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Development of regional collaboration in a format «Poland – Romania – Ukraine» as a condition of collective security.

Two formats of regional collaboration «Poland – Romania – Ukraine» and «Ukraine – Moldova – Romania» are analyzed in the context of Ukraine's integration into the European space and the collective security conditioning making. The vector of foreign-policy in this countries and the compressed historical review of mutual relations' development between them are analyzed.

Keywords: regional collaboration, collective security, euro-integration, European space, European region, foreign-policy vector of development.

Розвиток регіонального співробітництва у форматі «Польща – Румунія – Україна» як умова колективної безпеки.

Аналізуються два формату регіонального співробітництва «Польща – Румунія – Україна» та «Україна – Молдова – Румунія» у контексті інтеграції України в європейський простір і створення умов колективної безпеки. Дається аналіз зовнішньополітичного вектору цих країн та стислий історичний огляд розвитку взаємовідносин між ними.

Ключові слова: регіональне співробітництво, колективна безпека, інтеграція, європейський простір, єврорегіон, зовнішньополітичний вектор розвитку.

Rozwój regionalnej współpracy w formacie «Polska – Rumunia – Ukraina» jak umowa kolektywnego bezpieczeństwa

Analizują się dwa formatu regionalnej współpracy «Polska – Rumunia – Ukraina» i «Ukraina – Moldova – Rumunia» w kontekście integracji Ukrainy do europejskiego obszaru i stworzenia

umów kolektywnego bezpieczeństwa. Daje się analiza polityki zagranicznej wektorów tych krajów i ścisły historyczny przegląd rozwoju взаємовідносин między nimi.

Kluczowe słowa: *regionalna współpraca, kolektywne bezpieczeństwo, integracja, europejski obszar, euroeuroregion, wektor polityki zagranicznej rozwoju.*

Ukraine has a complex history. Its political changes and upheaval over the last several decades, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has shaped its economy and its domestic political system and its place in the European geopolitical map today. Understanding the past and the political and ethnic complexities that have shaped Ukraine is crucial to understanding Ukraine-Russian-European Union relations today, and Ukraine's journey towards and away from an Association Agreement with the EU ¹.

Ukraine became formally independent in 1990 with the Declaration of State Sovereignty of this country. Scholars describe its separation from the Soviet Union in 1991, as a more evolutionary course than a watershed revolutionary moment.

Unfortunately, for long time Ukraine has been determining with its foreign political vector of development, so now to call it a serious player on the political scene, able to consolidate around itself a number of countries and to create a real alternative center of influence in the former Soviet Union sphere, with all my desire is hardly objective even being, in general, a patriot of my country. Inside Ukrainian elite there were and are serious contradictions, which ultimately lead to the lack of a strict positions and intentions to defend the really own national interests.

On the post Soviet Union area there are traditionally opposed to each other the pro-Western and pro-Russian state development concepts. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have done a clear choice immediately after the collapse of the USSR. The remaining 12 states, after declaring the independence, for a long time remained, and some of them still remain, under a huge influence of Russia, whose main objective in this direction is to form a so-called "Russian world". The Eurasian structures idea, opposed to the European associations serves it. Meanwhile, the majority of experts, especially in Ukraine, for some reason do not want to notice that in addition to these two ways for development of post-Soviet states the third way is possible on which today Azerbaijan goes. This former Soviet republic successfully cooperates with the EU, the USA, the countries of the Middle East and the CIS. Azerbaijan managed to build a multi-vector dialogue and to carry out a policy of equal relationship with strong partner states.

We often, to my view, change the places of cause and effect, adjusting to the interests of others, and, finally, coming out of Russia's influence, continuing to look for a "strong patron" from the outside.

At present, the real ways for the Ukraine's entry into the European Community are 2 such formats as "Ukraine – Moldova – Romania" and "Ukraine – Poland – Romania".

¹ D'Anieri, P. (2006). Understanding Ukrainian politics: Power, politics, and institutional design. London: M.E. Sharpe, 74-75.

After a short historical review let's take a brief look at the development of Ukraine's relations with these countries.

Thus, the relationship between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova (RM) is sufficiently complex and often has the reversible character.

History of the Ukrainian-Moldavian relations dates back to the second half of the sixteenth century, when in 1563, Dmitry Vishnevetskii tried to take the Moldavian throne. And after almost a hundred years, in 1652 Bogdan Khmel'nitsky married his son to the daughter of the Moldavian ruler Basil Lupul, trying to reach his ambitious "Moldovan project" due to the marriage and family relations.

