CIS countries seems unquestionable, as it has been the longest in time and results from the mutual political affiliation to the

Soviet Union up until 1991. The most significant tasks that collaborators face in this region are: utilizing complimentary research schools and infrastructure, as well as establishing a broader science and technology community to address common issues. The second of the science and technology cooperation regions in question is the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Within this region of strategic significance for Russia, it is important to build wider research networks and ensure the integration of the Russian sector of applied research & innovation into the global environment. The EU remains the third-most important region of science cooperation for Russia, and it is these very relations that shall be explored in this study.

The currently implemented research programmes in Russia and those that may be taken up in the next years are set in the reality of framework programmes prepared for the years 2013–2020. A. Polyakov (2014) describes mechanisms of funding research in the Russian Federation which comply with the state programme of “Development of Science and Technology” for 2013–2020. This is a long-term program for basic scientific research in the Russian Federation co-ordinated by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. Next to this chief scheme, there are also programmes of the state academies of science for supporting basic research for 2013–2020 (RAS, FASO, Russian Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities). Apart from the Funding Landscape for science and technology support one ought to mention in this context also other supporting actions in Russia, such as: programmes for leading universities “5 to top 100”, mega-grants aimed to attract leading scientists to Russian universities and scientific institutions (Decree No220) and the network of centres of collective usage lists the following modalities of cooperations: bottom-up approach, bilateral joint and co-ordinated calls in selected priority areas of cooperation, mobility of researchers and multilateral science and technology and Innovation Calls (e.g. ERA.NET).

Scientific collaboration between Russia and the European Union has already established durable foundations for decision making and the implementation of projects, with the number of launched projects being the tool that reflects the intensity of collaboration. In 2014 alone some 45 projects took off under the Russian Federal Targeted Programme “R&D in priority areas of development of the Russian science and technology complex 2014–2020”. What draws the attention in the geographical characteristics of distribution of Russian partners is the distinct predominance of science institutes from Moscow (38 and 2 additional facilities from the Moscow Oblast). The remaining, visibly fewer projects were implemented in two other scientific centres: scientists from Saint Petersburg were involved in three projects, and researchers from Tomsk were involved in another two projects. In terms of European participants, 21 projects, that is most of the 45 ones started in 2014, were implemented in collaboration with partners from Germany, while much less projects were done in cooperation with France (9) or Great Britain (6). Other noteworthy partner states were Sweden (3 collaboration projects), the Czech Republic, Spain, Finland (two collaboration projects, respectively, with each of those states). The tail of the group of European partners is

made up of countries from which only one scientific institute signed up for collaborative projects started in 2014.

The project “5 to top 100”, which had the involvement of Russian research facilities, is an initiative coinciding with the Federal Targeted Program “R&D in priority areas of development of the Russian science and technology complex 2014–2020”. The goal of that project is to help Russian universities join the group of the leading 100 universities in the world. The Project “5 to top 100” participants include 4 universities of Moscow, 3 universities of Saint Petersburg and 8 universities located in the other cities of many regions (e.g. in Novosibirsk, Samara, Tomsk).

Another significant programme that constitutes a form of collaboration between Russia and scientists from other parts of the world are Russian mega-grants. A total of 160 laboratories, catering for various science fields, have been created for this agenda. Leading scientists from over 15 countries, including Nobel Prize and Fields Medal winners are among the researchers participating in the mega-grants scheme. A total of 39 grant contracts were signed during the first call in 2010. 21 of the grantees are Russian (including 11 with double citizenship), 12 recipients are EU citizens and 6 are winners from other countries. 38 grant contracts were signed under the second call (2011), with 18 grant recipients being Russians (including 12 with double citizenship), 12 being EU citizens, 7 winners coming from the USA, and 1 recipient from Japan. In the course of the third call (2012) the organisers signed 41 grant contracts. There were 19 Russians (including 9 double citizenships), 9 EU citizens, 5 winners from USA and 8 winners from other countries among the grant recipients. There were 19 Russians (including 11 with double citizenship), 19 EU citizens, 2 US Americans and 1 Japanese among the winners of the fourth call of the programme (2013), when 42 grant contracts were signed (based on Polyakov A., 2014).

One also has to stress Russia’s involvement in the development of mega-science research infrastructure within the framework of Russian-EU collaboration. The chief project in this respect is the European X-ray Free Electron Laser (XFEL), with the Russian Federation funding 25%, or 306.4 million euro. The second most important project in this respect is the Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (FAIR), with Russia providing 9.09% of the funds, i.e. 900 million euro (based on Polyakov A., 2014). The Russian side of the projects is very much aware of the significance of initiatives it takes up, whereas the projects themselves – their quantitative scope, the financial contributions and the versatility of initiatives – is an unmistakable confirmation of the fact that Russia is involved in collaboration and that this not a mere declaration, but a real operation.

Statements of the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science (2013) also contain clear arguments corroborating the intensity of scientific relations between the European Union and Russia. Russia is the most active international partner country under the 7th Framework Programme for Research. 273 different Russian institutions have obtained a total of 64 million euro, or 2.8 billion roubles, in EU funding. One half of these participations come from Russian regions. The commissioner highlighted that 25 Russian nationals had

been awarded grants of the prestigious European Research Council to conduct research in ten different European countries.

An important programme that has become a part of scientific relations between the EU and Russia is the Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme which is one of the ENPI financing instruments of the European Union. ENPI programmes are typically implemented at the external borders of the EU. Kolarctic ENPI CBC has granted financing to a total of 50 projects during programme period 2007–2013. The project partners include a wide range of public and private organisations of the Kolarctic region. The core programme region consists of Norwegian counties Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, of Norrbotten in Sweden, Lapland in Finland, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblasts and the Nenets Autonomous District in Russia.

In many contexts, the region is also being referred to as the Barents region. However, the Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme region differs somewhat from what is known as the Barents Euro-Arctic area, as the latter includes also the Kainuu region in Finland and Komi Republic in Russia. Kainuu and Komi are not eligible for Kolarctic ENPI CBC projects (Korshunova J., 2015).

Another project related to the North, but constituting part of the EU-Russia partnership, is the CETIA: Coastal Environment, Technology and Innovation in the Arctic. Project CETIA (2015) contributes knowledge, innovation and expertise in addressing challenges posed by offshore developments in the sensitive marine environment of the Arctic. Specific tasks include: coastal environment, monitoring; technology and innovation: bioremediation and development of molecular tools for the monitoring of microbial communities, used for oil-spill bioremediation. The educational goal of the project is to use a sequential approach to developing both academic knowledge regarding environmental management and academic cooperation between universities in the Kolarctic programme area.

Yet another programme forming part of the EU-Russia collaboration is the initiative School for all – Development of Inclusive Education. The overall objective of this project is to create a modern system of inclusive education in the European North of Russia based on the best international experience and to disseminate project results to other regions, so as to promote educational conditions of vulnerable people (such as those with special educational needs, immigrants, juvenile offenders), to improve their accessibility and participation in society and to promote their social contacts in joint activities. The main output of this project is knowledge; experiences are exchanged within the field of inclusive education in research, in teacher training education and in the everyday practice on many levels of school. The second purpose is collaboration in the field of inclusive education by way of joint cross-border research activities.

Another projects implement in the North of Europe under scientific agreements between the EU and Russia is ArctiChildren In-NET: Empowering School e-Health Model in the Barents Region. The overall objective of the project is to develop new e-Health approaches and to strengthen the learning and health connection through multimodalities and ICT applications at schools. Project-specific tasks include establishing a network with urban and rural pilot schools, univer-

sities and colleges and benchmarking the international best practices in school e-Health /e-Learning (Korshunova J., 2015). The lead partner of the project is the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences, whereas the Russian side is represented by the Murmansk State Humanities University, the Northern Arctic Federal University, as well as secondary schools in Russia involved in pilot programmes.

The CARIM-east is an example of a project concerning international research outside northern territories. This project was the first migration observatory initiative focusing on the eastern neighbourhood of the European Union and it covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) as well as the Russian Federation. The CARIM-east project is led by the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy, with Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw as a partner institution.

The project was implemented in the years 2011–2013. The particular purpose of CARIM-East is to build a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science). This project involves also the development of a comprehensive database to monitor migration stock and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives. The project's two main themes are: migration from the region to the European Union (EU), focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

In *Scientific Brain Drain and Human Capital Formation After the End of the Soviet Union. CARIM-East Research Report I*. Ganguli (2013) attempts to answer the question of how emigration of 'top scientific brains' impacts the development of the next generation of scientists. She provides new empirical evidence on the impact of emigration on human capital formation by drawing upon the exodus of Russian scientists after the end of the Soviet Union.

Aurora Project

The term Aurora Project actually comprises projects financed in two consecutive years: Aurora – Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education (Aurora I) and Aurora II – Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education (Aurora II), under the aegis of Erasmus Mundus. The implementation period for Aurora – Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education is 15.07.2012–14.07.2016 and that of Aurora II – Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education is 15.07.2013–14.07.2017.

Erasmus Mundus is an EU-funded cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with third countries. Erasmus Mundus Aurora (EMA2) consists of Aurora awards scholarships for EU citizens in Russia, and for citizens of Russia in the EU. The programme underlines the importance of inter-

nationalization of a process designed to contribute to Russia’s higher education competitive power on the international arena. The programme also promotes institutional development in the field of international cooperation and internationalization of partner universities by awarding grants for students, researchers, teachers and other staff.

The project aims at promoting university-business cooperation in a consortium made up by universities from the EU and from Russia. Aurora builds on an agenda of higher education institutions and business benefiting from working together (Aurora Project, 2015). In this context, universities need to develop partnerships with enterprises in order to be able to respond better to market demands. In the first edition of the project the European side was represented by 10 universities, each from a different EU member state (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Spain, and the Netherlands). This group comprises internationally renowned universities (Table 1). In the first edition of the project 12 universities in Russia, from various academic centres, participated in the project. The number of consortium members, both on

Table 1. Consortium members of Aurora Project

	University	Aurora I	Aurora II
Russian partners	Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, – co-coordinator	+	+
	Higher School of Economics	+	+
	Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University	+	+
	Northern (Arctic) Federal University	+	+
	North-Ossetian State University	+	+
	Novosibirsk State Technical University	+	+
	Pacific National University	+	+
	Russian State University for the Humanities	+	+
	St. Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance	+	+
	Udmurt State University	+	–
	North-Eastern Federal University	–	+
	Mari State University, Russia	–	+
European partners	University of Turku, Finland – coordinator	+	+
	University of Bologna, Italy	+	+
	University of Deusto, Spain	+	–
	University of Groningen, the Netherlands	+	+
	Humboldt University Berlin, Germany	+	+
	University of Latvia, Latvia	+	+
	University of Leuven, Belgium	+	+
	Masaryk University, Czech Republic	+	+
	University of Tartu, Estonia	+	+
	University of Warsaw, Poland	+	+

Source: based on: <https://www.utu.fi/en/sites/em-aurora/project/Pages/home.aspx>.

the part of the European Union and of Russia, has changed only little (cf. Table 1) over time.

The main coordinator of the project is the University of Turku, Finland, while the Russian co-coordinator is the Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Aurora ensures for the participating institutions: an increased capacity for international cooperation and modernization; the transfer and sharing of knowledge and innovations between education institutions and business; fostering of the universities' role in regional economy; long-term partnerships and profitable opportunities. Aurora leads to the development of the management capacity of Partner Universities e.g. by sharing good practices on mobility and mobility administration; creating transparent, democratic and open administration processes that enhance mutual responsibility and accountability in the decision-making processes; and by improving transparency and recognition of studies and qualifications (Aurora Project, 2015).

Meetings which participants and organisers of international exchange attend provide an opportunity for the trade of opinions, as well as conclusions from the implementation of projects. The Aurora I & II Consortium Meeting – Aurora, Aurora II and Triple I Dissemination Event held on April 20th–23rd, 2015, in Arkhangelsk, was such a convention. The Northern Federal University in Arkhangelsk was chosen as the venue of the event. This university, whose full name is M.V. Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, is a brand new ambitious university boasting distinctiveness and innovation designed to meet the needs of the Russian North and the Arctic.

April 21 2015 saw the Northern Federal University hosting the international workshop Internationalization as the Way towards University Excellence (2015). The Aurora, Aurora II and Triple I partner universities spent some time sharing their best practices and talking about their experience from the implementation of the project. Hosted as part of the Aurora I and II– Towards Modern and Innovative Higher Education – projects, under the EC-supported Erasmus Mundus, the workshop was attended by Head of the European Union's Delegation in Russia, Vygaudas Ušackas, representatives of Russian universities and of European universities. The experts gathered to share the best practices they achieved in promoting the education sector and participating in EU programmes. Their agenda also included network cooperation between North Europe-based universities.

V. Ušackas (2015) referred in his welcome speech to the recent aggravation in the EU-Russia relations, adding that Russia still remained Europe's neighbour and important partner and that the political fluctuations were unlikely to have any major impact on ongoing academic cooperation. Additional funding – to the tune of ca. 12 million euros – would be allocated by the EU for EU-Russia academic cooperation purposes this year. Ušackas alluded also to the internationalization of higher education as “not merely important but an essential line of work and a criterion to judge the performance and extent to which a university has penetrated the global market.” The keynote part of the workshop involved a set of presentations highlighting EU-Russian collaboration, as well as efforts to streamline the higher education system.

Moreover, during the Aurora I & II Consortium Meeting – Aurora, Aurora II and Triple I Dissemination Event, the EU Delegation to Russia made a tour around the NArFU Scientific Library and its Centre of Excellence. Their attention was mostly attracted to the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education, a product of the EU's Kolarctic-supported project School For All (a description of Kolarctic has been provided above in this study). Network cooperation in the North, which offers insight into what the internationalization process is challenged by, as well as the political framework, institutional mechanisms and network resources available for academic development, all constitute a priority. The university cooperation in the North is evolving within one of the three chief formats – the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension. The network consortia such as the UArctic and the BEAC Joint Working Group on Education and Research, where Northern (Arctic) Federal University (NArFU) acts as an active member, can be referred to as successful multilateral cooperation venues. In this way the summary of one project has enabled the delineation of opportunities of further collaboration that is already being implemented in some ways.

M. Kalinina (2015), Vice-Rector International Cooperation NArFU addressed the participants in the name of the organisers of the meeting. She noted that the most important challenges of internationalization and of university cooperation included: the participation in international consortia and its governing structures and a shift in focus from mobility to internationalization of educational programmes, degrees, diplomas and quality. Arctic Research priorities cover: environmental protection – the sustainable use of natural resources in the Arctic, biodiversity preservation, monitoring, risk assessment and climate change – reduction of black carbon emissions, permafrost degradation, mitigation and adaptation. However, transportation and logistics – i.e. developing transportation routes and infrastructure, Northern Sea Route development and servicing and safety in the Arctic – emergency preparedness, response and interaction, all seem just as important. Energy efficiency, renewable energy resources and cold climate construction constituted another important thematic category.

The author of this paper, who was also a participant of the Aurora project, thinks the following issues were particularly important: sustainable socio-economic development of the northern territories and human in the Arctic – health improvement, indigenous people, preservation of cultures and traditions. The range of topics brought up under the Aurora project is extremely wide. At this point the author of this study wishes to present the issues taken up by him and contained in the rather broad subject of *Spatial diversity and causes of depopulation processes in the Russian Federation* (cf. Wites T., 2007). Carrying out research on the characteristics of the depopulation processes in the Russian Federation is of great importance to the evolution of population studies, as indicated C.M. Becker and D.D. Hemley (1998) who pointed out the need to carry out research on depopulation areas. The systemic transformation initiated by the collapse of the Soviet Union triggered depopulation processes. This leads to more and more areas being depopulated, and those population losses are completely incomparable with the situation in other countries.

On one hand, the complexity of society is determined by the clear-cut nature of expectations tied to social roles, but on the other hand, it is affected by a growing dependence and increasing uncertainty. In this complicated social space, under conditions of progressing anonymity, some participants start looking for trust, while others seek isolation from the world surrounding them. The Asian part of Russia is a region that, due to its spatial circumstances and the distance separating it from the country's decision centers, can be interesting to many scientists. The author's degree in geography enables him to present how depopulation studies can differ, depending on the scientific expertise of the researcher. The way in which geography contributes to population studies and economic development, relates to the representation of spatial patterns and how it identifies the reasons and course of these issues. Finding spatial regularity, the ability to describe the current status, and a diagnosis are crucial to understanding changes which could have global consequences. The imponderables of great change are features characteristic for people who inhabit these areas.

In the Asian part of Russia, the region which, at the turn of the millennium, was characterized by the biggest proportion of murders, both attempted and committed, was Primorsky Krai where a substantial surge in homicides was recorded (from 402 in 1991 to 707 in 2001). Hence, the author of this study chose the Pacific National University as the location of his research stay within the framework of the Aurora project, as he intended to explore issues pertaining to social geography, and security geography in particular, in this illuminating region of Russia.

The tasks which the author managed to accomplish during his internship included getting to know the book collection of the local library in terms of information on the following topical areas: social transformations, migration and natural movement. Basing on preparatory works and information thus collected on location in Russia, it was possible for the author to prepare surveys and analyses of changes in population, with great attention to substantive details. A very important part of the visit was the coordination of measures and research in selected parts of the city. The one-month stay of the author has enabled him to create a synthetic presentation of research results and to formulate conclusions, so as to proceed with the drafting of publications.

The area with regard to which the author implemented his research project was also interesting in terms of the discussion on delimiting of Russian-Chinese border and the North border in Russia. Preceding studies of the author concerned this second topic, albeit in reference to the European part of Russia (Wites T., 2006). Notwithstanding many studies on the North written by representatives of various disciplines, it is still possible to argue and wonder over how to define the frontiers of a region which has existed in the Russian consciousness for centuries. The consequence of the border delimitation is the inclusion within the region of an appropriate number of people who await support from state authorities in order to facilitate the existence in an area with extremely unfavourable natural conditions.

Conclusion

The author of this study is aware of the various threats, as well as the means to overcome those, lying ahead of the executors of contemporary research collaboration between Russia and the European Union. The market facilitation of science, mentioned in the introductory passage, does not have turned out a curse for science, especially if it is tied to the professionalisation of science. This conviction is bolstered by conclusions stemming from the review of completed and continuing research projects. The scientific relations that tie Russia and the European Union are extremely varied thematically, thus enabling the participation of numerous partners and a broad research perspective. Scientific knowledge may serve both cognition, as well as market needs. Much depends not only on initiators of science policy, but also on those implementing that policy. The chief responsibility lies with researchers though who represent various areas of science and differing methodological schools.

A growing dependence between science and economy forces scientists to create a network of mutual ties. Science has not avoided the relativisation of cognition. Various institutes, or scientific schools interpret the same phenomena differently. The complexity of contemporary science means that research results often cannot be compared. International scientific collaboration allows to look at the same phenomenon from different spatial or research perspectives, leading to concurrence in diversity. In the case of scientific collaboration between institutions in Russia and EU member states it is of extreme importance to establish autonomy from politics. Showcasing the difference between a scientific dispute and a political dispute remains as important as creating research teams devoid of cognitive limitations. Our partnership is built on a shared scientific culture, on the excellence of our scientific communities and on centuries of exchanges and collaboration.

In spite of the existence of some formal limitations, participants of research under EU-Russian collaboration are quite hopeful about the future. In Russia civil servants in charge of research, as well as the project participants themselves are observing actions undertaken by the EU, including those that could limit bureaucratic procedures (Medvedev S., 2008). On the other hand, counting on an expansion of scientific collaboration, the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, has suggested observing the those decisions made in Russia that noticeably shape collaboration, stating that...*we have been following with great interest the work of the Russian government to reform Russia's research system, and I have no doubt that Russia has been following our work to reform how we fund research and innovation at the European level. We are keen to see Russia participate very actively in Horizon 2020, building on its excellent record under FP7* (Geoghegan-Quinn M., 2013, pp. 4).

