

potential contribution to discourses in (transport) geography // Journal of Transport Geography. – 2007. – Vol. 15. – P. 319–330. 4. Hall D. Transport geography and new European realities: a critique // Journal of Transport Geography. – 2010. – Vol.18 (1). – P. 1–13. 5. Linneker B. Transport Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development in Europe: A Review of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches. – University of Sheffield, 1997. – 165 p. 6. Martinez L., Viegas J. A new approach to modelling distance-decay functions for accessibility assessment in transport studies // Journal of Transport Geography. – 2013. – Vol. 26. - P. 87–96. 7. Miller H. Measuring space–time accessibility benefits within transportation networks: basic theory and computational procedures // Geographical Analysis. – 1999. – Vol. 31 (1). – P.1–26. 8. Pashynska N. Transformation processes in the transport system of Ukraine / / Modern problems of human geography / Ed. S. Artobolevsky and L. Sintserov. – M., 2011. – P. 71-82. (in Russian)

BALTIC-BLACK SEA GEOPOLITICAL REGION: THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF UKRAINE IN THIS SYSTEM OF REGIONAL INTERACTIONS

Nataliya Koroma

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

***Abstract.** The research is dedicated to the investigation of the geopolitical region (the example of the Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical region), which is a key category for study the world geopolitical structure and place of separate country in the system of regional relations. Influence of political and geographical conditions on the appearance of specific geopolitical regions on the world political map, over the processes of their formation and operation was studied. The mechanisms of interaction between the countries in the geopolitical region were disclosed through characterization functional spaces of the system of regional interactions. Conceptual foundations of political and geographical position of Ukraine in Eurasian geopolitical axis are marked at the regional level. Mechanisms of realization of the national interests of Ukraine in regional Baltic-Black Sea space both at the bilateral level of relations with all countries in the region and collaboration within the framework of regional structures are formulated.*

Корома Н.С. Балтійсько-Чорноморський геополітичний регіон: національні інтереси України в системі регіональної взаємодії. Дослідження присвячене вивченню геополітичного регіону (на прикладі Балтійсько-Чорноморського геополітичного регіону), що є ключовою категорією для вивчення світової геополітичної структури і місця окремої країни в системі регіональних відносин. Досліджено вплив політичних і географічних умов на виникнення конкретних геополітичних регіонів на політичній карті світу через процеси їх формування і функціонування. Механізми взаємодії між країнами в геополітичному регіоні було розкрито через характеристику функціонального простору системи регіональної взаємодії. Концептуальні основи політичного та географічного положення України на Євразійській геополітичній осі розкрито на регіональному рівні. Сформульовано механізми реалізації національних інтересів України в регіональному Балто-Чорноморському просторі, як на двосторонньому рівні відносин з усіма країнами в регіоні, так і щодо співробітництва в рамках регіональних структур.

The geopolitical processes were always inhering for the world system. Today as in the past the nature of geopolitical processes determines development of the world system: confrontation or cooperation? As a response to the challenge, the essence of geopolitical processes takes on new meaning. We are witnessing when local calls quickly turned on global and vice versa. Such conditions promote the active forming of systems of regional interactions between countries. A large regional space often serves like a *geostrategic zone* controlled and influenced by geostrategic players. The *geostrategic players* play a key role in world politics. These zones consist of geopolitical spaces of smaller size, called *geopolitical regions*. System of regional interactions in the format of geopolitical region is a causal effect of regional interests which may conflict with the interests of other regions: today confrontation (interaction) between the regions is starting to be much more substantial from confrontation (interaction) between the neighboring countries.

The appearance of specific geopolitical regions on the world political map is preceded by the following *politico-geographical conditions*: (1) geographical proximity of the countries within the region; (2) development of geocivilizational space; (3) cultural, ethnic, linguistic affinity; (4) a big and long-lasting political problems; (5) the existence of common long-term interests relating to neighborhood; (6) the intensity of socio-geographical and economic ties; (7) integral effect on a transformation in the society (general level of economic and social development of the countries, the presence of similar strategies in the future).

The geographical space between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea (or Pontic) is known as the Baltic-Black Sea region (in European geopolitics as the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus). Countries incorporated in common regional Baltic-Black Sea space form a geographic unit but which has ever been embodied by political cohesion among its diverse nations. Today, the Baltic-Black Sea region on the world political map exists factually, not as judicially, without any system of politico-territorial division and management with centers that would ensure its sustainability, manageability, integrality at the whole.