Interesting is the fact that exactly on the territory of present-day Moldova in the city of Bender, on the 5th (16th) of April 1710, the first Ukrainian Constitution of Pylyp Orlyk "Pacts and Constitutions of Rights and Freedoms of the Zaporizhian Host" has been adopted. However, in the future it did not become a major piece of legislation. And the Polish state is considered to be the pioneer of the European constitutionalism, as in 1791 General Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth adopted the first basic law on the Old Continent, later called the Constitution of 3 May.

The certain contribution to the strengthening of the cultural ties between Moldova and Ukraine made a brother of the ruler of Moldova – Peter Mogila, who in the early XVII century moved to Ukraine and became the Metropolitan of Kiev. His name is linked to the organization of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and the typography in Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Such examples can be given in abundance.

So, overall the relationship with Moldova can't be unneighbor, because historically the territories populated by ethnic Moldovans and Ukrainians, have a lot in common. The length of the border between Moldova and Ukraine is 985 km. The Ukrainians are the second largest ethnic group in Moldova after the Moldovans (11.2% of the total population). Moldavians are the fourth largest ethnic minority in Ukraine (0,5 % of the total country population).

As it's known, Ukraine and Moldova has established diplomatic relations in spring (on the 10th of March 1992). However, the basic Treaty on good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation, signed in October 1992 by the presidents of both countries, was ratified by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova only three years later. This is due to the unresolved territorial issue between the two countries.

And only agreeing to significant concessions and compromises there was reached the relative agreement between the two countries. As a result of concessions to Ukraine, Moldova got the access to the shores of the Danube, built a port and oil terminal, becoming a Maritime state.

In modern time, Moldova is quite a developed country. After the crisis of 2008 – 2009, the Moldovan economy has been developing the most dynamically among all European countries. Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 (in the recalculation on the one inhabitant) was 32.2% higher than before the crisis of 2007. For comparison, in Ukraine this indicator, vice versa, fell

to 17.6 %, i.e. the gap in comparison with Moldova is more than 1.5 times. The gap between Moldova and the EU was also declined. On the average, the growth of GDP (gross domestic product) of the EU countries during this period grew to 5.6 %, particularly Germany – 8.6 %, Romania – to 11,9 %, Poland – 31 %. Poland is the leader of EU by the economic growth over the last decade².

A special theme in Ukrainian-Moldovan relations is the question of the question of border with unrecognized Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, the length of which is 386 km. The Transnistria performs as the area of strategic and economic interests of Ukraine. More than 80 % of all imported goods of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic are imported from Ukraine. In addition, the transit of goods from Transnistria to the CIS countries through the territory of Ukraine makes over 80 million dollars (without energy transit).

Ukraine for more than twenty years adhered the ambivalent policy towards Transnistria. Kiev has taken steps both in support and in against the restoration of the territorial integrity of Moldova. This approach, sometimes called benevolent neutrality, contributed to the survival of Transnistria as an unrecognized state. However, in addition to the social, economic and geopolitical factors standing behind this problem, there was the another key factor, most likely forcing Ukraine to stay the course, the interests of Russia.

Taken over 20 years trying to “unfreeze” the conflict between Moldova and the unrecognized Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic in the regional format, where both were present Romania and Ukraine, have a zero result.

New Transnistrian authorities, is now headed by Yevgeny Shevchuk, who came to power in 2011, did not repeat the mistake of their predecessors and chose to abstain from commenting on the revolutionary events of Euromaidan, despite the obvious sympathy toward Viktor Yanukovich.

One of Ukrainian experts on the problems of Transnistria and a former employee of the presidential administration under Yanukovich, Vitaly Kulik examined the unrecognized Republic as an element of distribution of Ukrainian interests in neighboring regions, however, describing Transnistria as an unstable and dangerous region. On the other hand, he doubts that Moscow and Tiraspol will decide to attack Ukraine and open a Western front because such actions may involve Romania into the conflict (which is a NATO member) as well as Moldova³.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel often cites Transnistria (as well as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, DPR and LPR), as an example of using the zones of “frozen conflicts” by RF of to destabilize the situation in the countries, decided to sign the Association agreement with the European Union.

² Головченко, А. (2015) Особливості інституційного розвитку країн Центральної та Східної Європи та перспективи для України. С. 207–211.

³ Цит. по: Осипова, С. (2016). Урегулювання молдово-придністровського конфлікту в контексті європейського інтеграційного процесу. Одеса, С. 238-241.