S. Medvedev (2008) said in *Limits of Integration: Identities and Institutions in EU-Russia Relations: A more positive outlook for the EU-Russia partnership requires a mental change on both sides. The Russian elite needs a less isolationist and securitized imagination of the outside world (...). In this sense, rather than policies of fear and dam-*

age limitation, Russia should be looking for ways to accept the European Other, and for institutionalized forms of cooperation. The EU, too, will have to do its homework. In particular, the mechanisms of foreign policy-making will have to be detached from the ideology of integration (Medvedev S., 2008, pp. 46).

Speaking of the dependence of further development of scientific collaboration in face of political escalations between Russia and the EU, the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science vowed that: (...) *our scientists have a long history of collaboration. Indeed, in more challenging times in our relationship, science was one of the few areas where dialogue continued, uninterrupted* (Geoghegan-Quinn M., 2013, pp. 3). One has to take into account though that the uncertain geopolitical situation on the border between the EU and Russia may, but does not have to, cause changes with regard to mutual cooperation, including collaboration in science.

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Role of NATO in the development of the education and scientific infrastructure in Georgia

Abstract: Work considers the issues of information and communication infrastructure of the Silk Road countries. In particular, provides analysis of the projects implemented by Georgian Scientific-Educational Computer Networks Association Grena, funded by NATO, EU, Fund Open Society Georgia, International Center of Science and Technologies and Ukraine Center of Science and Technologies promoting introduction of know-how in Caucasian Region, provide opportunity of acquiring the necessary knowledge of new technologies to the people and increase the level of their competences thus conditioning social and economic progress.

Key words: NATO, EU, Georgia, Black Sea, development, integration, cooperation, technologies.

Introduction

NATO is the military-political international alliance, the main objective of which is ensuring security and defense ability, though this alliance could not be regarded without economic aspects. NATO pays special attention to the economic issues since seventies of the past century, as could be clearly seen from the economic forums, held annually and focused on economic security.

Economic issues are of significance with respect of joining of Georgia to NATO, as stable defense capability ensures economic stability and on the its side, economic stability feeds the defense ability of the country. In result of integration with NATO, defense system of Georgia should become optimal, with respect of

financial, human, material-technological expenditures, i.e. Georgia should gain high degree security at low costs.

Economic security and economic stability is one of the elements of NATO membership. It includes the factors, which would promote free development of Georgia and economic collaboration with NATO members. These factors include: economic growth, stable investment environment, international competitiveness and free market.

Economic integration makes the nations closer to one another and increases their welfare. Through mutual integration the countries become richer at higher pace than through individual efforts. In this respect, Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization has indeed great potential. Though, in many cases, contradictions between the Organization member countries prevent development of actual collaboration. This could be clearly seen from Aggressive politics of Russia against Georgia, implemented in August 2008, what is completely against the principles of the Organization, reducing its effectiveness and demanding reformation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, for improvement of its effectiveness.

NATO and Black Sea Region

In result of opening of the way to the west to the energy resources of Caspian Sea and Central Asia, expansion of the European Union and NATO the Black Sea Region acquired the transit corridor function and it became the European sea. Through it Georgia realizes its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and actively participates in Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and organization for democracy and economic development GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova).

As early as on 25th June 1992, heads of 11 countries of the Black Sea Basin: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine (Serbia joined in 2004), through adoption of Bosphorus Declaration and signing of Istanbul Protocol have established BSEC, which relied on the generally accepted principles of the international law. Its main goals include economic development of the region and its stability, welfare of the populations of the member countries and support to development of the democratic processes in the Black Sea space. "Of twelve countries of Black Sea Region, the absolute majority – ten countries are the post-communist ones. Only Greece and Turkey have no communist past, while all other countries of the region are burdened with the legacy of command economy. Of them, only Bulgaria and Romania could be regarded as successful countries, as they achieved membership of European Union through implementation of significant reforms, while other eight countries either do not set this objective at all (e.g. Russia), or have long way to go before they achieve European standards."¹

In this respect, support to use of the new technologies, tools and innovative products, as well as implementation of the new practices and work techniques is

¹ Papava V., *Zombie-ing of the necroeconomy*, Tbilisi, 2010, p. 91.

of great significance, with respect of expansion of the area of activities, entry to the world market, sharing of knowledge and experience, processes acceleration and costs reduction. "Generally, the "west" could be regarded as developed much better than the "east", while the latter is rich with natural resources and badly needs advanced technologies and high quality ready products."²

Currently, regarding the electronic commerce, the workers, managers, instructors and organizations can acquire new methods of work, providing basis for creation of new jobs. In the countries of Caucasian Region, development of the information and communication infrastructure is of critical significance for employment, economic growth, competitiveness of the enterprises and welfare of the population. It promotes collaboration between the eastern and western countries and achievement of comparable economic conditions. In this respect, preparation, support and promotion of rapid introduction process of the experience achieved in electronic economy and know-how.

International projects implemented in Georgia

GRENA, the association of Georgian scientific-education computer networks plays significant role in expansion of the information and communication infrastructure in Georgia.

Association GRENA was founded on 26th July 1999 and its founders are: Academy of Sciences of Georgia, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgian State Technical University, Tbilisi State Pedagogical University, Tbilisi State Medical University, Georgian State Agrarian University, Institute of High Energy Physics of Tbilisi State University, fund Open Society – Georgia. Professor Ramaz Kvatadze, doctor of physical;-mathematical sciences is the head (Executive Director) of GRENA from the date of its establishment.

Regarding the specific nature of work with the Association, information and communication services provided by Grena include delivery of rigorous internet services and are intended for the staff and the students.

Currently, GRENA network covers the leading Georgian universities, education and research centers, international organizations, foundations, ministries – over 80 entities in aggregate. Association's work expanded beyond Tbilisi and covered Kutaisi, Batumi, Telavi. In implementation of the stated goals, Association Grena, through use of the advanced information technologies, develops the infrastructure of computer network connecting Georgian educational and scientific institutions, the libraries, museums and other non-profit institutions, into single aggregate system. It promotes development of the information centers and local networks in Georgian educational and scientific institutions connecting them to the international telecommunication network.

At the international arena, GRENA extensively collaborates with the respective structures of NATO and EU. Currently it is involved in such significant in-

² Papava V., Political economy of the post-communist capitalism and its application for Georgian economy, Tbilisi, 2002, p. 412–413.

ternational projects: “Networking Infrastructure Grant “Establishment of Connectivity Nodes in South Caucasus Countries”, Networking Infrastructure Grant “Improvement of Security and Development of Infrastructure of the GRENA Network”, “7th Framework Programme Multi-Gigabit European Research and Education Network and Associated Services (GN3plus)”, TEMPUS Programme “Modernization of Mathematics curricula for Engineering and Natural Sciences studies in South Caucasian Universities by introducing modern educational technologies (MathGea)”, 7th Framework Programme “Bringing the EU-EECA cooperation and policy dialogue in ICT in the HORIZON 2020 era (EECA-2-HORIZON)”, “Implementation of New Learning Programs, Courses and Services in Information Technology”, “Experimental Deployment of an Integrated Grid and Cloud Enabled Environment in BSEC Countries on the Base of g-Eclipse”, “CULTURE Exchange Platform – CULTUR-EXP³ etc.

GRENA creates not only information and communication infrastructure but also takes care about training of the relevant professionals. Professional training and education in the information and communication technologies sphere is provided on the basis of GRENA Regional Cisco Network Academy.

GRENA offers to the users two-step education, based on CCNA and Network Security certified programs. CCNA course is the first step in formation of professionals in planning, installation and administration of the small and medium networks. It provides basis for all Cisco certificates. After completion of Network Security course the student will be able to reasonably plan the general system of network security, introduce and manage functional components of the network security, provide timely and competent response to the accidents. This course includes theoretical and practical training with network hardware of Cisco systems. Upon successful completion of the course the student receive the relevant certificate.

From its independence up to present, Georgia has made over 360 international agreements with the NATO member countries and 140 of them deal with the sphere of economics. Well developed international economic relations with NATO member countries are one of the preconditions for NATO membership. International trade relations should be particularly mentioned. Currently, large trade partners of Georgia are turkey, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, USA and Bulgaria. Significant share of the NATO and EU projects implemented in Georgia involves GRENA, Association of Georgian scientific-educational computer networks. GRENA implements the educational projects in close collaboration with the universities and scientific institutes, with the support from NATO scientific program, EU and fund Open Society – Georgia. Funding provided by them was EURO 1,460,500; 145,700 and 410,000, in the period 1999–2009, respectively.

Role of the software professionals in development of project management programs allowing management of several projects at one time is indeed significant. Programs provide application of such methods of project planning, as grant graphs, network diagrams, responsibility matrices etc. This software package is

³ <http://grena.ge/eng/projects>

related to the internet technologies, which provides access to the critical information. Use of the website program improves the work and allows information exchange between the teams working on one and the same projects in different regions. Project virtual teams communicate via electronic means. Currently information exchange, with respect of the project is possible via e-mail, telecommunications, fax and videoconferences. Association GRENA has the professional equipment of the videoconferences allowing conducting of the high quality videoconferences via internet. It is included into the EveNetwork world videoconferences network. Project teams can arrange the meetings; e-mails are accompanied with the video messages. Individual programs of project management are related to the information systems of greater complexity providing coordination of several projects. These systems are connected to the central information system of the organization. There are applied stimulating evaluation systems promoting effective project management. There is applied the project monitoring system: long-term projects are subjected to the planned inspection showing project progress and determining corrections as required. These projects are closely related to the strategic requirements of the organization; relation between the strategic goals and projects are clear for each member of the organization.

GRENA Project Manager is always oriented towards development of the global perspectives. Therefore, its representatives always work successfully in different countries at one time together with their partners.

“It is clear that in implementation of the integration projects the financial-credit system is of special significance. Its main purpose is providing financial resources to the projects. Therefore, the issue of investment attractiveness of Georgia is prioritized.”⁴

Support to development of information and communication infrastructure in Black Sea Countries implies better awareness in the most recent communication practices, new methods of work and trade, new forms of education and leisure, to allow people to be innovators, work with higher effectiveness and productivity to provide basis for improvement of life quality, what is a precondition for creation of the society aware in the digital systems. Education projects implemented by GRENA with the funding from NATO, EU, Open Society – Georgia, International Center of Science and Technologies and Center of Science and technologies of Ukraine promote introduction of know-how in the Black Sea Countries, provides to the people the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge of new technologies, improves the level of their competence.

NATO offers to its member countries such structure, which would promote cooperation political, military, economic, scientific and other spheres. At current stage, ensuring economic security and sustainability is of special significance for Georgia, as our country makes extensive attempts for NATO membership and in this respect.

⁴ Keshelashvili G., Economic Aspects of Development of the Black Sea Countries' Network Academies, “economy of Georgia” #4 2010, p. 86.

Conclusion

The work considers the issues of development of the information and communication infrastructure in the Black Sea Countries. In particular, it analyses the education projects implemented by GRENA with the funding from NATO, EU, Open Society – Georgia, International Center of Science and Technologies and Center of Science and technologies of Ukraine promote introduction of know-how in the Black Sea Countries, provides to the people the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge of new technologies, improves the level of their competence. It shows that contradictions between the member countries often hinder development of actual cooperation, undermine its effectiveness and call for reformation of BSEC with respect of improvement of its effectiveness.

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Tourism – Support for integration. Analysis of important decisions in Georgia, that contribute to tourism development

Abstract: The main goal of research is to present the important decisions that Georgia has taken in recent years in the direction of European and Eurasian integration, which took part in tourism development and vice versa – a contribution of tourism in European and Eurasian integration.

Key words: tourism, Georgia, integration, transport, biodiversity, protected areas, climate, visa regime, conceptual framework.

Introduction

In recent years the important decisions that Georgia has taken in direction of European and Eurasian integration made direct or indirect effects on tourism development. In some cases the impact of those decisions hasn't been reflected yet, however, in the near future it will be reflected on tourism. The original reason of the research is to identify such solutions and after that to determinate the impact of these decisions.

The second goal of the research is to determinate the effects of tourism development on European and Eurasian integration processes as a result of specific decisions.

In order to reveal such decisions documents such as “EU-Georgia Association Agreement”, “National action plans of environmental protection” and so on, have been reviewed. Such areas as transport, environment protection, education, culture, visa requirements and more have been investigated.

Transport

Association Agreement refers to four main fields of transport – road transport, rail transport, maritime transport and air transport fields of existing legislation to harmonize with European legislation and the enforcement mechanisms for those which directly or indirectly affects the tourism industry.

In the first place the EU-Georgia Association Agreement takes into account modernization of the transport sector and implementation of European standards.

Rail transport

Within the Association Agreement a united European railway area has been established, which is based on an integrated infrastructure chain and on a compatible equipment, which allows efficient transport services across the EU and neighbouring countries.

The project of Baku – Tbilisi – Kars is new transport corridor, which will connect Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey railway lines. As a result of this project, passing Turkey, will be open a new rail corridor from the Caspian Sea to Europe. The new railway will have an annual capacity of 1 million passengers.

Air transport

In the air transport sector gradually more attention is the part of “On the one hand between European Union and its Member States and On the other hand common aviation Area between Georgia”.

Common Aviation Area Agreement

With the Common Aviation Area Agreement between the EU and Georgia, Georgia’s integration into the European common aviation market will be possible and accordingly, there will be the opportunity to have signed the United Air Services Agreement with all member states of the European common aviation area to have. The agreement will enable to implement an unlimited number and direct flights between EU countries and the Georgian airlines. It will be possible for EU airlines from any place of EU to arrive at any place of Georgia and Georgian airlines from any corner of Georgia will be able to flight at any place of the EU. This will provide additional flights, additional investments in the field of aviation, competition will be increased, which will make a positive impact on ticket prices.

In addition, as a result of the agreement, Georgia will harmonize its legislation with European standards and will implement EU aviation procedures, including in areas such as aviation safety, the environment, consumer protection, air traffic management, economic regulation, competition issues and social aspects.

Starting relationships in Air space is promoting closeness of EU-Georgia economies, which will make a positive impact on DCFTA. According to EU data, the passenger transportation between Georgia and EU countries in the last five years, in average has been growing by 10% percent a year.

Transportation infrastructure significantly contributes to the development of the tourism industry, so projects and processes already mentioned are directly

related to the growing number of tourists as in our country as well as outside. It stimulates the integration process.

Environment protection

Cooperation with the European Union, among the other things, foresees environmental issues, according to the “National Environment Action Process” (NEAP). Specifically, the following objectives are:

Design of “National Environment Action Process” (NEAP), which includes every national and sectoral environmental strategic directions in Georgia as well as institutional and administrative issues

NEAP will be updated periodically and it will be approved according to Georgian legislation.

“National Environment Action Process” (NEAP) of 2002–2006 years Includes the following topics: water resources, ambient air protection, waste and chemical substances, black Sea, forestry and others.

Water resources

Georgia, as the ENP partner country, made a commitment to move its water-related legislation closer to EU water legislation.

European Water Management Model is necessary to ensure moving to a new and more sustainable water management model. It means to implement a various projects, system gradual rehabilitation/construction in various important cities, which also have a high potential for tourism.

Full implementation of the EU-Georgia Action Plan (In terms of water resources) will bring a significant positive results for Georgia in terms of the environment, It will be possible to introduce sustainable water use and management, which will bring a positive impact on ecosystems.

Long-term and short-term goals in water resources

In the field of water resources management, long-term (20-year) goals are ensuring human health and aquatic ecosystems safety and sufficient quantities of water. To achieve this goal, implementation of the following short-term (5 year) goals and appropriate measures is required.

Goal 1 – formation of efficient water management system.

Goal 2 – Pollution prevention and effective control of the abstraction mechanisms.

Goal 3 – Control of Water pollution reduction from untreated municipal wastewater.

Goal 4 – Control of Water pollution reduction from diffuse agricultural sources.

Now Georgian new law on water is in the stage of preparation, in which all types of regulation of water bodies will be foreseen as far as possible.

Ambient air

Industrial emissions

Historically in Industrial sector the source of pollutant water mainly was considered to be heavy industrial complexes, which right now are closed.

Nowadays, in Georgia, the monitoring system update is being considered, in terms of improvement of legislative and methodological, as well as material-technical base.

Long-term and short-term goals

Concerning the quality of the air with the long term goal is to achieve human health and safe air quality throughout the country. To achieve this goal in the coming 5 – year period the following specific results must be achieved:

Goal 1 – Improvement of the existing monitoring network and its gradual automation, which will allow assessment of ambient air condition and the impact of the key factors.

Goal 2 – Industrial emissions reduction, with supporting enterprises to implement new, advanced, energy-saving technologies and ensuring control on compliance with the requirements of environment influence permission.

Goal 3 – Gradual reduction of automobile emissions. This is possible through the implementation of appropriate mechanisms by foreseeing international practices and local peculiarities.

Waste and Chemicals

Household waste collecting

The waste management bill is prepared by the Ministry of Environment, which provides the definition of hazardous waste, classification, their production, transfer, neutralization, accommodation accounting and control of this process. Adoption and enforcement of the law will regulate uncontrolled movement of hazardous waste and it's safe disposal.

Georgia has a number of waste-related international commitments among them the EU association agreement. In order to facilitate the implementation of international commitments, some projects will be carried out, which are directed towards solving the problems of waste.

Also Georgia's National Action Plan on persistent organic Pollutants approved by the Georgian government, which incorporates performance requirements of Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants.

Long-term and short-term goals

The long term goal in the waste management fields is to introduce waste management modern system (Safe disposal of waste, waste energy sources, waste recycling, recycling, minimization)

Short-term goals that must be achieved in the next 5 years:

Goal 1 – Municipal and hazardous waste management improvement (Harvesting, transportation and the accommodation)

Goal 2 – Reduction of accumulate waste hazardous to the environment.

Black sea

In 1992, the 6 nations signed the convention on the protection of the Black Sea against pollution (Bucharest convention). This international document provides joint and coordinated action basis, which is aimed at improving the Black Sea ecosystem and sustainable development of the coastal states.

After the entry into force of the Convention of Bucharest (1994) many projects have been implemented at the national and regional level. The most important is the establishment of the Kolkheti National Park, which provides marine and coastal biodiversity protection zone. Currently, on the Black Sea coast, it is going on municipal sewage systems and their Treatment facilities Construction and rehabilitation. These measures will greatly reduce the pollution of the Black Sea.

In 2009, Georgia signed the Black Sea Protection Protocol to the International Convention on Biological diversity, as a result, the court has declared the importance of biodiversity in the Black Sea on the international level.

The government is well aware of the need to protect the black sea. In 1992–2009 was signed many international agreements, which are directed towards the protection of the Black Sea and promotion of regional cooperation in this field. In Black Sea Regional Strategic Action Plan (Sofia, 2009) are defined priority areas and measures of protection of the Black Sea. Issues related to the Black Sea have priority in EU-Georgia cooperation program too. Georgia had recently made Black Sea biodiversity protocol and Black Sea protection protocol ratification induced by land-based sources and activities, to which it again confirmed its willingness to participate in the implementation of measures aimed at protection of the Black Sea.

Long-term and short-term goals

The long term goal of the protection of the Black Sea is to improve its ecological situation. This goal is consistent with the goals of the Strategic Action Plan for the Black Sea region.

In order to achieve those goals following short-term goals over the next 5 years should be achieved:

Goal 1 – To protect and maintain commercial living natural resources

Goal 2 – Protection and management of Black Sea and the coastal area of biodiversity and habitats

Goal 3 – Reduce eutrophication

Goal 4 – Quality assurance of safe water for human health, recreational purposes and the use of water for biotasa.

Achieving these goals is very important not only in terms of biodiversity and environmental protection, but also for sustainable infrastructure development of the coastal zone and promotion from the point of view of tourism.

Biodiversity and Protected Areas

Nowadays the main challenges in the field of biodiversity are: Habitat degradation and stopping reduction of the number of species, to improve fishing and hunting regulation, to increase effectiveness of protected areas, the development of a network of protected areas, biodiversity conservation and improving the sustainable management of the database.

