

The modern approach to regional initiatives possibilities application – the example of the Baltic-Black Sea safety belt concept

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Received: May 15, 2021 | Revised: June 6, 2021 | Accepted: June 30, 2021

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4959531

Abstract

The article is devoted to the prospects of regional cooperation initiatives that could ensure the national security of Ukraine. In particular, discusses the evolution and creation of opportunities Baltic-Black Sea Union reformatting its prospects in recent times “security” and economic cooperation to the Adriatic Sea. Further transformation of the idea of Baltic-Black Sea Union as a result of the Polish-Croatian initiative “Baltic – Adriatic – Black sea” in the context of countering the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation and to promote stability in the region.

Key words: geopolitical goals, Baltic-Black Sea alliance, an alliance of Eastern European countries, Intermarium.

Introduction

For more than a century, there has been the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance of Eastern European States creating, in the development of which Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian geopolitical scientists have taken an active part. Considering the countries lying on the Baltic-Black Sea axis, it should be noted that Christianity and belonging to nations with a long European cultural tradition can become a platform for their possible unity. The main countries of the axis could include Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, which is currently building a “union state” with Russia, as well as the Czech

Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia. With the above countries – the Baltic countries are Ukraine's geopolitical interest for the development of the Baltic-Black Sea cooperation and to implement their own geopolitical goals.

Given the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, one of the most important aspects of cooperation with the Axis countries is to establish effective cooperation between the Baltic and Black Sea belt authorities in the context of information exchange and joint planning and countermeasures against the region.

Material and methods

Recently, there has been an intensification of consideration of the idea of regional cooperation between the Baltic States and the Black Sea. O. Volovych in his article “Baltic-Black Sea Union: Prospects for Implementation” points out that the core of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance could be a union of Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and, eventually, Belarus. The active

participation of Eastern European countries in the BBSU will be in the interests of all European countries, as it would further strengthen Europe as a powerful geopolitical center (Volovych O.). Bytyak, Y., I. Yakovyuk and S. Shestopal in the article “Project Intermarium: Geopolitical Analysis” note that Ukraine's foreign policy towards Euro-Atlantic integration may

contribute to the emergence of new regional regional geostrategic alliances, and the association “Intermarium” may in the future act as a “sanitary border”, a barrier to further isolation from Russia (Bytyak YU.P.).

Sokolovsky B. in his article “Prospects of the Baltic-Black Sea Union” considered the practical experience of cooperation within the Baltic-Black Sea and concluded that cooperation between Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic and

Caucasian states only strengthens the Caspian-Black Sea-Baltic Security Union, which can automatically become political association (Sokolovs'ky B.).

Volovoi V. considered the place of Belarus in the project of the Baltic-Black Sea region and believes that its success and geopolitical significance will lie in the cooperation of Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Lithuania (Volovoy V.).

Results and discussion

The main Ukrainian developers of the Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical concept can be considered politicians and public figures Yulian Bachynsky, Mykola Mikhnovsky and Stepan Rudnytsky, who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were engaged in the ideas of regional cooperation (Bachyns'ky Y. U., 2003).

During the Ukrainian National Republic, the chairman of the Central Rada M. Hrushevsky in his work “Orientation of the Black Sea” outlined the idea of creating the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance (Balto-chornomors'ky soyuz).

One of the first to point out the historical community of peoples inhabiting the Baltic and Black Seas in his work “Black Sea Doctrine” (1940) was a public figure, writer, publicist Yuri Lypa, who believed that the Baltic-Black Sea Federation should include Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Belarus (Balto-Chornomorska vis.).

The Baltic-Black Sea Union (BBSU) was first established in August 1919 at a conference near Riga. The document was signed by the delegations of Poland, Ukraine, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The BBSU program, developed by Latvian Foreign Minister Siegfried Mejerovitz, included plans for a defense union, integration of economic systems, a common banking and monetary system, a political convention on mutual support and a common foreign policy, and a free route from the Baltic to the Black Sea (Volovych O.).