Significant, in terms of the destruction of previous approaches to the relations between Bucharest, Kiev and Chisinau, became the simultaneous visit of the Prime Minister of Romania Victor Ponta and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Iurie Leanca to the Ukrainian capital, in late 2014. Kyiv and Bucharest have always treated each other with suspicion. Today, under the influence of new factors and realities, the situation gradually changes. Romania is trying to revise its strategy regarding Ukraine. The war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has influenced on this process, since it directly affects a matter of national security and national interests and Romania itself.

The actions of the trilateral (Romania – Moldova – Ukraine) require an understanding of the regional context of the challenges facing the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with all the attendant difficulties and unpredictable consequences.

In this context, Romania, as a member state of the European Union can provide assistance to facilitate for Moldova and Ukraine access to the European structural funds, what in result will promote economic partnerships between all three countries. And although Romania is considered as one of the poorest countries in the EU, it is a fairly large state in South-Eastern Europe, taking the 59th place in the world (19 million people) according the results of the last census, conducted in 2011, and 78th place by its territory. Romania became the first EU country which ratified the Association Agreement of Ukraine with the European Union. Bucharest hopes that this symbolic gesture was duly appreciated by Kiev. In addition, an Agreement on local border traffic was also signed: it is also a symbolic step in bilateral relations, proving once again that the parties are committed, finally, to change the paradigm of the Romanian-Ukrainian relations.

For the Romanian politicians and experts it's time to give a report to their selves that not to have interest in events in Ukraine means to ignore its own national interests, primarily in security sphere, and to demonstrate the political short-sightedness.

The socio-economic basis for the stabilization of relations between the three countries – Ukraine, Moldova, Romania became the idea of creating the Euro-regions. The start was made by a Protocol of tripartite cooperation, signed in July 1997 in Izmail, which contained specific provisions on the establishment of Euroregions in the Lower Danube and Upper Prut, which were considered as promising basis for the solution of practical problems of regional cooperation among the neighboring regions.

Unfortunately, the Lower Danube Euroregion and the Upper Prut regions could not become a viable independent partnership instrument and did not have a major impact on the creation of a common cross-border space with the integrated infrastructure. However, they played a positive role in the overall intensification of bilateral and trilateral relations.

Speaking about the milky way of Ukraine to Europe, currently the other format is more relevant, offered by the official Bucharest – “Romania – Poland – Ukraine”. In both cases (the

first was discussed above – “Ukraine – Moldova – Romania”) Romania initiate negotiations, trying to play the role of a leader in these tandems.

However, Bucharest, offering a format “Romania – Poland – Ukraine”, is mainly focused on the solving of the problems of minorities and the relations with Moldova, and for Poland the main regional Alliance was and is the Visegrad partnership in which Romania is not represented.

In a tandem of Romania, Poland and Ukraine, the Romanian side will not put priority on the development of trade and economic cooperation, moreover, the official Warsaw, taking into account its economic interests in the Ukrainian direction, will never agree with it.

Taking into account the content of the talks, the priority in this “triangle” will be the foundations of security building in the Black Sea region, in particular by increasing the NATO military presence in the region and by the establishment of a defense system on the outskirts of Europe. Thus, a missile defense system should cover the whole Southern Europe; their placement on the territory of Poland is planned until 2018.

At the present stage the difficult neighborhood of Ukraine and Romania became the hallmark of the bilateral relations. Perhaps, by the number of territorial disputes, the Ukrainian-Romanian relations do not inferior to even the gas problem in bilateral relations with its Eastern neighbor. The struggle for resources and historical claims are the root of some problematic issues.

In a certain extent historical premise of these cases should be regarded as a fact of maximum territorial expansion of the Romanian Kingdom until 1940-ies. In particular, into the part of the extended or “Greater Romania” were included Moldova and Ukraine, including Bukovina, Transnistria, territory from the Prut to the West Bug. However, according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Northern Bukovina and Hertsa region moved to the USSR. Accordingly, the desire of the reintegration of these territories still does not leave Romania.

The events of the spring of 2016 once again convince us in this. Such way, in Chisinau, the supporters of the reunification of Moldova with Romania staged a thousand-strong procession, which brought up the idea of changing of Ukrainian part of Bessarabia and Bukovina to the land of Transnistria.

On the 27th of March, the supporters of the reunification of the two countries went out to the streets of the capital of Moldova, with the slogans: “The Great Romania with the old boundaries and Bessarabia is the Romanian land”. The organizers of the action counted more than 50 thousand supporters; however, the local security officials mention about 5 thousand. On the background of this event there has been the founding congress of the formation of the “Council of the country-2”, claiming to be the alternative government.