System of Protected Areas

In 2005 the government approved the National Biodiversity Strategy and action plans (NBSAP). NBSAP identifies 10 – year strategy and 5 – year action plan for Biodiversity protection and in the area of judicious use of biological resources.

Accordingly to Georgian law requirements of “Georgian red list” and “red book”, endangered species commission IUCN evaluated the condition of the flora and fauna by the criteria and categories and made a new Georgian red list, which was approved by the Presidential decree. A number of species and species group conservation management plan has been prepared (Goat, leopard, bats, brown bear, Caucasian grouse, waterfowl, Imperial eagle, Tortoise, Caucasian salamander, *zutkhisnairebi*).

With financial and technical support of GIZ national monitoring system of biodiversity is being developed with the aim of obtaining adequate information about trends, creating response system and their integration in state politics.

Here should be specially noted the progress in the development of protected areas. In recent years the area of protected areas has significantly increased.

By 2011, 7.3% of the whole territory of Georgia is protected by the law (511 122.5 ha). In addition, it is planned to increase the total area of protected areas, in which some progress has already been achieved.

It should be noted that various measures have been taken for the development of tourism in protected areas, as a result, there already is a large part of the protected area that has adequate tourism infrastructure.

Various tourist services are available in the protected areas, Such as horseback riding, rafting, mountain tourism, bird watching, etc. which is the source of local income of the protected areas. Various event for infrastructure development are being held to strengthen the capacity of administrations. Also, the establishment of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) is noteworthy, which aims Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to support protected areas systems.

In the field of biodiversity, Georgia has many obligations of various international conventions and regional agreements. On the 10th Meeting of the parties of biodiversity convention (Nagoya, Japan, October 2010) strategy has been adopted and biodiversity conservation objectives defined for the years 2011–2020

in 2020. Georgia as the part of the convention on biological diversity, will determine the national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

Long-term and short-term goals

For the interests of present and future generations, the long term aim of the National Biodiversity Policy (20 years) is to protect, restore and maintain the Georgian ecosystem, species and genetic resources. This long-term goal may be achieved by effective management of protected areas and creating a unified system by sustainable use of biological resources and management and by fair distribution of the benefits.

These goals must be accomplished by the next short-term (5-years) goals :

Goal 1 – to protect and conserve endangered selected species viable populations and habitat rehabilitation.

Goal 2 – To increase fishing and hunting for the effectiveness of management in ensuring sustainable use of resources.

Goal 3 – To create efficient united protected areas network.

Goal 4 – To increase the effectiveness of protected areas management of administrations capacity and financial sustainability by implementing mechanisms

Goal 5 – biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources in providing appropriate information by creating RIO national system.

Forestry

In connection with the forests, to solve the economic problems activities were planned, in Georgia, from 2000 year projects financed by international donor organizations (World Bank, The UN Food and Agriculture Program) were being implemented which were aimed at restructuring (reorganization) of forestry and also introducing national forest policy.

Short-term and long-term goals

The task of Georgian forest field in long-term (20 years) period will be the improvement of functional (ecological) state on the bases of introduction of full-scale forest management sustainable.

To achieve the above mentioned goal the following short term goals are set:

Gaol 1 – Preconditioning development of sustainable forestry system

Gaol 2 – Reduction of unsustainable and illegal forest use

Land resources

To date, with the regard of land resource management series of laws are adopted, which regulate this sphere. From these laws some are directly connected to ground water protection, some to the land ownership and land use. Apart from that, Georgia is UN convention party of deforestation fighting.

Short-term and long-term goals

In the sphere of land resource management the long-term goal is introduction of best possible land use practices by sustainable management of land resources.

Consequently, In the sphere of land resource management the short-term goals are as follows:

Goal 1 – Degraded land area reduction, improvement of soil quality and pollution minimization.

Goal 2 – Strengthening existing opportunities for land spatial information system development.

Mineral resources

Short-term and long-term goals

In the sphere of mineral resources the long-term goal is the reduction of negative influence of obtaining mineral resources on the environment and environment protection, and the long-term goal in groundwater resource sphere is supplying the whole population of Georgia with secure and quality drinking water and supporting economic growth of the country by entering international market with this product.

To achieve these goals its required to set the following short-term (5 year) goals:

Goal 1 – Cleaning abandoned mines.

Goal 2 – Introduction sustainable management practices of new and existing mine.

Goal 3 – Management of monitoring system of groundwater.

Goal 4 – Introduction of groundwater obtaining sustainable practices.

Climate change

In 1994 Georgia ratified UN climate change frame convention and became party of convention, and in October of 1999 the country joined climate change convention Kyoto protocol. In 1997–1999 Georgia prepared the first national message of Georgia towards the climate change.

After 2003 number of projects were implemented in the country, that dramatically increased local potential to accomplish climate change convention and Kyoto protocol.

In 2006–2009 Georgia prepared the second message of the country torards the climate change frame convention, accent was made towards assessment of vulnerability of various systems and economic fields and development of adaptation projects. On the bases of this the project was implemented with the financing of Georgian government.

The Caucasus representatives of nature protection world foundation, with the financial support of German government in 2008–2010 implemented project “Wood landscape restoration in South Caucasus with the aim of reducing the impact of climate change”.

Short-term and long-term goals

In long-term perspective (20 and more years) the main goals of the country are:

1. Ensuring security of Georgian population with the regard of climate change with the implementation of adaptation measures.
2. Reduction of emissions of roads with greenhouse effect.

To achieve long-term goals its required to set the following short-term (5 year) goals and performing appropriate actions:

Goal 1 – Performing adaptation actions in regard of climate change in vulnerable regions.

Goal 2 – Determining climate change influence on other regions and sectors.

Goal 3 – Creating environment which will support reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Public healthcare

In scope of the association agreement, parties agree to develop cooperation in the sphere of public healthcare, with the aim of increasing security of public health level and human rights protection, which is the main component of sustainable development and economic growth.

Education, training and youth

In scope of the agreement, parties will cooperate in spheres of education and training. The cooperation in in education and training will be directed towards development of the following spheres: modernization of education and training systems; quality improvement; lifelong learning support; ensuring relevance and availability of all the levels of education. It will be possible to be involved in relevant programs of EU.

Cooperation in the sphere of culture

Parties will develop cooperation in regard of taking due account of fortified principles of the UNESCO 2005 “Supporting diversity of cultural expressions”.

Parties signing the association agreement will cooperate in the following main spheres: cooperation in the sphere of culture and cultural exchanges; art and mobility of artists; and institutional strengthening of the sphere of culture; inter-cultural dialogue; dialogue about cultural politics and cooperation in scope of international forums, such as UNESCO and European councils to support cultural diversity, keep and adequately develop values of cultural and historical heritages.

Cooperation in the spheres of sports and physical activities

Parties signing the association agreement will cooperate in the spheres of sports and physical activities with the regard of sharing information and best practices

to support healthy lifestyle and development of social and educational values of sports, sports mobility.

Agriculture

According to association agreement, parties of Georgia and EU will cooperate with the regard of agriculture and village development, in particular, with achieving policy and legislation progressive pompatability.

Visa Regime

In 2014 Georgian government set into action new visa regulations, according to which important changes effected countries with unilateral visa-free regime and simplified visa regime with Georgia. Changes were reflected on short and long-term visa acceptance procedures and visa fee payment rules.

Countries with which the visa-free entrance was abolished are: China, Iran, Iraqi, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kits and Nevis, Surinam and Saint Lucia. After abolishing the visa-free regime tourism was drastically reduced from above mentioned countries. The picture of reduction of number of incoming tourists during one year is shown below.

The changes in visa regimen also effected Russian Federation. On February 28, 2011 Georgia introduced 90-day visa-free regime for residents of North Caucasus, and the rest of Russian citizens can obtain visa when entering the country. After these changes, Tourist number from Russia dramatically changed. From March 1st, 2011 to 31st of December Number of visitors incoming from Russia was 255,951, and in the same period of 2012 – 485,157.

Taxation

The associated members have access to all or some markets of EU, Association agreement also implies the free trade agreement. the countries in free trade area are freed from customs tax, trade limits, infrastructure and customer service spheres are being developed, export possibilities increase.

Conclusion

All above listed decisions have or will have influence on tourism development in Georgia.

Single railway zone and aviation space will result in fee reduction, which will be directly effected on the tourist number increase from European countries. The same influence will have building Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transportation corridor. The project will result in increase the number of not only Turkish and Azeri tourists, but in Istanbul, after the completion of construction of railway tunnel crossing the Bosphorus Strait it will be possible to begin tourist travelling with railway

transport from European countries to Georgia, which will in turn have effect on the increase of number of tourists.

Support of environment protection and actions performed in this direction will have a positive influence on the development of ecotourism in Georgia. As mentioned above, in this sphere projects are considered in the direction of atmospheric air protection, water resources, waste, land resources and climate change. Special effect on tourist attraction will have activities that support tourist interest with the following resources: black sea, forests, mountains, protected areas and mineral waters. To say otherwise, will be conditioned to increase the demand and potential of ecotourism, village tourism, health tourism and other tourism types

The obligations accepted by signing the association agreement will in future also have positive influence on increase of tourist numbers. E.g. the steps taken in the direction of education will be reflected on educational tourism; Decisions made to develop culture sphere will have influence on the development of cultural tourism. The same result will have decisions in the direction of sports on the sports and recreational tourism. The development of agriculture will have a positive impact on agrotourism.

Concerning the visa regime, the review of visa regime and more liberalization will result in the increase of tourist flow.

Free trade area, which will result in removal of customs duties and trade restrictions will have a positive influence on the development of business tourism in the country.

In conclusion, Euro and Eurasian integration will have positive influence on the development of tourism. And vice-versa, tourism has a big role in the support of integration. We conventionally divided the integration resulted from tourism development into three spheres:

1. The visits of diplomats from Europe and Eurasia and diplomatic relations improve the country integration on the state level, as the visa regime has the influence on this type of integration;
2. Business integration implies the visits of business visitors and investments in the spheres such as culture, natural resources and hospitality (hotel, restaurant).
3. Integration on the individual level concerns organized and not organised tourists who study cultural values, get acquainted with natural resources and material and non-material resources.

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Importance of regionalism in the consciousness of the inhabitants of Samegrelo and Svaneti¹

Abstract: Historic determinants, geopolitical situation and centuries-old tradition resulted in Georgia being a country characterized by strong ethnic diversity. The paper, based on the results of the questionnaire and additional interviews, demonstrates the differences and similarities between the representatives of two ethnic groups inhabiting the regions of Samegrelo and Svaneti. Additionally, the gathered data has allowed to define the role of regionalism in the consciousness of these communities.

Key words: Georgia, regionalism, ethnic group, Megrelian, Svan, historical region.

Introduction

Geopolitical location of Caucasus, on the border between the European and Asian continents, its unique, hard to reach terrain, and turbulent history have all led to a distinct, internal division of the area into southern and northern parts.

The inhabitants of the Southern Caucasus (Georgians and Armenians) were first to establish state communities characterized by their own legal systems, complex social structures, common religion (Christianity) and individual languages. These factors have led to the unification of the inhabitants of the territories of present Georgia and Armenia and, later, a transformation of loosely tied societies into well – organised nations (Furier, 2011).

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Shaped by invasions and internal conflicts regarding succession to the throne, nowadays Georgia is a melting-pot of different cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Strong bonds to the home territories (small homelands) and the hermetic character of the regional communities² are considered the main reasons for the differences and divisions within the nation.

The aim of this article is to illustrate differences and similarities between two specific ethnic communities.³ The analysis of the subject has been performed on the basis of a study (questionnaire) conducted by the author between February and July of 2014.⁴ The administrative region of Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti has been chosen as subject of the study. This region consists of two historical entities that differ in terms of culture, ethnicity and language⁵, and has been therefore considered a suitable candidate for the analysis.

Additional differences between these two groups have been high-lightened by events that took place in the 1990ies, shortly after Georgia had regained its independence. The stride between the two opposing parties within the region: a group loyal to a Samegrelo native Zviad Gamsakhurdia on one side and a Svane-tian organisation Mkhedrioni⁶ led by Jaba Ioseliani, on the other, illustrate the mutual animosity between the two ethnic groups (Furier, 2000).

Conducting regional analyses of the Caucasus region one needs to consider not only a territorial division of the country but also a concept of regionalism itself.

K. Handke (1993, p. 22) defines regionalism as *'an idea that stems from a need to preserve, cultivate and advance specific characteristics of a given culture (social values, life style etc) within a territory characterized by distinct regional or ethnic features'*. According to Chojnicki & Czyż (1992), when discussing a subject of regionalism, one needs to consider not only the issues of cultural identity and separateness, but also political and economic actions that are characteristic for a given community. Depending on the scale of these, above mentioned characteristics we can speak of regionalism on country or continental level.

² This has its origins in, deeply rooted in common consciousness, clan traditions

³ An ethnic community, considered as a perfect example of ethnic identity is defined as 'named and self-identifying collective having a subjective believe in common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, shared culture and a certain degree of ethnic solidarity' (Smith, 2009; p. 51).

⁴ The questionnaire inspired by Furier's publication (2000).

⁵ Basing on the linguistic research of the Caucassus communities, Mikołaj Maar, has proposed a division of the population according to their 'national kinship'. According to Maar, the Megrelians as well as the Svans are both representative of native inhabitants of the Caucasus region; the 'pure Japhetites'. It is interesting to note that he has also included the Kartvelian people (Georgians) in this group, which has made the differences between these three groups and the rest of the Georgian nation, more distinctive (Tawzadze, 1933).

⁶ The Mkhedrioni (Horsemen) was a paramilitary group and political organisation created in 1989 influenced by a famous guerilla movement of K. Cholokashvili active during the Georgian Uprising in 1924 (Materski, 2004).

Samegrelo and Svaneti – General Information

Due to a strong sense of identity of the local communities and their adherence to the historical territorial divisions it has been decided to, when describing the specific units, to consider them according to a these subdivision⁷. The actual territorial division into nine regions⁸ shall be only used during general, statistical description of the units⁹.

According to official documents on the territorial division of Georgia, the historical district of Samegrelo has been fused with the upper part of Svaneti (Zemo-Svaneti), while the southern part of Svaneti (Kvemo Svaneti), together with Racha-Lechkhumi have become parts of a separate administrative unit. The region of Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti consists of eight smaller districts and a harbour city – Poti.¹⁰ In the beginning of the 2014 the population of Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti has been estimated at 476,300¹¹ with a majority (59, 7%) in rural areas, which has to do with strong agricultural traditions and relatively low level of urbanization. The most densely populated region is Zugdidi (177,000). In the same year, population density in the Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti region has been estimated at 64 p./km².

The region of Samegrelo is located in the western part of the country on the Colchis Lowland. The capital of the district with the governor's head-office is located in Zugdidi. This biggest city in the region has been, during the feudal fragmentation, the capital of the principality where the House of Dadiani had originated.

The historic region of Svaneti, as per territorial act from 2006, has been divided between several units and as such does not have administrative individuality.

As far as land formation is considered, the area is significantly different from the earlier described Samegrelo. It consists of a central part of the Great Caucasus and Svaneti Mountains. The capital of the region – Mestia is situated in the north and has been formed by joining of four smaller settlements: Lagami, Lanchvali, Lekhtagi and Seti (Dawitaj, 1967). The population of the region has been estimated in 2014 at 14,500. In the recent years the city has done some major renovations which together with rich cultural (medieval towers) and natural

⁷ The regional identity of the regions of Samegrelo and Svaneti is directly influenced by the times of feudal fragmentation when these units were separate principalities – ‘samtavro’ (Baranowscy, 1987).

⁸ The current territory legislation, introduced in 2006, is based on three levels of subdivision. Autonomous regions of Abkhazia and Adjara have been given a status of first-level entities; Second-level administrative units consist of the nine remaining regions (mkhare). Third-level divisions refer to 69 local entities consisting of 64 municipalities and five cities with so called “special status”: Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Poti. (Melua, 2010).

⁹ The National Statistics Office of Georgia does not collect statistical data on ethnic groups within its territory.

¹⁰ Poti, Abasha, Zugdidi, Martvili, Mestia, Senaki, Chkhorotsku, Tsalenjikha and Khobi municipalities (investinsamegrelo.ge; accessed: 10.04.2014).

¹¹ Unless noted otherwise, all statistical data has been obtained via the website of The National Statistics Office of Georgia.

heritage, and own airport makes Mestia one of the most important mountain holiday destinations in Georgia.

Method

Subject

It has been chosen to focus on the two most culturally and linguistically distinctive ethnophysiological regions of Georgia: Samegrelo and Svaneti. Due to the lack of statistical data concerning population size of any given ethnic group and the current territorial division combining the historical regions into larger administrative units, it is hard to characterise individual ethnic groups of Georgia, especially when demographic traits are concern. That being said, the results concerning the ethnic diversity are based solely on the answers submitted by of the inhabitants of the region during an interview and via the questionnaire.

The data has been collected by means of the questionnaire. The sample consisted of 50 respondents; 25 being representatives of the Megrelian ethnic group and 25 identifying themselves as Svans. Two versions of a questionnaire were devised based on the earlier conducted interview concerning the differences between the inhabitants of the mountain and coastal areas of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. The questionnaires were in Georgian with appropriate adjustments per respondents groups.

The questionnaires were filled in anonymously and consisted of 12 questions from which five were open questions and four concerning respondent's background (gender, age, education, place of living). The aim of the survey was to illustrate the attitude of the respondents towards the members of other ethnic groups as well as towards their own community.

Out of the 25 Megrelian respondents 52% were males, 64% were younger than 25, living in a city (52%) with university education (56%).

Respondents from the Svanetian ethnic group were mostly young people living in a city (60%) and with university education (56%).

Results

Please note that following chapter is a summary of the results obtained during the survey. Detailed results are available on request.

Megrelian Ethnic Group

The results presented below apply to the answers provided by the representatives of the Megrelian ethnic group.

Question 1

The respondents were given list of positive and negative traits and were asked to choose the ones describing other ethnic groups best. Due to the large num-

ber of the ethnophysiological regions following were chosen as a representative sample:

1. Svaneti – reason: a direct neighbour and part of the same administrative unit;
2. Abkhazia – reason: a current political situation and its separation from Georgia;
3. Kakheti – reason: known antipathy towards its inhabitants from the side of the Megrelian and Svan people;
4. Kartli – reason: a centrally located region with the capital in Tbilisi.

When asked to characterise the population of Svaneti 27% of the respondents have described them as *traditional*, 18% as *supercilious*, and 14% as *patriotic*. These answers comply with nation wide stereotypic view of the Svans. However, other answers included *friendly* and *courageous*.

The Abkhazians were usually described as *unfriendly* (18%) and *courageous* (15%). Many respondents have also indicated *cunning* (14%) and *traditional* (14%) as common traits of people of Abkhazia. Judging from the submitted answers and additional comments one can assume that the Megrelians appreciate the courage of their neighbours but due to the Abkhazia's separatist tendencies and involvement of Russia in the conflict, they tend to distrust and dislike them. These negative stereotypes towards the Abkhazians were additionally strengthened by a comment of one of the respondents who had never had any contact with the representatives of this ethnic group: *'I am n it sure, perhaps they just are unfriendly'*

Also the answers concerning the inhabitants of Kakheti that does not have a border with Samegrelo are interesting. The Kakhetians were generally described as *hardworking* (22%), *traditional* (17%) and *vindictive* (17%). Two respondents described them in the comment section as *just Kakhetians*, which was meant as a negative trait. The fact that so many people described the Kakhetians as hardworking probably stems from the long lasting agricultural traditions in that region.