Due to the politico-geographical features, *the Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical region* includes several subregional units – subregions (Figure 1): (I) Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), (II) Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) (III) Black Sea subregion (Ukraine, the South of European Russia, the Caucasian countries, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova). Black Sea subregion can be considered as a separate region, including Eastern Europe and the Transcaucasia (or South Caucasus) and separately countries of Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria, which support the regional and intergovernmental initiatives. Romania and Bulgaria geographically are Balkan countries. Under the socio-political, economic and ethnic characteristics they are close to Central Europe. In addition, Romania and Bulgaria's focus on Euro-Atlantic cooperation has led them to membership in the relevant structures, and so allowed the inclusion of these countries in Central Europe. Belarus is a country geographically in Eastern Europe. Belarus is difficult attributed to any of these subregions according to its politico-geographical, geopolitical parameters. But Belarus can be considered in the aspect of interstate relations.

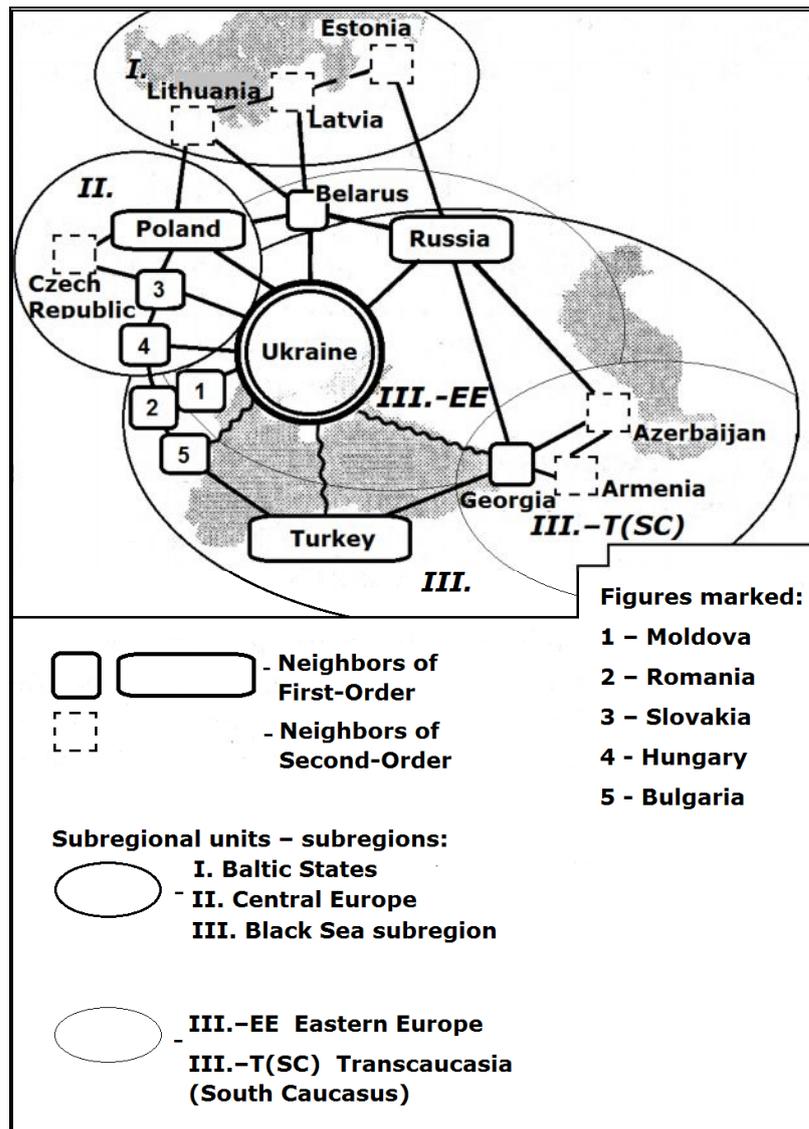


Figure 1 – The subregional units in the Baltic-Black Sea region

The study of socio-geographical ties and progress of politico-geographical processes within the geopolitical region, situated within clear-cut geographical space can be realized by way of characterizing *functional spaces of the field of the international interactions: geocivilizational, social-ethnic, informational-communicative, geoeconomic, geopolitic, security*. Superposition geostrategic interests of countries in the region form the axes of regional geostrategic interests which realized within the available functional spaces.

A unique socio-ethnic space within the regional Baltic-Black Sea space was formed under the influence of a number of politico-geographical conditions: historic coexistence within the common geographical space of ethnic groups, nations, peoples, and in result of interweaving their fates. The main obstacle to intensify socio-ethnic ties is civilizational clash and belonging (identity) issues of the individual to particular region that are more associated with historical memory, and less on the course of modern processes in the regional space. Nowadays we watch the process of changing identities in this area.

