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ENERGY SECURITY OF THE BLACK SEA REGION: GEOSTRATEGY AND GEOENERGY MEASUREMENT

The relevance of the research topic is determined by the search of political solutions to the world economic development problem in the context of the implementation of energy policies and states' security. Nowadays experience has shown energy is crucial to resource ensuring of economic development and increasing of competitiveness of any state's economy. Thus, world political processes are also considerably determined by the relations in the world and regional energy community.

The purpose of the article is the analysis of energy security condition in the states of the Black Sea region in terms of geopolitics and geostrategy of different regional and international political forces. The subject of the research is transformation and modification of these states' energy security. The tasks of the research are refinement of the concept of the Black Sea State regional division; consideration of the role and significance of the Black Sea energy security; definition of global and regional forces equation in the Black Sea region (Russia, Turkey, the USA, NATO); analysis of conflicts in the Black Sea region and their impact on energy security of the states in the region.

Methodology of the research is based on systemic, historical, structural and functional and legal and regulatory approaches to the problem study. The methods of the research are comparative analysis, case-study, observation.

The hypothesis of the research is that dynamic international processes are moving the Black region more and more from the periphery to the one of the centers of geopolitical interests of the rest world. Its economic capacity and supply of natural resources as well as the importance of energetic and transportation routes through it within the new Silk Road will draw attention of many countries and transnational companies. The authors believe strengthening of the states of this region will occur through the further international cooperation with Russia and EU.

The geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region has been proved in history. For long centuries it has been the crossroad of trade route between Europe and Asia,

and the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles connecting the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea have become the reason for bloody battles between major world power centers. Geostrategy is the subject that derives from geopolitics and hence attributed to its features. The subject and object of geopolitics are dynamic values interacting with space and time dimensions. Geostrategy is the subject that makes it possible to examine geopolitics sphere in dynamic aspect, detail and describing its basic components. Geostrategy should be considered both in modern and historical contexts (Kovaleva, 2017).

There are two basic concepts of regional division for the Black Sea States. Within the first concept the Black Sea region is connected with the Caspian Sea and determined as the Black Caspian region. In 12 August 2018 during the summit of “The Caspian Five” the presidents of Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenia resolved the legal status of the Caspian Sea. The Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea distributes oil and gas and biological resources among the countries of “The Five” and prevents from the emergence of military forces of “extraregional states” in the Caspian Sea (*The leaders...*, 2018). The membership in the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation) (*Black...*, 1992) of such states as Azerbaijan that has an access to the Caspian Sea and Armenia that is located between two seas but with no access to none of them is in support of this approach. The advocates of the second concept (mainly security experts) consider the region (or even subregion) as a unified system which includes the territories of the Mediterranean, Black and Caspian countries by emphasizing these countries’ interrelationship and their common concerns. Thus, the second concept is broader because it includes larger territories affecting the interests of other states outside BSEC. This concept asserts more complicated interdependence in international relations taking into account the resources of the countries and their current geostrategical position. For example, Z. Bzhezinsky viewed the Black Sea region as the part of geopolitical structure which he named “Eurasian Balkans” and it occupies the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf (Bzhezinsky, 2010). Some Bulgarian experts use the term “Great Black Sea region” (Dulgerova, 2009: 12).

The geography of the Black Sea region is extremely diverse. The states of South-Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Romania), the Southern Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), Russia and certainly Turkey are included there. These countries vary widely in their politic and economic structures, they have different foreign policy objectives, and they are members of different transnational associations. Therefore the Black Sea region is indeed the crossroad of various socio-political, economic and cultural systems.

After the collapse of the bipolar international relationship policy model the battle for strategic advantage adopted new measurements. From objective point of view the dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War have established specific vacuum in the Black Sea region which since the early 1990s the USA, Turkey and somewhat Iran have been filling. The goal of the Black Sea strategy of these states was to use geographic advantage of the region and its natural resources.

There is a problem of energy resources transportation such as gas and oil to the end user because of their uneven geographical distribution on the geographical map of the

world. Today carbohydrates are transported by tankers or pipelines. Pipes are preferable for a number of reasons. Their benefits are very attractive and amount to:

- Distance to the end user decreases significantly;
- It is possible to be free from transportation charges for transit of products;
- Environmental risk during transportation decreases significantly.

The Black Sea and the territories of the Black Sea coast are extremely important communicative and transport hub through which the supplies of oil, gas and other goods move (for example, tanker routes through Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipe etc.). The control over the straits of the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea waters would allow to control all legal and illegal international trade in the region, influence existing and being built gas pipes and as a result affect the state policy of this region.

We suppose that the Black Sea region actually should be considered together with the Caspian Sea region as practically these two regions together form a single energy system: energy resources are located in the Caspian Sea and transit routes to the main users pass through the Black Sea region. Energy and transit specifically are key factors for strategic importance of the region. Thus, such states as Russia, Turkey, the USA and somewhat Romania as well as such organizations as NATO and EU are fighting for control of it.