The characteristics attributed to the Kartlians were: *modern* (34%), *cowardly* (15%), *supercilious* (15%) and *friendly* (15%). The fact that the people of Kartli are seen as modern and open to new ideas has probably to do with the fact that Kartli is associated with the capital of Georgia and its inhabitants accept western lifestyle to a bigger degree than the rest of the country. Paradoxically, this is also the reason why they are often seen as cowardly, supercilious and out of touch with the rest of the country. Also, from the interviews conducted prior to the study, one can draw a conclusion that this antipathy towards the Kartlians is mutual as they tend to see the representatives of other regions in a similarly negative and stereotypical way¹². The answers describing the inhabitants of Kartli as friendly were mostly given by the respondents living in Tbilisi, having friends among the Kartlian ethnic group and, therefore, not basing their answers on stereotypes.

¹² During the interviews the Megrelians have described a negative attitude of the Kartlians towards their ethnic group as being based on erroneous, negative stereotypes. They have also complained about being judged not by their abilities but by their belonging to a specific ethnic group.

Questions 2 and 3

The aim of these questions was to show the importance of the local language and a degree of affiliation with the region.

A majority of the respondents (84%) admitted using the Megrelian language on daily bases. The remaining 16% were mostly Megrelians living in different regions, often with family members being of a different ethnic group, which makes it difficult for them to use their language often. The large percentage of the users of Megrelian illustrates the importance of this language for regional community. It is important to note, the language is being used also by the young people. This proves that Megrelian is a living language still being taught to young generations and used daily within the region with Georgian used solely at school, during official matters and while talking to inhabitants of other regions.

When asked about their admittance to being a representative of the Megrelian ethnic group while being in another region, 100% of the respondents gave an affirmative answer which illustrates their strong affiliation with their ethnic group. Additional comments show a significant role of regionalism in the consciousness of the Megrelians. E.g.: *A Megrelian shall first describe themselves as a Megrelian and only after that as a Georgian.*

Questions 4 and 5

The aim of these questions was to show the likes and dislikes of the representatives of a given ethnic group towards the members of the other ones.

If they were allowed to choose a neighbour, a majority of the Megrelians (36%) would choose a Megrelian. As far as other ethnic groups are concerned, 20% of the respondents would choose a person from Imereti. This preference for the members of their own ethnic group, illustrates a strong sense of regional unity and a closed character of this community.

When asked whom they would not want to have as a neighbour (Q.5), a majority of the respondents indicated the Kakhetians and the Svans. This goes in line with earlier described antipathy towards the Kakhetians and demonstrates a strong dislike towards the Svans whose territory together with Samegrelo is part of the same administrative unit. The animosity towards the people of Svaneti most probably stems from significant cultural differences between the two regions with Svaneti territory being mainly mountains and Samegrelo occupying the seaside.

Question 6

When asked to choose a known representative of their ethnic group whom they feel proud of, most of the respondents, as expected, have chosen a controversial ex-president of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Also his father, one of the best Georgian writers – Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and Meliton Kantaria, a Soviet soldier famous for hoisting a Soviet flag on the Reichstag in 1945 were popular choices.

Question 7

The respondents were asked to assign three traits to their own ethnic group. The most often named characteristics were: *resourceful*, *friendly*, and *cunning*. Other popular descriptions included: *traditional*, *astute* and *ambitious*. The few negative traits named were: *a swindler (I think)*, *liar*, and *racketeer*.

The character of the answers shows, apart for the local and ethnic patriotism, a certain degree of healthy criticism. The Megrelians are aware of their own shortcomings and often are critical towards the actions of their countrymen.

Question 8

Breaking away of the autonomic region of Abkhazia from Georgia and subsequent recognition of the inhabitants of this region as a separate nation has led to asking the Megrelians living in the neighbouring regions about their opinion about the Abkhazian community. Being asked whether they perceive the Abkhazians as a separate nation or as one of the Georgian ethnic groups most respondents chose the latter. It is interesting to note that among the respondents considering the Abkhazians a distinctive nation was a person living in Abkhazia. According to this respondent, considering the language, culture and history of the Abkhazian people it is difficult to see them as a part of a Georgian nation. Also, the earlier conducted interviews showed these opinions as not being that fixed as it may seem. Most of the respondents were not 100% sure of their answers, which means this issue is still unsettled in the consciousness of the region's community.

Svanetian Ethnic Group

The results presented below apply to the answers provided by the representatives of the Svanetian ethnic group

Question 1

Please note that for the Svanetian group this question has been adjusted accordingly. I.e. the questions about the ethnic group of Svaneti have been replaced with the ones concerning the Megrelian ethnic group.

The respondents were given list of positive and negative traits and were asked to choose the ones describing the other ethnic groups best.

The inhabitants of Samegrelo were described as *resourceful* (27%), *friendly* (18%) and *cunning* (18%) which demonstrate a positive attitude towards this ethnic group.

The Abkhazians were mostly describes as: *unfriendly* (23%), *supercilious* (17%), *traditional* (17%) and *courageous* (17%). The negative answers can be attributed to the dislike the patriotically inclined Svans feel towards the autonomous region of Abkhazia and its inhabitants whose actions led to the fragmentation of Georgia. The Kakhetians were mostly referred to as *traditional* (30%) and *hardworking* (28%) which, coming from the Svans known for their respect for tradition and culture, is a sign of respect.

The ethnic group of Kartli was mostly regarded as *modern* (34%) and *supercilious* (27%). Just like earlier, these answers can be attributed to a general negative view of people living in Tbilisi.

Question 2 and 3

As far as the use of the Svanetian language is concerned most of the respondents have admitted to using it on a daily bases. Participants not using Svanetian daily explained, that was not due to a lack of will but rather lack off opportunity as they were living in different regions and were therefore forced to use Georgian during their daily activities.

Just like the Megrelians, the Svans can be characterized by a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. 100% of the respondents reported they readily admit they are Svans when in other regions. They reported being proud of their ethnicity, which they identify with thanks to their language, tradition and the hermetic character of their community.

Question 4 and 5

When asked about their neighbour preferences 52% indicated the members of their own ethnic group. What is interesting is that even though 20% of the Svans would like to live next to the Megrelian, there was other 20% percent that indicated the members of this group as being their least desirable choice for a neighbour (Q.5). This illustrates the differences in opinions as far as their closest neighbours are concerned. There were also other, singular answers like: *anyone except a Kakhetian*, *anyone*, and *I am happy with my current neighbours*, which shows a lack of unanimity on this issue.

When asked about the least desirable neighbour the people of Kartli and Kakheti were indicated most often. As far as the Kartlians are concerned this goes in line with the answers given on the first question. It is interesting to note, how ever this is not so in the case of the Kakhetians. Described earlier as traditional and hardworking they were nevertheless chosen as one of the least desirable neighbours.

Question 6

As far as a person they are most proud of, a majority of the respondents have chosen for Mikheil Khergiani – one of the best known Soviet sportsmen and Georgian mountaineer from Mestia. Another popular choice was Ckubre Daiauri. Other answers included, among others, Jaba Ioseliani, Tsothe Dadiani, Iliko Gabliani, Bori Kaxiani, Besarionie Nijaradze, Erekle Saghliani, Klarens Shampriani. The quantity of names indicates that even though, the region is relatively small in territory and population, its inhabitants have no difficulties to relate to persons of historic significance that are often unknown in other regions. This illustrates a strong attachment to the culture and traditions of their ethnic group.

Question 7

When asked to assign three traits to their own ethnic group most often named characteristics were: *courageous* (24%), *faithful* (16%), and *traditional* (15%). Most of the respondents perceived their groups in positive terms relating to the basic virtues and the ethos of a proud and strong Svan.

Question 8

As far as the status of the Abkhazians is concerned, most of the respondents admitted to perceiving them as one of Georgian ethnic groups (88%). However, also here there were difficulties to give an honest opinion. One of the respondents commented: *I am not sure. It is hard to say.*

Conclusion

The questionnaire conducted among the representatives of the administrative region of Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti has shown that a significant part of participants does not relate to the current territorial division of the country. They see region not as an administrative unit but as an area inhabited by a specific ethnic group. Even though there were some similarities in positive and negative attitudes towards the members of other ethnic groups, there was a significant lack of unity between the two studied groups. The Svans and the Megrelians differ in culture and language. The deeply rooted stereotypes present in all layers of the society, local patriotism, attachment to the homeland and traditions, have resulted in many regionalisms that have internally split the Georgian nation.

Due to a current geopolitical situation of the country and the separation of Abkhazia, it has been deemed necessary to examine the attitudes of the Megrelians and the Svans towards their neighbour. The results suggest that a majority of the respondents do not see the Abkhazians as a separate nation. This, however, is not as obvious as it may seem. Most of the answers have stemmed from a personal view a participant held concerning the Abkhazians and their own opinion on the subject.

A strong regionalism as well as the likes and dislikes of the respondents can be, to a certain extent, attributed to the unwillingness of the government to collect statistical data on ethnic groups. This, most probably, is caused by the will to eradicate the perceived ethnic differences within the nation. The lack of data on the subject makes it impossible to assess the scale and direction of regional tendencies and, subsequently, to control possible negative events that may, in future, result in a serious conflict.

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Chapter 4.

Balkans case

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Geopolitical aspects of modern disintegration processes in West Balkan area

Abstract: Within the context of modern geopolitical processes, the West Balkan area remains the point at which different power centers collide both regionally and globally. Nowadays, the key geopolitical processes within the area are being articulated via global geopolitical goals and new world order interests in compliance with USA standards. As the globalization spread eastwards, Former Yugoslavia seemed to have been a stumbling stone. Factors such as the brutal NATO aggression, the overwhelming traditional Vatican politics targeting the West Balkan and its predominant eastern-Orthodox culture and civilization, and a whole range of Catholic and Islamic countries supporting the process of disintegration relying on ethnic, religious, civilization and cultural heterogeneity and animosity resulted in break-up of a powerful West Balkan country – SRF Yugoslavia; instead, the interest of the West, including the traditional aspirations of Vatican, resulted in forming several new states. All the newly-formed states, which both culturally and geopolitically belong to West Balkan except Slovenia, are now burdened with a whole range of different geopolitical and development problems. As some of these countries reached EU or NATO partnership, the West took a full control over the Balkan area and repressed the Russian interest and impact.

Key words: West Balkan, balkanization, former SFR Yugoslavia, disintegration, globalization, new world order, geopolitical instability.

Introduction

The term Balkan was introduced into the European geographic terminology by German geographer Zeune (1808) who named it after a Bulgarian mountain as he thought it was the central mass of the area (Cvijić, 1918). The peninsula adjusted the name throughout the course of history as the historical-geographical circumstances changed. Both scientific terminology and practice regard the Bal-

kan and Balkan peninsula to be synonymous. M. Grčić (2013) defined the Balkan as “the old Europe, the cradle of Hellenic civilization, Byzantine Empire, and Orthodox religion” and analyzed a deeper sense of the Balkan history by saying that it was “a civilization synthesis of everything that came from the east, north, and west” (Grčić, 2013, p. 41).

M. Radovanović (2007) inferred that “in compliance with the current geopolitical nomenclature and relevant traditional terms of the Balkan and Balkan Peninsula, there are now officially two term categories, i.e. the South-East and West Balkan. There is no separation into East, South, or Central Balkan (consisting of Serbia and Macedonia from the objective, geographical, historical, cultural, and functional points of view). It is a millennium-old regional-geographical constant of both Balkan and European south-east” (Radovanović, 2007, p. 15). Therefore, the same author determined the course of events which led towards the “birth of the West Balkan as a region of a multilateral geographical position and polarized ethno-cultural, confessional and demographic systems of regional development” (ibidem).

The conceptual and territorial definition of the Balkan within the context of modern European integrations is in compliance with the transformation of the Balkan regional position. Instead of its traditional crossroad function as the point at which the eastern and western civilizations meet, the Balkan has fallen under the Western influence from cultural, civilization, economic, and geopolitical points of view. In an attempt to spread their impact over the Balkan, the West powers consider themselves to be the center of civilization whereas the East is regarded to be the periphery (Grčić, 2013, p. 47).

There have been frequent attempts to change the name Balkan into the South-East Europe as European Union keeps spreading southeastward. EU has finally determined the spatial range of West Balkan and narrowed it down to the former Yugoslavia area, in which process Slovenia is being excluded and Albania is being added (ibidem). Actually, Slovenia is a former Yugoslav republic which geographically does not belong to the Balkan Peninsula due to its historical-geographical, geopolitical, and other factors of development and is regarded to be a part of Central European cultural range. On the other hand, Croatia has its cultural and geopolitical motives to keep trying to break-up from the West Balkan term affiliation and the poor image of the Balkan context. Essentially, Croatia area north from the Sava River, from both cultural and civilization points of view, does belong to Central European cultural range, which makes it a country of both Central Europe and West Balkan. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania geographically are an integral part of the Balkan Peninsula and from the cultural and civilization aspects they belong to the West Balkan. Similar to Croatia, North Serbia, i.e. the area north from the Sava and Danube known as the autonomous province of Vojvodina, belongs to the Central European cultural range, whereas the rest of Serbia (Central Serbia and the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohia) geographically belongs to the Balkan Peninsula and from cultural-civilization and “geopolitical” points of view it belongs to West Balkan.

After the brutal breakup of former SFR Yugoslavia, the new political-territorial systems with different organization models, and political, military, and economic partnerships were created in the West Balkan, following the interests of “globalism” and “new world order”.

The West Balkan covers the area of 275,000 km² and is populated with a little more than 22 million people. Memberships in many associations depict seemingly voluntary integration processes and geopolitical stability. Nevertheless, features such as the complex political-territorial organization of the newly-formed countries, the violently imposed political and territorial solutions, the endangered national and cultural interests and civil rights of some ethnic groups (particularly the Serbs in some newly-formed countries – Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia,

Table 1. Model of political and territorial organizations and different partnership of West Balkan countries

Country	Model of territorial organization	Surface (km ²)	Population	Partnership and membership ⁴⁾
Croatia	Centralized and decentralized, districts as units of local government	56,594	4,284,889	NATO member, EU member, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI
BiH ¹⁾	Decentralized, entities, district, cantons, units of local government	51,197	3,791,662	Partnership for Peace, EU potential candidate, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI
Serbia ²⁾	Centralized, decentralized, autonomous (provinces), counties, units of local government	99,248	7,120,666 ³⁾	Partnership for Peace, EU candidate, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI, BSEC
Montenegro	Centralized, units of local government	13,812	621,383	Partnership for Peace, EU candidate, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI
Macedonia	Centralized, statistical areas, units of local government	25,713	2,062,294	Partnership for Peace, EU candidate, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI,
Albania	Centralized, counties, units of local government	28,748	2,821,977	NATO member, EU potential candidate, SEECP, SPSEE, SECI, BSEC

¹⁾ Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) consists of two entities – Republic of Srpska and BiH Federation, and Brcko District.

²⁾ Serbia has two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohia (KiM); KiM is under the governance of OUN in compliance with 1244 Resolution of the UN Security Council; its independence was declared unilaterally in 2008 and it was acknowledged unilaterally by a whole range of countries which supported the SFRY breakup, and it was not acknowledged by UN and most countries worldwide.

³⁾ Without Kosovo and Metohia; the estimated population of the province is around 1,170,000.

⁴⁾ EU – European Union; NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization; SEECP – Southeast European Cooperation Process; SPSEE – Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; SECI – Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; BSEC – Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

and “temporarily” occupied Kosovo and Metohia) encumber the geopolitical stability of West Balkan and create potential crisis focal points.

Processes of disintegration in the area of West Balkan have largely contributed and will keep contributing the interests of globalism and “new world order“. Over the last two decades, these interests have been abusing basic human and civil rights of small nations and countries. Large nations and countries have also recently been affected only due to being an obstacle to globalism. Actually, globalism refers to USA, most powerful EU countries, and Japan to some extent.

Republic of Serbia and the Serbs were the major obstacles to western interests and globalism during the process of former SFR Yugoslavia breakup. Montenegro opposed SFRY breakup to some extent. Other former Yugoslav republics had their own geopolitical, ideological and cultural reasons and motives to support globalism and get international recognition with the help of Vatican and the West, the protection of which they exercise nowadays.

Despite being a full UN member, Republic of Serbia was targeted by the powerful West and USA due to its resistance to globalism and Western interests. NATO aggression on FR Yugoslavia (1999), a state which comprised of Serbia and Montenegro, quickly resulted in Montenegrin separation and independence (2006). On the other hand, the obvious political, economic, and military aid from USA, Catholic and Islamic countries to Albanian separatists in Kosovo and Metohia resulted in the unilateral separation and recognition of Kosovo and Metohia.

Bearing in mind both regional and global geostrategic and geopolitical importance of West Balkan, the aspiration of powerful geopolitical factors towards the Balkan region, its geopolitical, ideological, civilization, cultural, and ethnic complexity, the historical and modern geopolitical processes that burden the newly-formed countries and their ethnos, the strong animosity among specific ethnic groups resulting from the tragic events in Yugoslavia geographic space after 1990s, we come to a conclusion that West Balkan remains a focal point at which there will still be both regional and global clashes of geopolitical, geostrategic, geo-economic and cultural interests that will affect the geopolitical reality accompanied by a whole range of development issues.

Geopolitical processes in West Balkan in the context of globalism and new world order

As we have mentioned earlier, geopolitical processes in West Balkan have largely been determined by the process of globalization and interests of new world order. Under such circumstances, it is crucial to single out the role of European integrations and European regionalisms. This region is both a geopolitical knot and geopolitical cross (Ilić, 1994) where geopolitical, geostrategic, cultural, civilization, and finally geo-economic interests collide.

R. Gnjato (2011) analyzed the basic generators of globalism and the essence of new world order with a special focus on their impact in West Balkan and its disintegration followed by a violent breakup of SFR Yugoslavia. The author stated that globalism in form of a new world order had its historical continuum

reflected in attempts of powerful European countries to create a world based upon their own moral, cultural, and civilization values. USA took over the leader part in XX and XXI centuries (Gnjato, 2011, p. 20–21). Essentially, the nature of the new world order lies in the abilities of the financial, intellectual, political, and scientific elite to create a world of their own moral and civilization standards. In this regard, USA believes that its part as a globalization leader is the result of a natural law according to which there is a spontaneous emergence of a country that has the power, aspiration, intellectual, and moral ambition to create the world in compliance with its own wish (Marković, 1997). In addition, the new world order comprises the control over West Balkan, which may further be considered within the context of Hartland–Rimland political doctrine targeting at a full control over Russia in order to eliminate its strategic interests. The processes of disintegration that started in late XX century included West Balkan and aimed at the realization of the aforementioned doctrine in order to set the new world order (Avramov, 1997).

Lj. Mitrović (2007) analyzed the general impact of globalization in the Balkan and said that “within the context of modern social changes, the Fall of Berlin Wall, and the implosion of socialism (1989) the Balkan found itself in the process of geopolitical transition. Namely, as the political borderline shifted eastward there was an outbreak of cultural division into western Christianity on one side and eastern Christianity and Islam on the other. The Berlin Wall was replaced by new mobile walls and clashes all over the world... and the new politically instable focal points emerged (Mitrović, 2007, p. 37). Within the framework of globalism and new world order, the author inferred that it would be superficial to observe the breakup of SFRY only within the context of its ethnical heterogeneity. Geopolitical reality and processes of disintegration in West Balkan should be regarded within the context of Western geostrategic interests in form of globalism and “new world order” model. Because the interests of the West are incompatible with some geopolitical entities in the region and the interests of some powerful countries that do not accept the globalism policies (neocolonialism) and the “new world order” model set by USA, it seems reasonable that there is resistance to one such geopolitics within West Balkan, i.e. within the Serbian ethnic-national space (especially within Serbian countries that are territorially defined). By this we refer to the position and stand of few Serbian patriot political parties in Serbia, Republic of Srpska, and Montenegro, and the poor influence of scientific, religious, and cultural institutions and their representatives who do not approve of the political violence from the West and the compulsory political-territorial solutions in West Balkan. On the other hand, there are certain “elements” within the Serbian geopolitical space that contribute to the global geopolitical aims and imperil the vital national interests of Serbia and other Serbian countries.