The main Ukrainian developers of the Baltic-Black Sea should note the role of Poland and the significant contribution of its activists / politicians in the development of the BBS project. For the first time, a new concept of relations with Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus

was formulated by Polish journalist Juliusz Meroszewski and Polish humanist, editor of “Kultura” Jerzy Giedroyc, who substantiated the need to liberate Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus from Russia (Yezhy Hedroyts').

According to publicist Serhiy Grabovsky, the history of the idea of a Black Sea-Baltic (or Baltic-Black Sea) union, or confederation, dates back to the restoration of independence of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Ukraine and Belarus – the early 1990s. Both then and now, the idea of a confederation is based on the desire of “young democracies” in southern, eastern and northern Europe not only to get rid of dependence on the metropolis (Russia), but also to resist Russian aggression and strengthen military-technical and economic cooperation.

In March 1993, Tomasz Szczepanski's book “The Seaside” was published in Poland, in which the author gives a geopolitical description of the region, considers various options for the formation of the Baltic-Black Sea Union and predicts its possible relations with Russia, Western Europe and Scandinavia (Shchepans'ky T.).

For the first time since the collapse of the USSR, the initiative to intensify Baltic-Black Sea cooperation at the state level was made by the then President of Lithuania A. Brazauskas at the 1997 summit in Vilnius.

In May 2006, Vilnius hosted the international conference “Common Vision of the Common Neighborhood”, which was dedicated to the problems of Baltic-Black Sea cooperation.

In search of new opportunities for the realization of geopolitical goals, Ukraine did not stay away from the idea of establishing

cooperation within the Baltic-Black Sea region.

In February 1993, the then President of Ukraine L. Kravchuk took the initiative in Budapest to create a zone of stability and security in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, which should include the Baltic states, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and also Bulgaria and Romania. In April 1993, a project was prepared in Kyiv to create a Central and Eastern European Stability and Security Area (CEESSA), which was to operate under the slogan "Security for oneself - through security for all" (Tarasenko N.).

In 1994, there was signed in Kyiv agreement between 15 political parties from six countries (Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), according to which a non-governmental organization, the League of Mediterranean Parties, was formed to develop the idea of Baltic-Black Sea Alliance as a zone of stability and security. In League Ukraine was represented by following parties: The Democratic Party of Ukraine, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Green Party of Ukraine, the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Republican Party. There were even three congresses in 1995, 1996 and 1997, but by the end of the 1990s the initiatives had curtailed and the goals had not been achieved effectively (Bondarenko A.).

On 10-11 September 1999, a summit entitled "Baltic-Black Sea Cooperation: Towards an Integrated Europe of the 21st Century without Distribution Lines" was held in Yalta, during which were discussed issues of multilateral cooperation intensifying in the space between the two seas. At the time, representatives of 22 countries noted in a joint statement their desire to make joint efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts, maintain security and stability of economic cooperation in the Baltic-Black Sea region by participating in joint projects in energy, transport, communications and environment. Speaking at the summit, former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said: "The Baltic-Black Sea axis can and should become one of the consolidating and stabilizing pillars of the new Europe, and therefore an integral part of it". However, the formalization and

institutionalization of Baltic-Black Sea cooperation did not take place during the Yalta summit (Rassokha L.).

In November 2010, Vilnius hosted an international scientific conference "New Region of Europe: Paradigms of Regional Development in the Baltic-Black Sea Region", where politicians, experts and analysts from Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary and other countries discussed the prospects of Balto-Black Sea Union.

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has not only radically changed the security environment in the Eastern European region, but has also helped to resume discussions on finding new security formats.

In September 2014, participants of the international conference held at the National University "Ostroh Academy" on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the victory of the combined forces of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland led by Prince Konstantin Ostroh over the army of the Moscow Principality on September 8, 1514 near Orsha on the Dnieper, approved an appeal to the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko with a proposal to consider the possibility of creating a Baltic-Black Sea Alliance of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania with the right to join other states.