Capacity study of the Black Sea region as one of the factors of EU energy security relies on its acceptance of being the link between Central Asia and Caucasus-Caspian region on one side and between the Balkans and Europe in broader terms on the other side. In recent years the forces related to the construction of new gas pipe architecture in the region have intensified. There are lots of projects although few of them have been carried out and the rest are still eating the conceptual level. After taking into account the fact that the time to generate new suggestions has already finished due to many alternatives, complemented task to select more successful routes and to initially supply them ranks first.

Nowadays the Black Sea region has become more significant both for Europe and the USA, Russia and China, and the development of this zone will be subordinate to dynamics of their interests. Heightened attention to the Black Sea area is mainly caused by its importance as a key transit energy supply line. Ongoing processes of regional construction, in addition, further promote its establishment in the focus of international policy.

ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ENERGY SECURITY IN BLACK SEA REGION

Energy security is sophisticated and multifaceted concept that is of paramount importance for general security achievement of every country. In up-to-date context one of the prior strategic goals of countries is long term provision of energy at the lowest cost. Energy security in that regard is provision of steady energy supply of different types and sources (diversification) and stability in the energy market. Its support is connected with the solution to the crises, protection of key infrastructure, maintenance of economic stability and search for alternative energy supply lines. Economic and

geopolitical processes of the latest years are the reason to enrich energy security paradigm. Three basic factors of that phenomenon are “the shale revolution,” global financial and economic crisis and increasing vulnerability of critical energy infrastructure.

Today the main problems in energy security field are growing dependence of most advanced industrial countries on oil and gas supply, increasing demand for fuel from developing economic states such as China and India, and depletion of many kinds of fossil fuel outside the OPEC countries, necessity to establish new energetic infrastructure, climate change, political instability in a number of major exporting countries and also the attempts of some countries to use energy supply for political influence.

For a long time, the Black Sea region hasn't been considered as European periphery but as the unit of the axis the Caspian Sea – the Black Sea – Europe. Its significance for global states such as the United States of America, and especially for the European Union, is predicated upon their growing need in diversification of energy supply to decrease the dependence on energy sources extracted in the Persian Gulf and Russia.

The Black Sea region is strategically important on several grounds. Firstly, some countries of the region (Russia, Azerbaijan) are large energy suppliers not only for their neighbors but for all Europe. Secondly, other countries, such as Ukraine, Turkey, Bulgaria, are energy transit countries and they are subjects of world energy market in that capacity. Most countries of the region are considerable energy consumers as well.

In 2018 significant part of energy in the Black Sea was due to primarily the Russian Federation which is the main gas and oil producer and supplier. The share of Russia in world oil production in 2018 was 37%. The participation of the Russian Federation in world gas production is even more impressive – in 2018 the country produced 41% of the world's supplies (*The World...*, 2020). The country is expected to preserve leadership in gas supplies because it accounts for almost ¼ of world natural gas fields.

Another important energy exporter in the region is Azerbaijan. Though its share in world export in year 2018 is incomparably smaller than in Russia, statistics in the country shows high rate (75,9% of crude oil and 20,9% of natural gas) (*The state...*, 2018). The participation of the country in so called EU project “The Southern gas transmission corridor” turns it into potentially significant energy supplier to Turkey and EU countries that plays an important role in decreasing of these countries' dependence on import from Russia. The country can meet 20% of EU needs in gas aspect in the long term.

The countries of the Black Sea region make up a large share of gas supplies throughout Europe. One of the basic corridors for gas import from Russia went through the territory of Ukraine. In recent years the supply was suspended due to unstable political and military tension in the country, forcing EU to look for and design new energetic plans for natural resources supplies. Also, gas is transported by the pipeline system on the bottom of the Black Sea, specifically by “Blue Stream” and “Turkish Stream” from Russia to Turkey.

The importance of the region for oil supply is indisputable. The Black Sea has been a global energy corridor transporting more than 40% of oil supplies to EU and about 6% of world oil supplies through its waters over the last decade. Nowadays oil is transported to the region through several pipelines as well as tankers from Russian oil terminals in Tuapse and from Georgian terminal in Supse through the Black Sea and straits (*Sea...*, 2020).

It is useful to compare the key international players' strategies and doctrines and the latest modifications in them to understand their attitude to the Balkans and the Black Sea region better. It is obvious geopolitical rivalry between the USA and Russia is caused by significantly increasing importance of the Black Sea region, especially after some events in Ukraine in 2014 and also the role of the Balkans that are "the bridge" and "frontier zone" simultaneously has grown.