Ever since early 1990s up to now, powerful western geopolitical factors have been using all the available means in order to disintegrate the Serbian ethnic-national space in order to rule it and use for their own purposes. Undoubtedly, the West has succeeded. The geopolitical unanimity of Serbian peoples and countries has been shattered. In addition, a more deleterious is the fact that the cultural

and religious unity of Serbian people has been ruined under the influence of West-oriented political forces in all Serbian countries (Serbia, Montenegro, and Republic of Srpska). A blatant instance of corruption of the Serbian national being in West Balkan is the modern NATO and EU oriented Montenegro, which is completely unacceptable from the Serbian interest point of view. Furthermore, Western affiliation and vassal relations exclude any kind of the neutral position towards the Western interests. After all, Montenegro does not want to attain a neutral stand on any matter of either regional or global interest. On the contrary, they rush to join NATO and expect it to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity from the potential inland disintegration processes and neighboring impacts (especially referring to the so-called Great Albania concept) and they practically offer favors they are not even asked. Sanctions against Russia are an illustrative example of relations between Montenegro and the West. It was the same reason why they decided to recognize the unilateral Kosovo and Metohia independence and establish a full diplomatic liaison with this quasi state. Naturally, one such stand completely collides with the opinion of Serbian political parties in Montenegro and the Serbian interests in both Montenegro and other Serbian ethnic-national regions. It is all these and similar reasons that make Montenegro a country of geopolitical instability and unpredictability.

In order to reach their global geopolitical and geostrategic goals, the West has already taken a full control over West Balkan. Serbia is an exception to some extent. Nevertheless, Kosovo and Metohia secession aided by NATO forces and the Western recognition of this unilaterally declared statehood both provided a complete control over the area and enabled further pressure against Serbia. The Western pressure against the “rest of” Serbia (political and economic above all) should result in full control over the country and Serbian support to globalism on its way Eastwards, which eventually means the final confrontation with Russia. Such Western expectations are utterly unacceptable for the Serbian people and oppose their national interests. Still, some but few geopolitical factors believe these expectations to be “reasonable”, which only further complicates the turbulent Serbian geopolitical atmosphere. The truth is that the Serbian people in West Balkan learned their lesson from both historical and modern experience, which is why they base their geopolitical stability and economic safety on close connections with Russia. From the historical point of view, we should mention that Russian geopolitical and geostrategic interests share a tight connection with the Balkan, which further implies Russian prevalence over the region. In this regard, Russian presence and influence in West Balkan were limited down to being symbolic in 1990s. Nonetheless, the revitalized Russia has reopened its way back to the Balkan starting with Serbia and probably spreading all over West Balkan in the next phase.

The geopolitical scene full of potential integration and disintegration processes (especially in Serbia as the most complex and influential country in West Balkan) is further complicated by the geopolitical interests of influential neighboring countries along with Germany and Turkey due to Vatican and Islamic historical cultural-religious interests over the Orthodoxy. Unlike Turkey which bases its

geopolitical comeback to West Balkan on historical and cultural reasons, German interests lie upon pragmatic geopolitical and economic reasons. If we should add the strategic geopolitical and other reasons of the most powerful countries, i.e. USA and Russia, we come to a conclusion that there will be new challenges such as a permanent definition of West Balkan as a transitional impact area between the East and the West.

Disintegration based upon balkanization

Due to its geographical position, the clash of interests of powerful world states, a complex historical-geographical development, and antagonistic cultural, civilization, confessional, and ethnic features, West Balkan has always been referred to as the “barrel of gunpowder” with its highly-expressed geopolitical instability. Hence, M. Grčić, a distinguished Serbian geographer (2007) defines the essence of balkanization as a geopolitical capacity of the Balkan with all its unbalanced geopolitical structures, which make the geopolitical situation vague and unpredictable (Grčić, 2007, p. 29). The same author believes that there are five paradigms crucial for this geopolitical process. The geographical paradigm is based upon the interferences, merging, and accessibility on one side and isolation and separation on the other. It was these characteristics that provided the Balkan with the transitional (Eurasian) quality and led towards the formation of relatively small geopolitical forms. The civilization paradigm is in close connection with Huntington’s Theory of the clash of civilizations (ibidem, p. 30–32). S. Huntington (2000) identifies civilization with religion, which is manifested within the Balkan area, i.e. West Balkan in particular. Within this context, West Balkan represents the borderline between the western (Roman Catholic) and eastern (Orthodox-Byzantine) cultural circles. This area characterized by centuries of civilization clashes (i.e. religious clashes) symbolizes an ancient borderline between Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empire. From the civilization point of view, it is the eastern borderline of European Union, Catholicism, and “western world” in general (Huntington, 2000, p. 176–178).

The geostrategic paradigm refers to the outstanding relevance of the West Balkan area, Thus, Z. Bžežinski (1999) concludes that “the traditional Balkan represents a potential geopolitical medal for the European supremacy” (Bžežinski, 1999, p. 117). The historical battle for the geostrategic control over this area (among Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman Empire, and Russia) may be transferred into modern time in which USA is in charge and the process of balkanization takes place in compliance with the interests of the new world order. The historical paradigm reflects itself in the formation of the master-vassal-enemy relationships throughout the complex historical processes, which generated and hastened the process of balkanization. Finally, the Theory of social-cultural systems regards the Balkan as a “buffer” zone between the divided social-cultural areas of the West and the East (Grčić, 2007, p. 32–33). Therefore, balkanization has negative connotations with reference to its political-cultural split, ethnical and religious intolerance, and the permanent foreign impact on the key geopolitical

issues. Within a negative context, balkanization is a process which generates the size degradation of political-territorial systems and a constant geopolitical instability. Hence, balkanization has reached its peak through the imposed Serbian sovereignty loss over a part of its territory. Logically, we here refer to a temporary loss of sovereignty of Republic of Serbia over a part of its internationally recognized territory within the Kosovo and Metohia area. M. Radovanović, another distinguished Serbian geographer (2007), regards this problem as an encouragement of the balkanization process within European South-East in its worst form. The nearby history will show whether it is a well-planned geopolitics of chaos, or cynicism and arrogance of powerful countries, or both; and it will affect not only Serbia but also Bosnia and Herzegovina and both its entities, Montenegro, Macedonia, and probably Croatia..." (Radovanović, 2007, p. 15). In any case, from the geopolitical point of view, balkanization is a process which should enable the complete dominance of globalism within this area and open a clear path for the "new world order" on its way towards the East, which should finally result in the breakup of Russia and the rule over its development resources. It is necessary to employ all the West Balkan countries and integrate them into EU and NATO in order to achieve this "divine" goal of the West. At the same time, this means the recruitment of Serbia and other countries in which there is a strong sense of Serbian national awareness and a natural orientation towards the friendly Orthodox Russia. One such expectation is very unlikely from both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (its official position depends on Republic of Srpska and the determination of the Serbian people). Hence, geopolitical and economic pressures against Serbia and Republic of Srpska from EU and the West further contribute to the geopolitical nightmare, instability, and disintegration processes in the West Balkan region.

Actual and acute geopolitical problems of West Balkan countries

Nowadays, countries of West Balkan are characterized by the latent geopolitical instability articulated via the processes of disintegration, which are being disguised by the pending integration processes. R. Gnjato (2011) outlines the factors upon which the modern geopolitical processes within this area are based. These processes, "which are global, regional, or local, rest upon different geopolitical interests and features that characterize their nature and intensity. Undoubtedly, these processes recline on geographical, historical, and modern factors of development" (Gnjato, 2011, p. 18).

Republic of Croatia, a country which still belongs to West Balkan in the cultural-civilization and modern geopolitical sense, defined its geopolitical stability and total social-economic progress by entering EU and NATO. Nevertheless, its inner geopolitical stability is being affected by the unacceptable geopolitical status of Serbian population, who degraded from being a full constitutive people to a national minority in the newly-formed Republic of Croatia, in which they fail to meet their basic civil rights such as the linguistic right, educational sys-

tem right, cultural institution right, the right on property return for the Serbian refugees, etc. There is also the intolerable modern form of political-territorial organization within the area of the violently abolished province of Republic of Srpska Krajina, mostly populated by the Serbs before the Croatian aggression supported by NATO (1995). From the aspect of potential geopolitical processes, this problem may become reality in any time depending on the dominant foreign impact. Similar issues may be triggered by the historical rights of certain national communities in modern Croatia (e.g. the Italian community in Istria and Dalmatia). In addition, regional relations are burdened by the unattended borderline disputes between Croatia on one side and Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro on the other regarding both land and sea borders. There is also the unsolved land borderline issue between Croatia and Serbia along a part of the Danube stream. Furthermore, there is an evident Croatian geopolitical impact on Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which might be referred to as a foreign interference in the matters of a sovereign country. Still, all these problems currently represent no threat to geopolitical stability of Croatia because the current state of affairs is in favor of the key interests of globally most powerful geopolitical factors (*ibidem*, p. 22–23).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is burdened by complex geopolitical and total development processes. Its complex structure with two entities (Republic of Srpska and BiH Federation with its cantons) and one Brcko District is a result of the interest clash among its constituent peoples – The Serbs, Croats, and Moslems (officially referred to as Bosniaks since 1993) but also of the western interests via globalism and “new world order“. Actually, Serbian interests are connected with the preservation of Republic of Srpska, which is an entity with the authorities defined by the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution, and Republic of Srpska Constitution. Geopolitical interests of BiH Croats target at a new organizational model of Bosnia and Herzegovina based upon the canton principle, or even better a formation of a third entity based upon the ethnical principle, i.e. the Croatian one. On the other hand, Bosniak interest aims at the entity abolition and creation of a Unitarian state in which the ethnical majority would be a key factor of both internal and foreign politics. Hence from the Bosniak point of view and their geopolitical interests, it is an attempt to essentially reshape the Constitution and the position of BiH constituent peoples. In accordance with the Dayton Agreement and BiH Constitution, Brcko District is a separate administrative-territorial unit that damages territorial integrity of Republic of Srpska to some extent (*ibidem*, p. 23). When it comes to global and regional geopolitical relations, the current Bosnia and Herzegovina organization means that there are mechanisms through which Republic of Srpska and the Serbian people may to some extent control the BiH processes of integration. This should refer to the potential EU membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which political subjects in Republic of Srpska do not oppose. Nevertheless, there is an opposed opinion on BiH NATO membership due to reasons we shall not elaborate here.

Republic of Serbia is burdened by different geopolitical issues that largely suppress its development processes. The key problem refers to the *de facto* sov-

ereignty loss over its territory after the unilateral independency declaration of its autonomous province in Kosovo and Metohia. Speaking of geopolitical orientation towards the world largest centers of power, there is a wide public consensus on EU membership. Nonetheless, there is no agreement on NATO membership on the national level nor should it be expected. The resistance to NATO integrations is the direct consequence of NATO aggression against FR Yugoslavia and the Alliance's role in the state breakup into Serbia and Montenegro; finally there is the unilateral recognition of so-called Republic of Kosovo by most EU countries, USA, and its followers. These actions viciously abused the UN Resolution on Kosovo and Metohia and violently deprived Serbia from its sovereignty over its own territory.

Problem of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohia and the deprivation from their own civil and human rights make the geopolitical stability of Serbia even more problematical. In addition, there is the exceptional status and geopolitical stability of the Balkan and South-East Europe, which only further announce potential implications both regionally and globally. Furthermore, the geopolitical stability of Serbia is also threatened by the ethnical homogeneity of some parts of the state along with either obvious or hidden separatist aspirations encouraged by random support from neighboring countries which only implies possible forms of disintegration processes. In this regard, the impending focal points are as follows: south Serbia mostly inhabited by Albanian (Shqiptar) population targeting at Albania and Kosovo union; Raška region inhabited by "Bosniak" population and their political representatives aiming at annexation with "Bosnia"; and finally some parts of the autonomous province of Vojvodina dominated by Hungarian national minority, who might be a factor of destabilization or even disintegration of Serbia depending on the geopolitical interests from the country's vicinity.

Ever since its independence (1991), geopolitical processes in Republic of Macedonia have largely been subject to interests of globalism, the fact which has been further intensified by the NATO presence on its territory. Internal geopolitical stability has been largely affected by the ethnic problems, especially by some political requests from Albanian parties and separatist aspirations of local Albanians. Due to high birth rates and immigration from Kosovo and Metohia, Albanians now make 30% of total population (*ibidem*, p. 25). In this regard, whole of west Macedonia is practically within the so-called "Great Albania" scope including even Skopje as a capital mostly populated by Macedonian ethnics.

Geopolitically, Macedonia is coping with a latent geopolitical issue of the country's name which is not acceptable for Greece and which is why the name is still Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Besides, among a whole range of major and minor geopolitical problems, it is crucial to mention the unacceptable status of Serbian national minority and Serbian Orthodox church, which further complicates the relations with Republic of Serbia. We should not neglect to mention the unattended borderline issues between Serbia and Macedonia.

There is also a permanent issue of the official Bulgarian position on Macedonian nation. It is the Bulgarian opinion that Macedonians are actually Bulgarians

who build their “Macedonian” national identity upon the political basis, which in turn affects the Serbian centuries old statehood, cultural and total impact.

Nowadays, Republic of Macedonia builds its geopolitical stability upon the Western affiliation and attempts to join EU and NATO as soon as possible. It is one such position towards globalism, European regionalism, and EU that provides the country with the geopolitical stability for the time being. Nevertheless, major changes in global and regional geopolitical relations would have multiple consequences in this former Yugoslav republic.

Republic of Montenegro defines its “geopolitical” and development processes via its Euro-Atlantic integrations on one side and internal factors of development on the other. The international recognition of Montenegro demanded meeting multiple requests from so-called international community, i.e. EU, NATO and USA. The price of the independence, international support, and potential Euro-Atlantic membership was paid by scattering the union with Serbia, keeping “distance from it, recognizing the unilateral Kosovo independence...” (ibidem, p. 25–26). The geopolitical (in)stability of the country is affected by the concept of a civil state in which the volition of Albanian and Bosnian community greatly determines both present and future.

The current political elite of Montenegro are strongly supported by the West in regard to the suppression of Serbian impact on geopolitical affairs as well as the eradication of Russian interests in the country.

Republic of Albania represents a factor of geopolitical destabilization of the region due to its historical geopolitical aspirations and globalization goals which the country supports. Ever since the state was founded (1912), or even earlier since the time of the First League of Prizren (1878), Albania has preserved its key geopolitical and geostrategic interest in creating a state which may unite all the territories populated by Albanian ethnos. One such politics has contributed a unilateral secession of Kosovo and Metohia from Serbia whereas the country still maintains the latent, and sometimes direct, secession aspirations of Albanian population in south Serbia, west Macedonia, north Greece, and even southeast Montenegro.

The aforementioned analyses may help us infer that the processes of disintegration in West Balkan, resulting in the breakup of former Yugoslavia into minor political-territorial systems, have not brought a noteworthy geopolitical stability in the newly-formed countries. Each of the former Yugoslav republics is burdened by multiple internal and external geopolitical affairs. Modern constellation of worldwide forces, embodied in the globalism and the new world order model, guarantees only a temporary stability to those regional, state, and local systems which unconditionally meet the demands from the West by being either a semi-protectorate or vassals. It is reasonable to expect the nightmare in the Balkan “barrel of gunpowder” to continue because of the opposed interests of specific geopolitical subjects and ethnos in West Balkan and the direct opposition to interests of the West and globalism by some of them.

Conclusion

Nowadays, West Balkan is and will continue to be an area of geopolitical instability with uncertain and unpredictable outcome. From 1990s up to now, disintegration processes have come as a consequence of Western geopolitics and traditional politics of Vatican targeting against Orthodox Christianity (and Islam recently); this has generated new geopolitical subjects in former SFR Yugoslavia, i.e. West Balkan and burdened them with a range of geopolitical and development issues from internal, interstate, inter-regional, and global points of view.

Despite being engaged in the unlikely Euro-Atlantic integrations, with an exception of Croatia which is a full EU and NATO member, the whole of West Balkan remains a “barrel of gunpowder” likely to explode at any time due to its extreme complexity, heterogeneity, mutually opposed interests of its peoples, huge economic and social issues, poor scientific, technological and total development, opposed interests of global forces, etc.

Full EU membership of all West Balkan countries may contribute to the social-economic stability. Nevertheless, West Balkan countries are expected to enter NATO in order to serve the interests of the West. On one side, it would mean the dislodgment of Russia from this area. On the other hand, it means the geopolitical stability in the Balkan, free eastward intrusion of globalism, and exploitation of West Balkan resources (especially human resources) supporting new world order and taking part in NATO military operations worldwide. Still, this concept seems to be missing the support from all peoples and states within the region. Therefore, we should expect new “friendly” urgings from the West that peoples who still oppose NATO membership (i.e. Serbia and Republic of Srpska) will be at an advantage if they decide to fight and get killed all over the world instead of preserving a neutral status and openness to any kind of economic, scientific, and cultural exchange with all the welcoming states worldwide. As these persuasions are very unlikely to succeed, we may expect all types of pressure from the West and USA against Republic of Serbia and Republic of Srpska (which is the part of BiH opposing NATO membership). Actually, pressures against Republic of Srpska will impose its integration into the concept of a unitary BiH, i.e. a country that would automatically serve the interests of the West and USA in particular. On the other hand, Serbia will face pressures to accept the reality of Kosovo and Metohia secession, the supports to Vojvodina autonomous province and Raška county potential secession, and finally secession of south Serbia municipalities mostly populated by Albanian people in order to join the so-called independent Kosovo via the well-established recipe of human right and freedom vulnerability. Thus, the West remains a powerful tool of Serbian disintegration based upon the country’s ethnic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity and there is also NATO to provide their support if necessary.

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Political-geographical impact of disintegration processes within SFR Yugoslavia geospace on the modern ethno-demographic features of Republic of Srpska – a Bosnia and Herzegovina entity

Abstract: Disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia was characterized as ethnic-religious and civil war, which had escalated within Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace. Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict lasted for three years and a new state of BiH was created comprising two political-territorial units, i.e. entities: Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation. The war events in SFR Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska geospace altered the ethno-demographic structure and the consequences of disintegration processes still affect the modern political, demographic, and any other type of development.

Key words: disintegration, political-geographical processes, ethno-demographic background, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Introduction

Late 20th and early 21st centuries have been characterized with different turbulent political-geographic processes, which have largely caused shift in international geopolitical relations, especially in Europe.

“Political-geographical and geopolitical processes (global, regional or local) rest upon different geopolitical interests and factors which define their character and intensity. Undoubtedly, these processes rely on geographical, historical, and modern factors of development” (Gnjato, 2011, p. 18).

Political-geographic processes did not fail to hit the Balkan Peninsula and SFR Yugoslavia geospace, the disintegration of which took place in 1991. There were new political-territorial units formed within its geospace. Unfortunately, Yugoslavia disintegration happened through an ethnic-religious and civil war, which escalated within Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace (Zekanović, 2011a, p. 10). Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict lasted around three and a half years and was ended with the harmonization of Dayton General Framework Agreement (November 21, 1995) and its ratification in Paris on December 14, 1995. The state of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed consisting of two political-territorial units, i.e. entities of Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation. The territory of the pre-war municipality of Brcko was declared a district.

“The population number, density, and structure (economic, religious, etc.) and the ethno-psychological characteristics form a set of qualitative and quantitative features fully affecting the political-geographic processes and political-geographic position of a community” (Zekanović, 2011b, p. 327.).

If we consider the impact and relevance that the population holds within some political-territorial unit, then this impact is of the key importance for the geospace of Republic of Srpska entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, population and its ethno-demographic features are one of the crucial factors of political-geographic position and social-economic development in Republic of Srpska.

It has been twenty years since the peace came into force and the war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to globalization and similar processes, the political-geographic characteristics of Republic of Srpska have changed. Nevertheless, consequences of disintegration processes within SFR Yugoslavia geospace dating back from early 1990s still present the backbone of political-geographic features. Hence, an urge appeared for a complex study of how disintegration processes affected the ethno-demographic characteristics of Republic of Srpska. Having analyzed the real facts, the intention was to outline the complexity of disintegration processes in SFRY and the current consequences they caused within Republic of Srpska geospace.