Dreams of a certain part of Moldovans about merging with Romania have long been not a secret for anybody, as well as periodic conversations about the claims on the part of the border area of Ukraine. However, the last congress of the “unionists”, in which more than a hundred delegates participated, resulted in some sort of concrete action.

This way, the Pro-Romanian Moldovans voiced the idea of exchange of territory of the quasi-state of Transnistria on the Ukrainian part of Bukovina and the Odessa region. According to them, this will restore the historic territorial justice. Complete reunification “the unionists” dream to realize in two years, in conjunction with the centennial of the last serious attempt which was made in 1918 with the arrival of the Romanian troops to Moldova.

It is clear that such rash actions could unleash the real civil war in the Republic. Because in addition to the unrecognized secession of Transnistria there is the territory of the Gagauz autonomy within Moldova, 98 % the population of which, according to the 2014 survey, declared the immediate secession from out Moldova if it decides to join Romania. That is, a chain reaction that destroys the integrity of the states, is inevitable here.

Nevertheless, Romania, as it was already noted, became the first country which ratified the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. And on the 17th of March 2015 the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis visited Kiev to meet with President Petr Poroshenko. This, incidentally, was the first visit of the Romanian President to Ukraine over the past seven years – in comparison with frequency of Ukrainian-Polish visits.

During the last year’s meeting in March, the presidents agreed to cooperate in areas such as the unfreezing of the situation in Transnistria and strengthening of security in the Black Sea region. However, perhaps the most important outcome was the formation of a new format of regional cooperation the triangle “Poland – Ukraine – Romania”. The few days before the visit to the capital of Ukraine on the 12th of March 2015, the Romanian President met also with his Polish counterpart Bronislaw Komorowski, which was also part of the strategy for the establishment of “triangle”.

Not less effective factor in the reduction of conflict around the territorial dispute between Ukraine and Romania is the membership of Romania in NATO. Should not be considered adequate, to the existing situation, the loud statements about the possibility of the recreating the “Great Romania” by force. For NATO the involvement of its members in armed conflicts is not highly profitable which affect the image of the Alliance.

The most important issue today is a strategic Alliance of Poland and Romania, and to a certain extent their Union on the Ukrainian issue.

The formation of such an Alliance in Central and Eastern Europe was not that active until 2014, and it’s not surprising: they had different priorities. Bucharest, focused mostly on domestic Affairs and relations with Moldova, and for Poland the main regional Alliance was, as it was already emphasized, the Visegrad partnership. So, until 2014, the President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski visited Romania once. (For comparison: in Hungary at the same time, he made four official visits).

However, due to the changes in the situation in Ukraine, Romania and Poland have got a common priority in the relationship. The destabilization of the region, the expansion of Russia close to Romania, as well as an increase in military activity of Moscow in the Black sea now are the main threats for the official Bucharest. So it is not surprising that Warsaw and Bucharest

became the main supporters of the increasing of the military presence of NATO in the region and the creation of the defense system on the European periphery.

This way, Poland plans to spend in 2016, 9.3 billion EUR (i.e. 2.1% of GDP) on defense expenditure, while Romania stated that by 2017 it will increase the defense spending from the current of 1.33 % of GDP (1.78 billion EUR) to 2 %⁴.

In the mentioned format the role of Ukraine is also important. Romania has longer border with Ukraine than Poland: 530 km against 420. The change of power in Ukraine, and soon the election of the new President in Romania, allowed the sides to start with a clean slate. The request to restart relations were observed both in Kiev and in Bucharest.

By the way, the victory of Andrzej Duda on the May presidential elections in Poland has also played in favor of the Union of Poland and Romania: before Duda criticized Komorowski for a lack of effective counteraction to the Russian aggression. Also the new President of Poland is against the “Norman format” and requires the inclusion of the neighboring countries – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania into the negotiation process on the Ukrainian settlement.

Consequently, his active work in this direction may further increase the rate of expansion of cooperation between Poland, Romania and Ukraine.

So, it seems that the triangle formed by Poland, Romania and Ukraine, can become a good base for the creation of collective security through the effective confrontation of joint efforts at the level of regional cooperation. And an example of successful cooperation should bring other neighbors to this strategic Alliance: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

The other way, except creation of collective security and effective regional cooperation, for the optimum of the process of European integration of the post-socialist countries, simply does not exist.

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⁴ Savka, A. (2015). *Институциональное обеспечение государственной региональной политики Польши Дніпропетровськ, С. 191-200*