In 2015, the newly elected President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, repeatedly stated that he intended to propose to the heads of state of Central and Eastern Europe to create a "partnership alliance of states from the Baltic to the Black and Adriatic Seas". On the eve of the inauguration on August 6, 2015, A. Duda called for the creation of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and six countries of the former Yugoslavia. It is important that this initiative was taken by the President of the most economically powerful and politically influential country in Eastern Europe, which is a strategic partner of Ukraine, which can be seen as an attempt to create a new Eastern European center of geopolitical influence within the European Union interests. On November 12, 2015, the Baltic-Black Sea Forum was held in

Kyiv, organized by the NGO IISU (International Initiative in Support of Ukraine) together with the Baltic-Black Sea Confederation Foundation (Lithuania). The event resulted in two institutional initiatives: the creation of information and cultural, security and economic union of nations and states – “Baltic-Black Sea Commonwealth” and the activation of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine with a permanent body – the Secretariat. It is designed to promote international and informational cooperation between political forces and non-governmental organizations aimed at strengthening the Baltic-Black Sea integration.

In February 2015, in Ukraine was established the non-governmental organization “Baltic-Black Sea Confederation” with the main purpose to form through civic structures a socio-economic platform to build an intergovernmental association of the Baltic and Black Seas with the participation of peoples living in historical territories. Commonwealth and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – modern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and others. The main task of the BBSC NGO is to restore transit-transport, economic, financial, trade, spiritual-cultural, social and military cooperation between East and West, South and North Europe to ensure the national interests of the Confederate countries. The founders of the BBSC NGO hope that the powerful interstate union created by the joint efforts of the Baltic and Black Sea regions will contribute to the economic development of the Mediterranean countries, as well as their cultural uplift and social protection of the peoples of the region. In order to find strategic partners, the BBSC NGO participates and initiates thematic scientific and practical conferences, round tables, as well as consultations with governments, national platforms, non-governmental organizations in the Mediterranean countries, primarily with Poland and Lithuania on common priorities in various countries spheres of political, social, economic life. It should be noted that at the stage of creation of this non-governmental organization, the intelligence agencies of

Ukraine may introduce associations of their employees into the administration. Which, in general, will contribute to their legalization in the already transformed intergovernmental organization. The above will facilitate the receipt of intelligence information, its rapid exchange between member countries, the prevention of military conflicts and countering military aggression by the Russian Federation.

On May 20, 2016, in an interview with Rada TV channel, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Andriy Parubiy proposed the creation of the Baltic-Black Sea Union. He stated this after a meeting on May 16, 2016 with the head of the Polish-Ukrainian friendship group in the Parliament of the Republic of Poland Michał Dworczyk. According to A. Parubiy, “Ukraine should become one of the centers of decision-making, one of the centers of influence as a great powerful state”. A. Parubiy believes that “the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Union, as one of the formats of European integration of Ukraine, is extremely promising and important for our state”.

An important stage in the transformation of the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Union can be considered the Polish-Croatian initiative “Adriatic – Baltic – Black Sea” (ABBS), which was first presented by the President of the Republic of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic during UN Assembly on September 29, 2015. The original idea was to create an Adriatic-Baltic vertical, but the initiative aroused considerable interest from the EU's Black Sea countries, and they were also involved in the project.

The first international event within the initiative “Adriatic – Baltic – Black Sea” took place from 25 to 26 August 2016 in Dubrovnik (RH) at the forum of 12 EU countries: Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

The forum was held under the slogan: “Strengthening Europe: Connecting North and South” and aimed to discuss energy development, transport infrastructure and telecommunications projects.

The key host countries of the forum were Croatia and Poland.

The forum was attended by five EU presidents: Croatia (K. Grabar-Kitarovic), Poland (A. Duda), Hungary (J. Ader), Lithuania (D. Grybauskaite), Slovenia (B. Pahor) and Bulgaria (R. Plevneliev). Other countries were represented at the lower level: Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Romania, Austria), Ministers of Transport (Czech Republic) and Deputy Ministers (Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia).

Representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economy of such countries as the USA, China, BiH, Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Moldova, Greece, Turkey, as well as energy companies SOCAR (Azerbaijan), GAZ-System S.A. (Poland), Hoegh LNG (Norway).

The organizers of the event sent an invitation to participate in the forum of the Ukrainian delegation headed by the Prime Minister of Ukraine V. Groysman. However, the Ukrainian side did not take part in the said international event.

At the same time, according to the advisor to the President of the Republic of Croatia – coordinator of the ABBS initiative Vito Tursic, Ukraine has the opportunity to join the ABBS initiative as an associate member, as it provided in the Joint Statement adopted by participants at the Dubrovnik Forum “...Three Seas Initiative is open to partnerships on specific projects with interested countries and business entities around the world who share basic values and principles of the EU”.

Participation in the ABBS initiative in the future may be a great interest to Ukraine, which is one of the largest Black Sea states and has close historical, political and economic ties with virtually all countries of this initiative.

Advantages of Ukraine's participation in the ABBS initiative:

political:

1. Involvement in the initiative would be an additional factor in Ukraine's European integration – both through the support of Ukraine by EU countries “Central European vertical” and through its practical inclusion in the system of political, trade, economic, transport, infrastructure, energy and other ties within the initiative.

2. The project can be useful in terms of supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russian

aggression – the group of participating countries includes the most active and consistent defenders of Ukraine: Lithuania, Poland, which along with Croatia will play a key role in the initiative.

economic:

Ukraine will have the opportunity to become part of an extensive regional transport and trade network – by intensifying (deepening) cooperation with EU ports in the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Seas.

The greatest prospects for Ukraine are possible in the energy sector. Involvement in the ABBS initiative could be an additional factor in strengthening Ukraine's energy security by connecting to the gas transmission network, which will connect LNG terminals in the Baltic and Adriatic (in particular, through an interconnector with Poland, which is being built as part of the North-South gas corridor), as well as in the framework of participation in the project to create a gas corridor “Croatia – Hungary – Ukraine”.

Considering the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance project, it should be noted that its viability will depend on a combination of security aspects and motives and the economic component. The Baltic and Black Sea countries have already established cooperation in various areas of the economy at the bilateral level, but if they join the Baltic-Black Sea Union, they will also be able to carry out multilateral large-scale economic projects.

If such an association will be created, strengthening the economic cooperation of its member states may simplify business doing in the common economic space, in joint energy, logistics and infrastructure projects that will contribute to the economic development of the region. The resumption of energy, economic, transit-transport, financial, trade and social cooperation between the countries of the Baltic-Black Sea region will allow them to increase their economic potential and defense capabilities.

It is obvious that Ukraine cannot neglect the opportunities provided by the above-mentioned regional initiatives (Baltic-Black Sea Union, Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative). It should be borne in mind that any association of states

must be responsible for and not go beyond the treaties of the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and, in addition, a positive response must be given by the Court of Justice of the European Union. The only quick option, taking into account all the

above rules that allow the creation of, for example, a confederation or union on the basis of interstate agreements, is the creation of the International Organization of the Baltic-Black Sea region (Firus A.).

Conclusions

Duration of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO requires Ukraine to find new ways to protect their independence and sovereignty. Potential allies for our country is first and foremost Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Moldova and Georgia, which like Ukraine, with all times of its existence has repeatedly been the victims of imperial policy of Russia.

The advantages of the Baltic-Black Sea Union include the successful geostrategic and compact location of the Mediterranean countries at the intersection of transport and energy corridors,

the complementarity of economies, long historical contacts and interaction, similar ethnic mentalities, worldviews, cultural and civilizational principles.

Through closer political and economic cooperation within the framework of the ABBS, Eastern European countries would be able to strengthen their positions in the region and identify as an independent, self-sufficient and organic intergovernmental association with their own interests.

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