Geopolitical characteristics and disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia

Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), internationally known as Yugoslavia, was declared at the 2nd AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) session in Jajce (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on November 29, 1943 and a socialist federation was formed in 1945 comprising six republics. According to 1974 Constitution, the subjects of the federation were 6 republics and 2 autonomous provinces. “The federal structure was based upon the historical specificities of different nationalities and religious affiliations” (Grčić, 2000, p. 399).

It was a centralized, socialist country relying on the power of Yugoslavian communist party and the political concept of “brotherhood and unity”. Being a socialist state, it was internationally treated as a “Moscow’s extended arm”.

The ethnic and national diversity of the population was undoubtedly the most prominent feature of Yugoslavia. It was precisely the multinational population structure and special historical-geographic background that caused the federal organization. Yugoslavia was a multinational state and so were its republics and provinces.

It largely covered north-west and middle Balkan Peninsula and partly intruded Central Europe north from the Sava and Danube rivers. It was both a Balkan and Central European country. The surface was 255.804 km² and it was 8th largest country in Europe.

If we exclude Norway, Sweden, and Finland that covered large territories of poorly populated subarctic regions, the only larger countries were France, Spain, Italy, and Poland (Rogić, 1982, p. 9.). The state land borderline was 2,969 km long and if we add 2,092 km of seashore borderline and 4,024 km of maritime border of all its islands, the total state borderline was 9,085 km.

The country was situated at the centuries old international crossroad between Europe and Asia. The shortest road between Europe and Asia led down the valleys of the Sava, Danube, Morava, and Vardar rivers. This is why it was always the intersection of interests of largest world powers.

It was the most complex state in Europe and the religious line of demarcation, which was a direct consequence of its geographic position. This area had always been a border between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and Christianity and Islam (Radovanović, 1989, p. 16). It represented a historical-geographic, ethnic, religious, and social-geographic mosaic, which might have brought prosperity if the political-territorial unit was “stable” or it may have caused clashes and deterioration if the political-geographic processes were destabilizing as in late 1980s. There were four different cultural-civilization circles that left their historical heritage – Byzantine, Mediterranean, Central European, and Islamic, which left deep marks in the social and political lives of South Slavs.

The geospace had extremely complex and specific political-geographic, military-political, and geostrategic positions. “By 1948 (the Inform Bureau conflict) it was defined by three features: 1) location behind the “steel curtain”, 2) the growing relevance of Rim land maritime position for maritime and continental forces, and 3) position within the zone of interest division between the West and East (“Yalta zone”)” (Pavić, 1989, p. 19.). It had local, sub regional and regional features of a geographic position. Due to its contact position (Balkan, Danube, and Mediterranean), Yugoslavia interrupted the continuity of geopolitical interests of military blocks. At the time of bipolar world division, it was a part of the geopolitical division of the Balkan Peninsula according to 2+2+2 formula.

The position within the famous Rim land zone affected its geopolitical relevance worldwide. It was one of the countries within the so-called “grey zone”, which the great forces treated in a twofold manner – either supporting one’s independence from the opposing side or trying to allure one within their own

sphere of dominance. One such relation constellation had preserved until middle 1980s, which was the time when the “grey zone” started losing its earlier geopolitical relevance and the cold war end emerged. “Namely, it had been a bridge between the East and West for decades. Once the powerful East failed, the need for SFRY no longer existed.” (Stojanović, 1994, p. 55).

Yugoslavia disintegration commenced as soon as European Community started to clearly formulate principles of common external and safety affairs. Simultaneously, the disintegration of socialist block and USSR took place in East Europe. As long as it existed, Yugoslavia was exposed to different attacks from secessionist and counter-revolutionary forces from both country and abroad.

Causes of disintegration may be divided into three groups as follows: a) causes within the constitutional elements in the state, b) causes due to Constitution organization, and c) causes of the international character (Zekanović, 2007, p. 88).

Causes due to Constitutional elements in the state were based upon the fact that the people and government organization no longer saw a joint future of the federal state. The administrative borderline between the republics was neither historical nor ethnic. Hence, there was a creation of centers of power in country’s periphery. Instead of the national and social cohesion based upon the socialist ideology, the prerequisite was set for the politics of national division and separatism.

Causes due to Constitution organization were many but they essentially based upon the 1974 Constitution. “Federal Constitution limited the rights (and functions) of the federation and passed all the crucial state matters (jurisdictions) down to republics and provinces, which were constitutive elements of the federation” (Kuzmanović, 1999, p. 321). Borders of the republics, created by the Constitution, triggered the process of national territorialization and progressive nationalism.

Causes of the international character referred to the impact of global political-geographic processes and changes on the political stability of Yugoslavia in early 1990s. Having been a “neutral” state, it served as a bridge between the East and West. The Cold war ended in USSR breakup and Warsaw Pact, which further led towards the shifts in the European political map. Practically, Yugoslavia lost the “reason for existence” from the international affairs point of view.

If we take a look at Heart land – Rim land concept, it was the Rim land zone that spatially transformed in early 1990s. USA and NATO took advantage of the USSR weakness to improve their geostrategic position in East Europe by incorporating former CMEA and Warsaw Pact countries on their way eastwards (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Check Republic, Slovakia, Poland, etc.). Thus, Yugoslavia ended in a less relevant Rim land part, the geopolitical relevance of which was minimized. We are witnesses to the political crisis and political-geographical processes in Ukraine, which only confirm the idea that the Rim land inner belt has moved northeastward. It was exactly within SFRY geospace that Samuel Huntington’s thesis on global ethnic clashes, i.e. clashes of civilizations, was confirmed and affirmed.

Still, the external factor was replaced by the group of inner factors in late 1980s. It was back then that the well-known national differences escalated via the national conflicts. In mid-1989, the crisis within the society reached its peak. As the 40-year-old leading party (Communist Union of Yugoslavia) collapsed and the inter-republic relations tapered, it was in 1990 that the conditions were created to form a multiparty system comprising ethnically based political parties. The destructive role of political factors grew via the escalation of nationalism and decentralization, and the national parties' reputation rose. A large number of the newly-formed parties had a separatist, nationalist, and anti-Yugoslav program. The traditional lines of demarcation came into the limelight – confessional and cultural (located down the East-West transversal) and social-economic down the Una, Sava, and Danube rivers, i.e. North-South division.

The May 1990 elections in Slovenia were won by oppositional parties (DEMOS), the programs of which were based upon an anti-communist concept and independence aspirations. Quickly afterwards, on June 2 1990, Slovenian Assembly adopted the "Independence Declaration" and declared the supremacy of the republic law over the federal one. Six months later, 86% of votes on the referendum verified and confirmed the secession longings.

The timeline was identical in Republic of Croatia. On December 28, 1990, Croatian Parliament adopted a Constitution to declare Republic of Croatia a country of Croats. Half a year later, the 94% voters on the referendum (May 19, 1991) voted for Croatian independence. Hence, Slovenia and Croatia became sovereign and independent countries on October 8, 1991. The secession of these two Yugoslav federal units was an introduction into the tragic war conflict within SFR Yugoslavia geospace.

In January 1991, Macedonia adopted Declaration on independence, which was supported by around 90% voters on September 8, 1991 referendum.

Of all the Yugoslav federal units, it was Serbia that took the longest to take a distance from socialism and adopt a multiparty system. It was unprepared for numerous political changes in its political-geographical vicinity. On September 28, 1990, Serbian Assembly adopted a Constitution and officially became independent but still putting its rights in line with the federal Constitution. Republic of Montenegro held a similar position so the two countries joined to form a new federal state named Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In October 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina Assembly adopted the Resolution on Sovereignty (October 15, 1991). From that point, the state disintegrated into three parts upon the national basis.

It became obvious that the war could not be stopped within the Yugoslavia geospace. Clashes in Slovenia are believed to be the beginning of the conflict as the so-called Slovenian Territorial Guard acted upon the barracks of Yugoslav National Army (YNA) and took control over the border crossings to Austria, Hungary, and Italy. Yugoslav Presidency, which was the highest authority in the country, attempted to cease the clashes so they decided to draw YNA from Slovenia on July 19, 1991. There are still many discussions on the incapability to manage YNA and react timely. A distinguished Yugoslavian military analyst once said:

“YNA could not stay under the glass bell while the system and moral collapsed all over the country, and it was naive to expect it to be immune to the social impact” (Lazanski, 1999, p. 152). Once the Yugoslav National Army withdrew from Slovenia, there were intensive attacks on barracks in Croatia. The conflict soon escalated all over Croatian territory and the focal point was in Slavonia (the town of Vukovar) in autumn 1991.

There had been numerous unsuccessful attempts to stop or control the war via truces and peace negotiations. In spring 1992, the war spread to Bosnia and Herzegovina where it escalated and gained the features of an ethnic-religious and civil war.

Civil and ethnic-religious war in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In order to understand the genesis of Bosnian conflict, we must look back on the historical-geographical perspective of this geospace. “Bosnia and Herzegovina is a part of Balkan geospace with a most complex ethno-demographic and religious structure. This geospace represented the merging point between religious-civilization and cultural impacts of the West and East, which in turn determined the political-geographical processes, geopolitical characteristics, and ethnic composition of the population” (Zekanović, 2012, p. 25–25).

The formation of the ethnic and religious mosaic was most affected by four historic events. The first was the adoption of Christianity by the Slavs in the Balkan by the end of 9th century. The second was the 1054 East-West Schism. The third event was the emergence of the Ottoman Empire and a new religion (Islam) in the Balkan in early 14th century. Finally, the fourth one was the “Eastern Question”, i.e. the retreat of the Ottoman Empire from Southeast Europe in late 19th century and the formation of new states, which left a deep political-geographical

Table 1. The summary of BiH population according to religious affiliation from 1879 to 1910

Year of census	Total population	Orthodox population		Moslem population		Catholic population		Other population	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1879	1,158,440	496,761	42.88	448,613	38.73	209,391	18.08	3,675	0.31
1885	1,336,091	571,250	42.76	492,710	38.88	265,788	19.89	6,343	0.47
1895	1,568,092	673,246	42.93	548,632	34.99	334,142	21.31	12,072	0.77
1910	1,898,044	825,418	43.49	612,137	32.25	434,061	22.87	26,428	1.39

Source: Štatistika mjesta i pučanstva Bosne i Hercegovine, C i Kr. Vladina tiskarna, Sarajevo, 1880. pp. 4, Štatistika mjesta i žiteljstva Bosne i Hercegovine po popisu naroda od 1. maja 1885, Zemaljska štamparija, Sarajevo, 1886. pp. 363, Glavni rezultati popisa žiteljstva u Bosni i Hercegovini od 22. aprila 1895, Zemaljska štamparija, Sarajevo, 1896. pp. LVII–LIX, Slavenko Terzić, Projekt “austrougarskog Balkana” u Bosni i Hercegovini (O ideološkim osnovama naučnih istraživanja i naučne propagande), Zbornik radova: Bosna i Hercegovina od srednjeg veka do novijeg vremena, Istorijski institut SANU, Beograd, 1995. pp. 410.

Table 2. National structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina population from 1948 to 1991

Year of census	Total 100%	The Serbs	%	The Croats	%	The Moslems	%	Others	%
1948	2,565,277	1,136,116	44.3	614,123	23.9	788,403	30.7	26,635	1.1
1953	2,847,790	1,264,372	44.4	654,229	23.0	891,800 (591,800)*	31.3 25.6	37,389 (337,389)	1.3 7.0
1961	3,277,948	1,406,057	42.9	711,665	21.7	842,248	25.7	317,975	9.7
1971	3,746,111	1,393,148	37.2	772,491	20.6	1,482,430	39.6	98,042	2.6
1981	4,124,256	1,320,738	32.0	758,140	18.4	1,630,033	39.5	415,345	10.1
1991	4,377,033	1,366,104	31.2	760,852	17.4	1,902,956	43.5	347,121	7.9

(Source: Milena Spasovski, Dragica Živković, Milimir Stepić, *Etnički sastav stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine*, Geografski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 1992. pp. 46–47, www.fzs.ba – Federalni zavod za statistiku).

* In 1953 census results, the Moslems were referred to as “Yugoslavs neuter”.

impact on the religious-civilization processes in both Balkan Peninsula and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The ethnical diversity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the result of the aforementioned events and the ethnical structure of the population may be tracked with certainty from the end of 19th century. In 1878, the 40-year rule of Austro-Hungary started and it was in 1879 that the Austro-Hungarian authorities ran the first of four total population censuses.

A similar population national structure was in 1921 and 1931 censuses.

The genocide and the total victim number, especially on the Serbian side in WW II, caused the decrease of demographic potential. Furthermore, a small number of refugees returned to their devastated homes, which also negatively affected the demographic development along with the great war losses.

During the 1945–1991 post-war periods, there had been six population censuses in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1991).

Based upon the 1948 census, the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was 2,565,277, of which the Serbs were 1,136,116, the Moslems were 788,403, and the Croats were 614,123.

Based upon the national affiliation data, it was evident that the Serbs were the majority with 44.3% of total population. According to the last census, there was 1,366,104 Serbs, i.e. 31.2% of total population. In 1971, the Moslems were the majority with 1,482,430 people, i.e. 39.6% and kept the leading position up to 1991 census when there were 43.5% Moslems out of total population. The Croats were the third largest ethnic group and the figures kept decreasing from 23.9% in 1948 down to 17.3% in 1991 (Zekanović, 2012, p. 33–34).

According to the last population census, none of the three largest ethnic groups in BiH ever had the absolute majority, so we could not speak of either ethnic homogeneity of the state or the nation-state concept, which was the case with other Yugoslav republics. Bosnia and Herzegovina had the most complex ethno-demographic structure in the Balkan.

Speaking of modern political-geographical processes, the religious-civilization determinants of the geospace were twofold. In addition, the ethnic homogeneity and consolidation were integrative and the concept of multi-ethnicity was disintegrative. The religious factor was crucial for the formation of national identities and for the attempt to define national geopolitical interests. Religious and cultural-civilization mixtures and permeation (particularly at one such merging point as Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace) often caused large conflicts including the one in 1990s.

Considering the course of events of disintegration processes within Yugoslavia geospace, the war could not have missed BiH. Hence, it was in 1991, i.e. 1992 that Yugoslavia already disintegrated and five new states were formed within its geospace: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

It was impossible for Bosnia and Herzegovina to easily form as a sovereign state due to poor harmonization of interests of its constitutive peoples. It was referred to as “Yugoslavia minor” because it had all the ethnic specificities as Yugoslavia. The Serbs, Croats, and Moslems all had the same rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which meant that no individual nation was the bearer of the republic sovereignty as in other republics. It was the only republic of former Yugoslavia without a majority sovereign people.

The three constitutive peoples, wrong politics, religious differences, different national identities, history, and the overwhelming economic crisis all brought on the turbulent political-geographical processes within this geospace for which Jovan Cvijic, the best-known Serbian geographer, claimed would be the “key” for the Serbian-Croatian relations and the Yugoslav issue back in early 20 century.

The opposed interests of the Serbs, Croats, and Moslems/Bosniaks had a spatial dimension, i.e. all the three parties believed the Bosnia and Herzegovina territory to be their own and had different interpretations of the “new” political-territorial unity. Essentially, the historical, political-geographical, and geopolitical question emerged: “Who does Bosnia and Herzegovina belong to?”. The crisis in BiH brought to surface all the historical-political and political-geographical elements of balkanization conditioned by the local, regional, and global factors.

Apart from the tense international relations and a potential conflict which might have been predicted, Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament decided to break up from Yugoslavia like Slovenia and Croatia. To be more precise, On October 14, 1991, the Parliament adopted the Resolution on BiH Sovereignty, and the Declaration on Independence was adopted in December 1991. These events turned out to be a critical moment for further crisis escalation because the constitutional system of BiH was based upon the agreement of all three peoples and not upon the majority system. This was why none of the decisions should have been legally valid without the consent of all three peoples.

The majority of Serbian Parliament members (around 32%) boycotted the vote and left the Assembly. Quickly afterwards, a Serbian plebiscite in BiH was organized (November 9 and 10) in order to stay part of Yugoslavia and in compliance with January 9, 1992 results they declared their own republic (Serbian Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Srpska).

In an attempt to prevent the civil war, European Community formed an Arbitration Committee headed by Robert Badinter, a French solicitor and diplomat, and suggested a BiH referendum on independence. The referendum took place on February 29, 1992 and around 63% voters supported the independence, which was accepted by the international community as a ground basis for a new state formation. Another Serbian referendum in BiH came as a response to the previous one and the Serbian people declared their own independence and a Serbian state in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Once it became clear that a conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was inevitable and that its consequences would be vast, the international community tried to prevent it by forming different bodies and expert groups. The first and most concrete one was offered by the expert group headed by Jose Cutileiro, a Portuguese diplomat. The Declaration on Principles of Constitutional arrangement of BiH known as "Cutileiro plan" was accepted by all sides in Sarajevo on March 17, 1992. A "Lisbon Agreement" was designed on the Declaration basis (August, 20, 1992), which would accept a con-federal structure and the equality of the three constitutive peoples. The Moslem side rejected the plan and it was not realized. Cutileiro plan was the last peaceful attempt before the tragic events escalated and it was the milestone of peace negotiations, which were afterwards conducted under far more delicate conditions.

Ever since April 6, 1992, there had been a civil and ethnic-religious war within Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace based upon the lines of demarcation among the Serbs, Croats, and Moslems.

After the failure of Lisbon negotiations, United Nations took the leader part in crisis solution. The 1993 London conference attempted to solve the crisis via co-ordination of EU and UN. This attempt was known as Vance-Owen plan and came during the conflict peak (first half of 1993). It was unacceptable for the Serbs.

Half a year later, a modified version of this plan was prepared, known as Owen-Stoltenberg plan, and it referred to BiH division into three provinces. The plan was now unacceptable for the Moslems and was rejected in January 1994.

As different international diplomats offered various peaceful solutions, the war intensified. Unsatisfied with their status in BiH, the Croats entered the war against the Moslems whereas the Moslems fought against each other in western parts of the country. It was those clashes that helped the international community understand what type of war it was. Once it became obvious that a somewhat controlled war may turn into an uncontrolled one ("everyone fighting against everyone else"), the Croats and Moslems were offered a concept of a joint federal state. The agreement was signed in Washington on March 18, 1994 (Washington Agreement) resulting from the American initiative and diplomacy. It included the abolition of the Croatian political-territorial unit of Herceg Bosnia and gave a possibility to make a con-federal union with Republic of Croatia. This agreement ended the conflict between the Croats and Moslems (after the ratification, the Moslems changed name into the Bosniaks) and a military union was formed. It was a milestone of Bosnia and Herzegovina crisis because all the subsequent military actions and political initiatives were either direct or indirect results of the Agreement.