Modern realities determine the necessity to define new regional identity, which will be determined not only according to the ideas about cultural and linguistic people's affinity, but will be based more on economic and political expediency. *Interdependence, especially economical, leads to form a common identity.* The desire of countries, situated in Central and Eastern Europe, to achieve recognition of their European identity through membership in the EU shows their urgent need to a common economically secure identity.

Social-ethnic ties between subjects of the Baltic-Black Sea region were strengthened historically, and often were identified with economic projects. Kievan Rus traded with Northern Europe and The Byzantine Empire (or Byzantium) through the ancient trade routes connecting the Baltic and Black Seas even in time of Vikings from the 9th century. Today, the economic projects realized here could be important prerequisite for the political cohesion between already modern countries in the modern world as well as of the forming the Baltic-Black Sea region.

Goeconomic space of the Baltic-Black Sea region is a powerful factor for economic development in both the region and Eurasian area. The basis of the goeconomic space could become a powerful transit-transport system that links the Baltic and the Black Sea region. Essentially, it goes about a renovation in under the conditions of information-technology revolution of the systemic economic model "From the Varangians to the Greeks". All that has been accumulated in this field of investigation can be united into a single system of modules - a unified system of functional complexes in the form of complementary sets of elements, relations, effects, actions, properties that as a result will form a single unit: transport complex, international systems of oil-pipes, gas transport flows, ferry transportation and banking and financial complex. All this reveals the conceptual basis of a common market of the Baltic-Black Sea region countries in the energy and the transport-communication spheres. It is within the goeconomic space that we can observe the most interaction of geostrategic interests of the region's countries and the interests of neighboring regions and geostrategic global actors. Thus it goes about their energetic and economic security.

Today, the part of continent from the Atlantic to the Bug has already merged into one space, not only goeconomic and geopolitical, but also into *security space*, and the impact of EU and NATO - the main institutions operating in these spaces - reach to the Asian continent. And the Baltic-Black Sea region due to its geopolitical position is an important link in the process of political and economic security of the West. The degree of regional interaction support by the countries of the Baltic-Black Sea region depends on the stability of both the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian system. Today region's countries really determine and will continue to shape the safety state and structure of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian systems. In this regard, the interests of EU and U.S. as Russia and China in this area will be growing. The possible expansion of the security based on cooperation may be limited because of the lack of basic values and common geostrategic interests between countries. The problem of security is needed to be considered from the point of view of international perspectives in the world geopolitical structure. We can talk about the geopolitical and geostrategic aspects ensuring national security, linking them to the needs of

international security. Implementing the idea of forming a Baltic-Black Sea region a unique approach can be used for the development and implementation of modern theory of security based on cooperation.

Geographically and geopolitically, the Baltic-Black Sea region is in the center of intersection of axes world geostrategic interests. Its politico-geographical position certainly makes the region an integral part of the European and Eurasian region, and therefore it must define region in its proper place and role, given all the threats and challenges both internal and external. Eastern EU border that runs along geopolitical junction of the Baltic-Black Sea region have divided it into two separate fields of interactions ((1) Member States – Baltic States, Central Europe and the two Black Sea countries, (2) the applicant countries for accession). If further advance of the EU's eastern border stop and at the same time Russian impact and ambitions in Eastern Europe increase, these will intensify tension and create a new line dividing Europe into East and West, not only geographically, but also civilizationally. To prevent the development scenario of the "separation" of the region, countries must find ways to accelerate the internal transformation in the society and to speed-up economic and social development, creating a special field of regional interactions with all functional spaces that will allow defining Baltic-Black Sea space as the separate region with common policy of regional strategy.

The territory of Ukraine has always been and continues to be today a place of axes intersection in the Eurasian geopolitical system of coordinates: West - East (latitude) and North – South (meridian). These so-called Eurasian geopolitical axes crossed Ukraine at various time. Such crossings always confer special characteristics for politico-geographical position of any country.

Ukraine, which is the main link of communication along North – South geopolitical axis, naturally and logically should be the active coordinator of internal processes in the Baltic-Black Sea region, thus keeping in balance external influences of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian systems. Their influences' trajectory motion corresponds to the direction of West-East geopolitical axis and collides in the Black Sea region, more accurately in Ukraine, arching North-South axis in one party or another.

The importance of realization Ukraine's national interests in regional Baltic-Black Sea space was confirmed yet by the modeling the geopolitical concept of Baltic-Black Sea orientation in the early 20th century in Ukrainian geopolitical thought. The development of the Baltic-Black Sea regional interaction system provides geoeconomical and geopolitical perspectives for Ukraine.