Table 3. Natural circulation of Republic of Srpska population 1996–2011

Year	Estimation of population number			Born				Deceased			
	total	males*	females*	live born				total	males	fe- males	new- borns
				total	males	fe- males	still- born				
1996	1,391,593	–	–	12,263	6,368	5,895	61	10,931	6,056	4,875	179
1997	1,409,835	–	–	13,757	7,176	6,581	73	11,755	6,495	5,260	156
1998	1,428,798	679,975	749,003	13,527	7,081	6,446	56	12,469	6,615	5,854	112
1999	1,448,537	689,186	759,351	14,500	7,394	7,106	70	12,529	6,681	5,848	119
2000	1,469,182	714,793	754,389	14,191	7,319	6,872	52	13,370	7,069	6,301	103
2001	1,490,993	725,368	765,625	13,699	7,053	6,646	77	13,434	7,290	6,144	73
2002	1,455,446	708,449	746,997	12,336	6,365	5,971	40	12,980	6,791	6,489	89
2003	1,463,465	712,335	751,130	12,066	6,247	5,819	41	13,498	7,121	6,377	66
2004	1,471,529	716,260	755,269	11,917	6,188	5,729	35	13,475	6,987	6,488	63
2005	1,479,634	720,205	759,429	11,638	5,974	5,664	40	13,802	7,239	6,563	37
2006	1,443,709	702,718	740,991	10,524	5,351	5,173	27	13,232	6,904	6,328	50
2007	1,439,673	700,754	738,919	10,110	5,203	4,907	39	14,146	7,302	6,844	38
2008	1,437,477	699,685	737,792	10,198	5,262	4,936	34	13,501	7,058	6,443	40
2009	1,435,179	698,567	736,612	10,603	5,577	5,026	32	13,755	7,099	6,676	51
2010	1,433,038	697,524	735,514	10,147	5,184	4,963	41	13,517	6,935	6,582	44
2011	1,429,668	695,884	733,784	9,561	5,008	4,553	29	13,658	7,001	6,657	43
2102	1,429,290	695,700	733,590	9,978	5,089	4,889	38	13,796	7,064	6,732	37
2013	1,425,549	693,879	731,670	9,510	4,907	4,603	37	13,978	7,237	6,741	33

Source: Demografska statistika 4, 10, 14, 15, 16 i 17 Republički zavod za statistiku, Banja Luka.

A new peace project named Contact Group plan was offered as a result of the latest geopolitical constellation. The plan comprised two fundamental documents, i.e. “Elements of Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina” a map on demarcation line between BiH Federation and Republic of Srpska. The map offered a compromise between Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg maps. Still, the plan was not acceptable for the Serbian side so Croatian army prepared to attack Republic of Srpska according to Washington Agreement in early 1995. A joint Croatian and Bosniak military offence started in summer 1995. The Republic of Srpska territory was narrowed down to less than 49% and the Serbian side was compelled to accept the Plan. If different, they would face a total defeat.

Therefore, there had been multiple solutions offered to stop the hostility since the beginning of the conflict. It was only in September 1995 that the principle harmonization of different stands was accomplished. By this we refer to Geneva and New York conferences during which the Basic Principles for the Peace Implementation were arranged. On those grounds, the final peace negotiations were conducted at the Peterson Air Force Base (USA). The negotiations ended on November 21, 1995 as the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina was ratified, i.e. “they harmonized the General Framework Peace Agreement in Bosnia

and Herzegovina, which was definitely adopted and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995” (Popović-Lukić, 1999, p. 11).

Provisions of the Peace Agreement made Bosnia and Herzegovina a state of two entities – BiH Federation and Republic of Srpska. The entities were given jurisdictions of a individual political-territorial subjects. It was difficult to constitute a complex state such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and defines its political-territorial units taking into account the aforementioned ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of this space. Hence, it is an undefined form of state system, which makes it unique worldwide. The state system is based upon 1+2+3 formula, i.e. one state, two entities, and three constitutive peoples and religions.

Political-geographical aspects of modern ethno-demographic features of Republic of Srpska

Republic of Srpska is an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina the surface of which covers around 24,641 km², i.e. 48% of Bosnia and Herzegovina territory. From the geographical position point of view, it belongs to continental political-territorial communities. Mathematically-geographically, Republic of Srpska covers north and east Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace, positioned between 42°33’19” and 45°16’34” latitude and 16°11’06” and 19°37’44” longitude.

The borderline is determined by the internationally recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina borders with former Yugoslav republics of Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro and the inter-entity borderline with another entity of BiH Federation. Total borderline is around 2,177 km long, of which around 1,081 km is the inter-entity borderline. Based upon the unofficial 2013 population census, there are 1,326,991 people living in Republic of Srpska. Due to its religious characteristics, it is practically the Orthodox entity in BiH.

Disintegration processes have always had the key impact on demographic processes. The reproductive population contingent in Republic of Srpska has decreased due to consequences of disintegration processes, conflict, refugees, and post-war traumas. The result is the continuous negative natural circulation of the population. Those negative demographic circulations affect the misbalance of the demographic population structure, which directly impinges on the political-geographical characteristics of Republic of Srpska. Thus, it is crucial to take into account the future development of population, demographic movements, and population policies.

In addition, the population in Republic of Srpska is suffering turbulent demographic transitions due to war conflict and disintegration processes within the geospace of Bosnia and Herzegovina and SFR Yugoslavia, and the global political-geographical processes in Europe in late 20th and early 21st centuries.

The number of newborns for 1996–2013 periods witnesses that Republic of Srpska is an area of low birth rates. The biological regeneration of populations is below the level of reproduction. The estimations of population number indicate that Republic of Srpska geospace marked the absolute increase of 33.956 people. Hence, the total demographic growth is positive but full of specificities as the

birth rates have been negative since 2002. Ever since 2001, the Republic of Srpska population has been decreasing and the absolute decrease is 65,444 people.

The reasons for negative demographic circulation should be regarded with reference to disintegration processes and the war conflict, which reduced the reproductive population contingent.

According to estimations, the total war loss in Bosnia and Herzegovina ranged from 97,207 to 104,732 people (Pašalić, 2011, p. 338). The Ministry of Labor, War Veterans, and Disabled Persons of Republic of Srpska documented 20,391 dead soldiers, which is 1.46% of total Republic of Srpska population according to Republic Bureau of Statistics 1996 data. The total number of war veterans singled out in 10 categories is 37,627 (Zekanović, 2011a, p. 144).

Due to 1991–1995 war, Republic of Srpska geospace witnessed refugees that are a specific form of violent migrations.

“The official UNHCR data show that around 2,500,000 people were dislocated within Bosnia and Herzegovina geospace, which is around 55% of pre-war population. In September 1996, UNHCR published the official estimations that there were around 1,050,000 BiH refugees in around 100 countries worldwide” (Marinković, 2005, p. 73). According to 1996 population data, one-third of Republic of Srpska population were dislocated, i.e. one-fifth of population according to 2001 data. In spring 1996, there was a “Census of refugees and other people suffering war effects” performed together with the United Nation Refugee High Commission. In relation to Republic of Srpska results, there were 419,879 refugees and dislocated citizens.

The forced migrations caused a high spectrum of social-economic and political consequences within the Republic of Srpska geospace and its political-geographical vicinity. The refugee process altered the natural population distribution and the ethnical composition of the geospace. Furthermore, it caused large demographic, social-economic, psychological, cultural-historical, and political consequences.

The spatial consequences refer to shifts in natural and social life conditions of the refugees. The problem of rural population is a difficult adaptation to urban life style. Demographic consequences refer to demographical structure misbalance (age, sex, education, financial). Social-economic effects are based upon the social position of the refugees. From this point of view, the forced migrations caused unemployment. Psychological consequences refer to problems originating from changes in life style and conditions. Cultural-historical consequences are manifested in the difficult and long-term assimilation of the refugee population. From the political-geographical point of view, refugees affected the spatial ethno-demographic structure, which eventually led towards the ethnical consolidation and population homogeneity.

There are also geo-demographical features of the bordering areas resulting from the disintegration processes in Republic of Srpska.

As a political-territorial unit, Republic of Srpska is being exposed to complex political-geographical processes, characterized by particular relations to bordering areas. The bordering areas have poor population density due to post-war

distrust among ethnical communities and poor economic development and unemployment. The young keep migrating to urban centers of Republic of Srpska and abroad, which negatively affects the political-geographical and demographical characteristics of the area.

Conclusion

Population, which is the key resource and element of the social-economic development, forms a set of ethno-demographic characteristics which play an important role in political-geographical evaluation of Republic of Srpska geospace. It was the ethno-demographic foundation that primarily determined the origin, survival, and political-geographical future of Republic of Srpska.

SFR Yugoslavia disintegration and the ethnic-religious conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended 24 and 19 years ago respectively.

Demographic consequences of SFR Yugoslavia disintegration and BiH conflict are immense. Despite the fact it took place many years ago, demographically Republic of Srpska still suffers from the effects of these political-geographical processes.

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Factors affecting disintegration and integration processes in the Balkans after the Cold War

Abstract: The article aims to identify the long-term processes, responsible for shaping the inter-Balkan relations from early 1990's until today, with the analysis of the relevant academic literature as the basic research method. The description of the processes in question takes into consideration the multifaceted characteristics of the region as well as the volume of foreign influence on the local socio-political and economic relations. There is the considerable impact of the disintegrative factors on the state structures and the international relations. On the other hand, the mid 90's saw the emergence of various initiatives, aimed at the consolidation of the inter-Balkan system of references. In spite of this, the integrative factors remain relatively weak. Their upkeep and development is hampered by the high level of fragmentation and the strongly polarized approach to political controversies, characteristic of the discussed area.

Key words: integration, disintegration, Balkans, Western Balkans, NATO, European Union.

One of the characteristic traits of the current relations within the Balkan area is the accumulation of disintegrative and conflict-inducing factors¹, which tend to noticeably overwhelm the elements, which would work to harmonize and consolidate the regional relations. The said situation is directly connected to a number of processes, rooted in turn in the political, historical and socio-economic

¹ The terms Balkan area or the Balkans, described in the present article refer to territories of the following states: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H), Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece (mainland), Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and European part of Turkey (which is called Eastern Thrace). The term Republic of Macedonia is used to describe the country, which in 1996 has adopted the official name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

characteristics of the region. Both internal and foreign affairs of all the Balkan countries have also been severely affected by the international destabilization of the early 1990's, resulting from the disintegration of the socialist Yugoslav federation. The relations within the so-called post-Yugoslav zone suffered the gravest regression, becoming a war-zone for ruthless territorial and ethnic conflicts over the 90's (Mihajić, 2001, 328–329)². Litigations resulting from contrary national and geopolitical interests, and often dating well into the past, have dominated the political scene. Only in the late 90's the initiatives aiming at harmonizing the ways of approach and development of multilateral cooperation in various areas of economic and socio-political life have gradually started to influence the atmosphere of official international relations. The normalization process in the post-Yugoslav republics and Albania received the most attention. *Western Balkans* emerged as the official term for this area in the international nomenclature, beginning from the European Union's (EU) institutions. In the confines of the academic discourse this term is identified with either a region of separate geopolitical characteristics or a sub-region of the Balkans, depending on the context (Petrović, 2009, 28–30)³.

The initiatives dealing with integration processes in the Western Balkans are unique in character due to the fact that they had been imposed on the local countries by foreign powers. Their goal was to invent solutions as well as political and economic references for both the internal and international level, in order to prevent the armed conflicts from erupting anew and to integrate state structures, which were being disrupted by a number of particularisms. The above aspect is where the situation in eastern Balkans differed, since this regions had not suffered from warfare and the disintegration of state bonds. It had, however, been under the power of communist regimes until the late 1980's. The countries in this region (Bulgaria and Romania) had to face a complicated transformation process from the socialist to the capitalist system. Undermining the former foundations of the socio-political and economic life resulted in the disintegrative factors manifesting themselves mainly within every country's own internal context. It is worth notice though, that as early as in the mid 90's the new states of the eastern Balkans attempted to establish multilateral political and economic cooperation with the nearby countries, which had been situated on the opposite side of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War period (Greece, Turkey). The inclusion of post-

² The term of post-Yugoslav zone describes the five republics, which comprised the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the 1945–1991 period, and all of which have become independent states at the beginning of 1990's. (B&H, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia). Serbia and Montenegro have functioned as a single entity until 2006 (within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the later State of Serbia & Montenegro). The terms such as post-Yugoslav zone (or area), widely used in the text, refer to the territory of the former socialist Yugoslavia.

³ In accordance with the terminology adopted by the EU, the Western Balkans consist of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia&Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia. The South-East Europe on the other hand (referred to as The Balkans in a number of official documents) is comprised of all the countries of the Western Balkans as well as Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey.

Yugoslav republics into this process was made possible later in the decade, after containing the armed conflicts (Hinkova, 2002, 14).

The analysis of the desintegration factors within the Balkan relations should start from a general characteristics of the specific geography of the region. The Balkan peninsula, the fourth of the great European peninsulas (along with Iberian, Apennine and the Scandinavian) is not particularly separated from the mainland, up to the point where any agreed-on boundaries, running along rivers or country borders, are prone to negation (Mahunka, 2013, 5)⁴. What is more, hardly any geographical feature can be indicated as dominant in the peninsula's area. Doubtlessly, the geographical conditions work to disintegrate this region, dividing it into separate units. In fact the only trail to connect the Danube river valleys in the northern part of the peninsula to the Aegean coast would be delineated using the Morava and Vardar river valleys. This "depression", stretched between Beograd and Thessaloniki, creates a natural north-to-south corridor, sufficient to create opportunities for the development of stronger regional bonds (Djordjevic', 2004, 60–62). What stands as a problem though, is the fact that this area is hardly connected to the other parts of the peninsula, with very scarce natural passages. To the west we find the Kosovo plateau to the east on the other hand the parallel-lying mountain ranges of the Balkan mountains and Rhodope, difficult-to-access. The fragmentation of the Peninsula's area is further worsened by the Dinaric Alps, reaching as high as 3000 metres above the sea level. Their slopes stretch to the Adriatic in such a way that even today there are only very few places (e.g. the Neretva river valley), where reaching the inland from the Dalmatian coast is at all possible. This does not differ much in the southern part of the peninsula. The mountain ranges of Epirus and Olympus separate the Greek lands from the rest of the Balkan area. The highly varied topography of the Balkans is an important fact to consider when analysing the region's heterogeneous historical and cultural developments. In the past it had been subject to various foreign influences which shaped the characteristics of every particular area. What is more the varied geographical conditions enabled the preservation and strengthening of specific local bonds. These specifics did not transgress the borders created by local topography. On the other hand some of them (as Vojvodina, Slavonia, Dalmatia) are often much akin to the distinctive features of cultures identified with neighbouring regions: Mediterranean or Central European (Wituch, 1998, 139). Doubtlessly, the inter-Balkan relations have been severely hampered though, leading to strong particularity of the local interests.

The cultural variety of the region is one of the inhibitors in the development of integration processes. Century-long political processes resulted in the civilisation and country borders within the Balkan region running along separate lines, being subject to different criteria. Such divisions tend to be shaped by foreign

⁴ In order to determine the northern border, a hypothetical line, running between the Danube delta with the Croatian harbour of Rijeka is usually used, although some publications prefer to run the said line from Odessa in the east to Trieste in the west. It is common practice to run the line along the Danube, upstream from its delta to Belgrade, and further to the west along the Sava and Kupa rivers, to the current Slovenian-Croatian border and then further towards Rijeka.

influences, which affected the region in question during any particular period of its history. One of the divisions which are frequently brought to attention is the Eastern-Western Roman Empire border, dating back to the ancient times (ca. 4th century A.D.). Some of the scholars regard it as a basis for the demarcation line between the Catholic and the Greek Orthodox world, established during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. 14th century in turn has seen Islam being introduced to the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire, and winning groups of local followers. Another important line runs between the Slavic and non-Slavic inhabitants. This division had been particularly frequently referred to during the 19th and 20th centuries by the Great Powers, interfering with the regions interests – including Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Germany (Vezenkov, 2006, 60–69; Bottlik, 2009, 259–264; Ristić, 2009, 108–110).

The Balkan region is inhabited by various nations and ethnic groups of different ethnogenesis, using their respective languages and varying alphabets. The criterion of religion should also not be underestimated. Catholicism, the Greek Orthodox Church and Islam lay at the foundations of many a nation's identity – an identity morphed over the course of the 19th and 20th century; a relatively short period in comparison to other parts of Europe. The region's multiculturalism is so prominent, and so interweaved into the ideologies of particular nations, that a number of academics question the existence of any consistent traits the Balkans would share as a whole. What they claim is that the lack, past and current, of complementary cultures and traditions, which could rally the inhabitants around any universal, region-wide attributes. Instead there exists a system of references, preserving the region in a state of permanent disintegration. Paradoxically thought, the Balkans are often perceived as quite homogeneous both culturally and socio-politically. Such approach is visible not only in popular, stereotype-based associations, but also in the academic discourse (Goldsworthy, 2002, 26–28; Todorova, 2004, 176–183).

The political instability of the region, which translates directly into a high degree of fluidity of country borders, is frequently mentioned in academic work concerning the past and contemporary Balkans. For many researches it is the integral trait of the regional system of references. This situation results from the numerous ethnic controversies and territorial disputes, including the varied independence-oriented, secessionist or irredentist activities, which are a vivid display of the strong revisionist tendencies and influence the temporary political and territorial solutions (Olchowski, Pawłowski, 2009, 80). It is difficult to avoid the impression that the activities which work to weaken the inter-regional references are a natural element of the Balkan political scene throughout the whole of the 20th century. On the other hand the numerous integration-oriented activities, introduced in the Balkans during the same period, are often regarded as arbitrary, anti-democratic in character, dictated by the superpowers or particular interests of the individual participants of the inter-regional relations. Certain scholars attempt to describe the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation in the 1980's and 90's within this framework. Their claim is that the concept of Yugoslavia, supposed to integrate the Slavic peoples of the Balkans along egalitarian principles,

had been rejected in the context of the gradual democratisation of the political system, as unfitting for the interests of the particular nations. The political circles of the nascent republics have even regarded this concept as a threat to the very survival of national communities in the context of the fall of the communist ideology and the escalating ethnic rivalry within the Federation's structures (Ramet, 2002, 56–57; Zacharias, 2004, 457).

The disintegration of the system of references in the Balkans, as the main determinant of the situation in the region in 1990's, has developed on two important levels, one of them concerning the international context, the other the organisation of the particular countries. The former deals with the then fluctuations in the international arena – worldwide, European and regional. The latter concentrates on the processes of state-formation (in the post-Yugoslav zone) or system-transformation (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania) of the countries, which have formerly existed as a part of the socialist system. The democratisation and liberalisation of the political systems have exposed the weakness of the state institutions. In many cases they were not able to counter a number of pathologies, rooted in the socio-political and life, undermining the country as a whole and posing a threat to the national interest (Wojnica, 2013, 273–274).

It is without doubt that the increase in disintegrative tendencies in the Balkans and the end of the bipolar world division era are co-related. The instability, characteristic of the international situation in the post-communist Europe, ignited numerous decentralist tendencies, which had been previously tempered by the logic of Cold War rivalries. It was then that Russia withdrew its influence from the south-eastern Europe, having opted instead to concentrate on integrating the so-called post-Soviet zone. On the other hand the United States were increasingly interested in the Balkan region, just as certain Western Europe countries, including Germany, which, reunited, proceeded to outline their new priorities in foreign affairs (Deckers, 2002, 162–163; Ullman, 1997, 409–415).

A number of the regional disintegration processes, working within the region's countries, can be identified as characteristic for the whole post-communist system in Central and Eastern Europe. These manifested themselves in the general deficiency of the state system, the lack of foundation for the market economy, low level of competitiveness of the local economies and the increasing role of crime groups in socio-political practice of each state. In certain countries these circumstances were aggravated further by the resistance against the reforms and the liberal economic policies within the general public and the tensions in the ethnic background (Butigan, 2006, 335; Balfour, Stratulat, 2011, 13, 27–29). In this respect the situation of three areas is most specific: in Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H), Macedonia and Kosovo. The first and second examples are where the consolidation process is supported by the international powers, hampered though by the particular interests of the most prominent national groups, the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. These communities are hardly interested in developing ways of cooperation, that would support the interests of state, understood as a multiethnic community of citizens over the national particularisms. The international activities, aimed at the structural renewal and the integration process in

B&H meet with negative evaluation as to their effectiveness, while the existing political solutions are perceived as the outcome of the “forced compromises”, introduced by foreign powers (Stanisławski, 2009, 111). The socio-political consolidation in Macedonia poses a number of difficulties because of the contrary ambitions of the numerically dominant Macedonians and the Albanian minority, comprising ca. 20% of the population. The Albanians have received a guaranteed special status according to the framework of the Ohrid Agreement (2001), negotiated under pressure from United States and the European Union (EU) in the face of the armed conflict in Macedonia. The implementation of this agreement though, results in aggravating the discrepancies within the country, negatively affecting the process of consolidation of the state structures (Georgievski, 2006, 178, 196; Paszkiewicz, 2012, 79–80). The context of complications in the establishment of stable state structures brings to attention the specific case of Kosovo, where the representatives of the dominant Albanian population proclaimed independence on 17th January 2008, with acute opposition from the Serbian side. This situation resulted in the creation of two separate management systems for the contested zone, concerning the areas inhabited mostly by Albanians and Serbs. The final solution of the Kosovo controversies seems to be doomed to failure, not only because of the contrary interests of Albanian and Serbian ethnic groups, but also the lack of agreement among the members of the United Nations Security Council (UN SC), where Russia and China object to recognize the independence of Kosovo without preliminary consent from the Serbian state. In such a context the situation in Kosovo stands as yet another controversy without any real hope for a mutual agreement, resulting in furthering the discrepancies among the region’s countries, with their varied attitudes towards the matter in question (Balcer, 2008, 66–80).

The high influence of disintegrative factors over the internal relations in the Balkan area is frequently explained as the result of lacking democratic traditions and the impact of autocratic sentiments on the socio-political life. The academic analysis of the region’s situation draws attention to the certain delay, in comparison to countries and societies of the Western Europe, in the state-formation, social and economic processes. What is commonly mentioned in this context is the prolonged experience of Ottoman rule, which isolated the region from the state developments of Christian Europe and worked to strengthen the traditional forms of social life. The limited influence of Western-European values and solutions hampered the modernisation in the Balkans. As a result the state-formation of modern Balkan countries, as well as the transformations, have occurred slower than in other parts of the continent (Todorova, 1997, 17–19; Jezernik, 2006, 3; Čolović, 2013). When the region’s countries undertook the challenge of system transformation during the 1990’s, they were forced to introduce democracy without much reference to their own tradition, or even in opposition to their historical heritage⁵. The analysis of current state of affairs in the Balkans also reveals

⁵ The weakness of the democratic solutions refers also to the countries, which found themselves on the opposite side of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War period, such as Greece or Turkey. Both republics suffered from breaching the democratic order by the military coups.

inequality in the development of democratisation process among particular countries, especially in the post-Yugoslav zone. It was there that the anti-democratic state regime survived until the end of year 2000. Only when Slobodan Milosevic had lost his power, did it become possible to increase the tempo of the country's democratisation and modernization. On the other hand the negative influence from the former period is still visible in Serbia, resulting in slower transformation proceedings and the anxiety as to the stability of the democratic course of action (Lamont, 2010, 80–82; Uvalić, 2012, 318). In Croatia aligning the country's structure to the prerequisites of actual parliamentary democracy was made possible in early 2000, only after the death of president Franjo Tuđman and the demise of the Croatian Democratic Union in the elections (Jović, 2006, 90–91). Without doubt the stabilisation of democratic principles in certain countries is hindered by ethnic strife (e.g. in B&H, Macedonia or Montenegro) and rivalry between the political factions (Albania), as well as the general deficiency of the region. What is also brought to attention in the research into the democratisation process in the Balkan context is the high influence of practices referring to the political clientelism, which tends to develop in the state structures. With a strong foundation in the unofficial code of conduct, rooted in the local social tradition, such practices affect the country's institutions on various levels. It results in weakening of the rule of law system in particular countries. It has been addressed in reports concerning the development of democracy in the region. The frequent conclusion is that by sustaining the local "habits" the state structures, including e.g. the courts, are more prone to be influenced by the particular social or political groups of interest (Butigan, 2006, 335; Georgiev, 2009, 102–104, 106).

The Balkan countries by no means form a consistent economic system. The economic cooperation is hindered by the discrepancies of the development level among particular countries and their foreign trade structure (Altman, 2003, 129–130; Božić, 2006, 23). The countries from outside the region, e.g. Germany, Austria or Italy still remain the most important trade partners. In such a context, however, it is well worth to mention the gradual increase of trade between Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, which can be traced back to the mid 1990's. These countries have developed their cooperation thanks to being situated outside the direct conflict zone and with the benefit of EU support (Kondonis, 1998, 381). This exchange served as a basis for the attempts to create more stable structures or transport routes. These notions however, initially excluded the countries engaged in armed conflicts or international litigations. The authorities of post-Yugoslav republics, mostly kept on the margin of the said developments, did hold a grudge against their neighbours for being ghettoized and isolated from agreements concerning the region's nearest future (Simić, 1998, 33; Kondonis, 1998, 379). The question of insufficient participation of the particular countries in the pan-Balkan matters has been partially contained in the period following the cessation of hostilities in Croatia and B&H. One of the most important steps towards the improvement of inter-Balkan relations was the multilateral political declaration on pursuing the policies of "good neighborhood", stabilisation, security and cooperation in the Balkans. It was signed in Sofia in 1996 by repre-

sentatives of seven Balkan countries. On the basis of that agreement the *South-East European Cooperation Proces* (SEECP) has been established (Busek, Kühne, 2010, 28–32). On the other hand though the divisions in the region had been complicated by the international political and sanctions against Yugoslavia during the 1992–2000 period. Aggravated international alienation of the country, geographically located “in the middle” of the region, and in possession of the important communication and transport routes, was a direct result (Avramović, 1997, 85; Comras, 2011, 55–75; ICG, 2000, 1–10). The isolation of Yugoslavia, as well as the vast damage after the armed conflicts in the post-Yugoslav zone resulted in furthering the economic fragmentation of the whole region. It should not be omitted, that each country still suffers from multi-layered economic crisis symptoms, in spite of the reform introduced by the authorities from the 90’s. The analysts point to the fact that the local economies are excessively dependent on the external financial aid, founding the low efficiency in absorption of this kind of support (Bastian, 2008, 335). This picture is complicated further by the high unemployment rate, high percentage of the grey sector in the economy, corruption, non-transparent business connections, especially in such strategic branches as the power industry (Božić, 2004, 304–309; Vachudova, 2009, 45, 49; International Monetary Fund, 2015, 15).

Another of the distinctive traits of the situation in the Balkan region following the end of the Cold War is the increasing influence of foreign powers on the general state of affairs, concerning the wide spectrum of international security. This process involves the European and world superpowers as well as international organizations and NGOs. This is especially true for the ever unstable zone of the Western Balkans. Since the early 1990’s the said region experienced considerable foreign (i.e. international) influence of military, political and economic character, usually with the consent of the UNSC, as a representative of the main superpowers’ interests (Ciechanowski, 2013, 259–301). The aim of this activity was to cease the armed conflicts (Croatia, B&H), to supervise the level of security in the contested or border areas and to monitor the general stabilisation in the zone of high ethnic-conflict risk. From the mid 1990’s the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) presents itself as the main participant in this field. The NATO forces have conducted numerous campaigns (operations), which greatly influenced the political and military situation in the region. What is more, these operations have served as a basis for the introduction of peacekeeping missions (IFOR and SFOR in B&H, KFOR in Kosovo), all with UNSC consent. Without doubt the NATO forces played integral role in concretization of the region’s security system. They led military interventions at the 90’s, tried to implement peace agreements as well as the resolutions of the UN SC (Blease, 2010, 1). NATO’s activity towards broadening the structures by the integration of the remaining Balkan countries is also worth mentioning (Rekawek, 2013, 1; Luša, 2013, 206–208)⁶. Since later in

⁶ Since 1952 Greece and Turkey have been the NATO members. In 2004 Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, in 2009 Albania i Croatia have joined. In 2015 three Western Balkan countries are regarded as official membership candidates to NATO (B&H, Macedonia and Montenegro), but without any specified date of accession.

the decade the increased participation of other international structures, chiefly the EU, is what should be brought to attention. Gradually the other subjects take over the control of situation in the territories most threatened by conflict from the competences of the NATO (Blockmans, 2006, 212–213; Kovačević, 2012, 147).

The debate on the Balkan issues is concerned with the ambivalent influence of NATO and UE on the general state of political relation in the region, especially in its post-Yugoslav part. On the one hand the Euro-Atlantic organizations have struggled to hamper the extent of disintegration processes (by insisting that the new country borders are aligned with the former division lines from the period of socialist federation), opposed the separationist and irredentist tendencies threatening the integrity of Croatia, B&H or Macedonia, and continue to support the consolidation processes in the said countries. On the other hand though certain experts claim, especially the Serbian scholars, that the NATO and EU have added to the divisions in the region, by legitimating e.g. the territorial partition of Serbia. So it was that the Euro-Atlantic powers supported the separation and independence of Kosovo, by the military action *Allied Force* (1999) against Yugoslavia. They also lent support to the establishment of separate administrative and military structures in Kosovo, which worked to isolate the province from the rest of the country and added to the process of territorial and political fragmentation of the Western Balkans. Some of the researchers also try to reveal the workings of the superpowers, supposed to establish the 'neo-colonial' subjugation of the region's new economies to the foreign influence (Vratuša, 2004, 27–29). The above arguments create the high ambiguity in the evaluation of the role of the so-called foreign (or international) forces in the region up to this date. On the one hand the evaluations surely display the Euro-Atlantic contribution to the restoration of the international order, on the other it is brought to attention that such activity serves mainly the particular interests of the United States or certain countries of the Western Europe (Isaković, 1998, 63–64; Radojičić, 2011, 150–153).

What dictates the most of the EU's political and activity in the Balkans is connected with the so-called association process. Because of the high complexity of the inter-Balkan relations, the perspectives considering the integration of the new countries are addressed to two levels, individual and collective. It means that although every country's achievements on the way to the membership are evaluated individually, the Community also makes an effort to pursue a relatively consistent policy towards the region as a whole, supporting various forms of regional cooperation. The initial date for the inclusion of the broader, regional context in EU's association policy was the year 1999, when the *Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe* has been accepted (Busek, Kühne, 2010, 11–20; Delević, 2007, 23–25). The act obliged the membership-aspiring post-Yugoslav countries, as well as Albania, to initiate and actively develop the regional cooperation, which is to solve the basic problems existing in the inter-Balkan relations during the pre-access period. The following year in Zagreb the basis of the *Stabilization and Association Process* (SAP) were created, containing three main foundations: the agreements on stabilization and association signed with the particular countries of the region, the preferential trade agreements and financial aid (Gordon, 2008, 88–89). In or-

der to improve the exchange of information and funds between the international organizations and the Balkan countries, in 2007 the Stability Pact has been substituted with the *Regional Cooperation Council* (RCC). The main goal of this body is to support and coordinate the most prominent trends in the regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe in order to aid their consolidation. The founders of the Council have decided to prioritise five areas of activity, corresponding to the categories outlined earlier by the Stability Pact. These include: economic and social progress, energy and infrastructure, justice and domestic issues, cooperation in the field of security and quality improvement of the human resources. According to its creators, the RCC is supposed to serve as an “executive arm” of the SEECP, under development among the region’s countries since 1996. Its purpose is to act as a middleman in the information exchange between the region’s countries and the financial organizations as well as to help implement the projects concerning the international cooperation (Busek, Kühne, 2010, 663–668).

The EU politicians have adopted the strategy of “multi-speed” in their approach to the individual Balkan countries, including post-Yugoslav republics. The proceedings were the most rapid in the case of Slovenia (2004), then Bulgaria and Romania (2007) – the countries which had not been encumbered seriously by the aftermath of the armed conflicts. The matters of the Western Balkan countries have been addressed with a separate procedure, with a number of priorities, including the further democratisation of the socio-political systems, the gradual absorption of the UE’s legislation, as well as the development of balanced market economy and multi-sectoral cooperation between the neighbouring countries (Bache, 2010, 4–6). Without a doubt, the emergence of a consistent strategic course of the EU towards the Western Balkans at the end of the 1990’s was made possible by the certain improvements in the political atmosphere of the region. It was in this period, that all the region’s countries had been governed by relatively democratic authorities (Olchowski, Pawłowski, 2009, 89). The EU’s politicians were well aware of the fact, that offering not only cooperation, but also association and a perspective for a final access would help motivate the Balkan political elites and societies to introduce the necessary reforms and encourage various forms of cooperation among the neighbouring countries. It seems however, that the EU intends to achieve the development of regional integration in the Balkans chiefly by means of and financial nature. According to evaluations, the cooperation in the field would help to empower the compromise approach in the political relations and to decrease the risk of strife escalation. ally speaking the activity to create a common regional market are supposed to revive the situation, add dynamism to the influx of external investment and strengthen the relationships between neighbouring states (Konitz, 2014, 14–15; Bandović, Vujačić, 2014, 49). Consequently the EU also supports integration enterprises such as CEFTA, which had proven their effectiveness in the access of mid-east European countries (Bastian, 2008, 335; Stojanovic, Manic, 2009, 47; Busek, Kühne, 2010, 191–234).

The forms of the EU’s support for the Balkans are varied. The so-called autonomous trade measures are worth notice as a gateway to the European market for virtually every product of the region’s countries. The funds for educational

and scientific purposes are a separate quota. The EU also develops a number of projects which are based upon the process of sending advisors and experts to the region's countries, able to coach to central administration officials and members of associations or the courts of justice. Among the EU aid initiatives, the CARDS programme (*Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation*) deserves separate mentioning. It was within this framework that numerous projects were conducted, aimed at the democratization, reconstruction and stabilization of the region. Between 2000 and 2006 alone the non-repayable aid for the countries of the Western Balkans within this fund amounted to 5.4 billion EUR. It was the greatest help *per capita* for any of the UE partners up to this date (Mizerska-Wrotkowska, 2009, 280–281). In 2007 CARDS was replaced by the *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance* (IPA) and year 2010 saw the establishment of the *Multi-Beneficiary Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance* (MB-IPA). The funds in this programme are available to the candidate countries and potential candidates to membership (Bache, 2010, 5; Qorraj, 2010, 81–83).

Among the EU political integration initiatives, the *EU-Western Balkans ministerial forum on Justice, Foreign and Home Affairs*, established by the *Thessaloniki Summit* in June 2003 is often singled out. Its initiative is based upon yearly meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs, domestic affairs and justice of the region's countries. All the membership candidates are also obliged to introduce common attitudes in the field of *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP), established by the EU institutions (Mizerska-Wrotkowska, 2009, 284). The creation of the *Energy Community of South East Europe* (ECSEE; referred as the *Energy Community*) in 2006 has been celebrated as a great success of the EU diplomacy, and opened a way to a concrete, common area of regulation in the field of power industry (Bastian, 2008, 337–338; Busek, Kühne, 2010, 341–368). Substantial cooperation has also been undertaken in the areas of ground and aerial transport, environment protection or the preservation of the objects of cultural heritage (Mizerska-Wrotkowska, 2009, 284). The EU's influence over the general state of affairs in the Balkans is confirmed by certain examples, such as the creation of the *South East Europe Transport Observatory in Belgrade* (SEETO; 2004), *International Sava River Basin Commission* in Zagreb (ISRBC; 2004) or *Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative* in Skopje (MARRI; 2003)⁷. With the EU's support the region's countries cooperate to combat the organized crime, to manage the borders and the police concerning matters such as asylum, migration and visas. In the field of parliamentary cooperation, the *Conference of the Parliamentary Committees on European Integration/Affairs of the States Participating in the Stabilization and Association Process in South East Europe* has been arranged (COSAP; 2005). It is thought as a regional form of parliamentary cooperation (RCC 2013, 51–55, 63).

The above mentioned undertakings combine to create a general network of pan-regional cooperation and or well within the existing coexistence frameworks of the EU. All of them are being developed with the help of the adequate insti-

⁷ For details see: <http://www.seetoint.org/>; <http://www.savacommission.org/>; <http://www.marri-rc.org/>. (Access: 15.04.2015).

tutions of the Community, benefiting from counseling as well as logistic and financial support. Despite all this the Brussels' evaluations show that the regional cooperation process is still on uneven level of development and works in considerable dispersion. Most of the political initiatives share a common trait of low level of institutionalization and high level of fragmentation. The differences in the character and scope of various initiatives are also very conspicuous: from inter-government forums and round-table meetings to grassroots undertakings, struggling to integrate the communities inhabiting multi-ethnic or trans-border areas. Their aim is often within the concept of "partial integration", pertaining to single elements of socio- life. The areas of operation of many of the various initiatives overlap quite frequently. Yet such "democratisation" in the field of activities concerned with certain areas of cooperation can support the creation of multilateral dialogue. This said, a homogenous organisation with precise competences, stable source of funds and a broad scope of activity, such as the Regional Cooperation Council, might be more effective in controlling the whole process of regional cooperation and its participants. The countries of the region are reluctant though, to attributing too much power to supra-national bodies, which naturally evoke the unpleasant experience from the period of the Yugoslav Federation. Since the notion of political re-integration of the region's countries as a whole is generally rejected by all the participants, the institutional and content-related "dispersion" of the regional cooperation could be regarded at this stage of development as favourable, adding to the pluralisation of relationships and strengthening the partnership in mutual relation (Qorraj, 2010, 91).

What forms a separate issue is the fact, that many of the regional matters still remain within the context of bilateral relations or are only mentioned on the margin of the questions discussed on the pan-Balkan forum. The governments of particular countries show limited interest in consolidation of cooperation, that would contain the whole region. Particular countries remain involved in political and financial aftermath of the events reaching back to the 1990's and they pursue their varied national interests. Many controversial issues have not been put on the multilateral forum due to the lack of "political courage" amongst the prominent Balkan politicians. Many of them seem to believe that bringing certain issues to this level would meet with a negative response from the public opinion. The societies in turn don't want to legitimise the political leaders to engage in a concrete discussion about the long-term disputes (Đukanović, 2009, 502–504). Although the development of regional bonds under the auspices of the EU benefits from a relatively high social support in the Balkans, the EU's approach to the forms of regional cooperation meets with a criticism. The governments of particular countries regard it as arbitrary and disconnected from the region's reality. The critical voices point out that the European Commission tends to force the Balkan authorities into activities, which are utterly superficial and intended to win positive evaluation, while being actually contrary to their national interests.

The process of political and economic cooperation in the Balkan context has up to this date lacked the influence to significantly alter the relations, based on traditional mistrust among certain societies. In spite of the emergence of nu-

merous political initiatives, aimed at the establishment of real foundations for political and economic integration since the mid 1990's, the level of institutionalization of such activity remains limited. Many political projects possess only declarative and very superficial character, not translating into any concrete activities. It is true though, that since the cessation of hostilities in the Balkans, all of the local countries have attributed high priority to the integration with the European structures. This has not resulted, however, in increased willingness to cooperate on the regional level. The basic political goal for the candidate countries is to be advanced with implementation of the access requirements. Demands to pull together the regional cooperation are relegated to secondary status. What is lacking is the determination on the part of the political elites to engage in the arduous and controversial process of solving the inter-ethnic problems. Such an approach would necessitate, in the case of Serbia and Croatia for example a final withdrawal of support to the irredentist movements in B&H, which balances on the edge of secession as a result of the national divisions. Without doubt, the lack of sufficiently effective stimuli to pursue a common approach to the foreign affairs, including the relations with the EU, by all the Balkan countries creates another considerable hindrance. There is the fear that the hegemonic tendencies might become reignited within the system of mutual relations.

After two decades since the end of the armed conflicts in the Balkans the threat of further fragmentation and destabilization still remains imminent. It is difficult to expect that the current multilateral cooperation would create any new political quality and weaken the influence of the disintegrative factors on the local relations. Paradoxically the inter-regional divisions tend to increase along with the pursuit of the European integration process. The political elites express anxiety that the access of the better prepared candidates would become straggled by the necessity to level the discrepancies between them and the candidate countries which are less advanced in their struggle for membership. On the other hand the number, form and formation process of the agreements concerning the regional cooperation possess a great value. It creates new information exchange channels and inspires a development of dialogue-oriented procedures, where the interests of all the participants should be addressed. Such cooperation is without precedent in this region, which until very recent times suffered from fatal disintegration on the grounds of armed conflicts between the neighbouring countries.

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