POLICY OF GLOBAL FORCES IN RELATION TO THE BLACK SEA REGION

Being situated between oil and gas fields of Russia and Caspian countries, the Black Sea region is going to establish itself as a strategic transit zone to transfer energy sources in which a lot of interests are intertwined. First of all, these are competing interests of EU aimed at security improvement of its energy supplies and of Russia having its plans that mainly seek to preserve and strengthen its influence on post-Soviet area. EU efforts in diversification of energy supplies for decreasing dependence on Russia reveal growing interest to the Caspian Sea as Russia is not only largely supplies natural gas to Europe but controls major part of resource transit from the Caspian Sea at present. These efforts are also supported by the United States which is well aware of a great role of the region as a link between resource-intensive Europe and rich in resources but still politically fragile regions of the Middle East and Central Asia. Turkey's part in the region is all the greater, it aims to become a key regional power, an important transit hub for energy supplies and a sort of East-West Bridge.

EU POLICY

EU Member States depend on import of energy resources as they have no sufficient local reserves for meeting their consumption. Therefore, the Black Sea region is considered to be extremely important for steady development of European economies since valuable routes of oil and gas transportation from Russia, the Caspian region and the Middle East go through it. The priority in the Black Sea policy is the establishment of new energy links and the expansion of existing ones between these regions and European markets that will greatly improve energy security of the old continent.

After Bulgaria and Romania's entry in 2007 EU has become a regional player in the Black Sea region and conducts the policy to strengthen its influence in the region. In March 2004 the document "Black Sea synergy" was adopted (Lyubcheva, 2010; *Turkish...*, 2007) which focuses on the specific policy realization in the area of regional security, transport, environment, energy security, trade and proper management. In the field of security the document provides that EU will work on increasing of energy stability together with regional partners by improving the existing one and establishing new energy infrastructure. The Union is expected to further strengthen the links with energy producers, transit countries and consumers by means of the energy security dialogue.

At the beginning of 2011 European Parliament approved the report involving EU general strategy for the region which is primarily focused on increasing political and energy security. The key aims of the strategy are stabilization of the Black Sea region, respect for human rights, immigration management, energy security increasing and promotion of social and environmental regional development. This document indicates the most significant problems of EU in the region: so called “Frozen conflicts,” locked borders between some countries (*European...*, 2011).

EU is especially worried about its energy security that is tightly connected with the stability in the Black Sea region and decreasing of the Union energy dependence on Russia. EU is going to construct so called “The Southern gas transmission corridor” to overcome increasing dependence on fuel import from the Russian Federation. It will be the fourth largest axis for gas supplies along with the Northern corridor Norway, from the east in Russia and from the Mediterranean Sea in Africa. Its main goal is to increase supply reliability as due to the evidence during Gas Crisis in January 2009 the countries depending only on a single supplier suffered most of all. “The Southern gas transmission corridor” will become the straight link between EU gas market and some of the world largest gas fields, the Caspian Sea and the Middle East. The dominant suppliers of the project are supposed to be Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and probably Iraq. Iran and Egypt can be included in the future but now the political situation in the countries doesn’t allow it. Turkey will be a key transit country with other transit routes through the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. The supplies through the Southern corridor are expected to begin in 2020 meeting approximately 10–20% of EU gas needs. The project “The Southern gas transmission corridor” initiated by Azerbaijan and aimed at gas transportation from The Caspian region through Georgia and Turkey to European countries is one of the priorities for EU (Norman, 2020). After consideration of many variants of natural gas supply from the Caspian Sea to Europe in the medium term TANAP and TAR projects are likely to be implemented. On 1 July 2019 the construction of Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) was completed. A gas pipe TANAP will be connected to Trans Adriatic gas pipe (TAP) (Dechev, 2019). It means that natural gas supplies from Azerbaijan to Italy will begin through Greece and Albania which is already a real diversification of gas supply to Europe with other countries’ supplies except Russia (Aleksееva, 2018).

RUSSIA POLICY

Russian policy in relation to the Black Sea region is closely linked with some crucial issues for the country:

- unsolved conflicts in post-Soviet area in the region;
- plans for the further NATO expansion;
- possible EU expansion in the future;
- the prospects of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);
- security policy in the region;
- last but not the least energy policy in the region.

Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 changed the situation for Russia in separatist territories of Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia and Transdniestria and Nagorny Karabakh's conflict. Moscow responds to any emerging concerns in accordance with its particular interest. For instance, with regard to Armenia and Azerbaijan dispute over Nagorny Karabakh Russia joins other key members of Minsk Group, and together they form the common position which is in favor of Armenia, its traditional partner in Caucasus region.

However, with regard to splinter territories of Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia the position of Russia is much tougher. The country undertakes unilateral actions for effective integration of these two parts in its territory without the recognition of the international community and official annexation. These actions peaked during the war in August 2008 in Georgia when Russian troops invaded two splinter territories to support separatists in their fight against Georgian Army.

In contrast to fierce protests over NATO expansion in 1999 before the first wave of expansion by three Central European countries, Moscow's respond to the second wave of new member states in five years (including Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria) was quite calm.

In 2008 Russia had not any serious objections to inviting Croatia and Albania to enter NATO. Nevertheless, Moscow's respond to probable entry of Georgia and particularly Ukraine is not so moderate. The primary aim of Russian diplomacy remains preservation of Ukraine as some kind of buffer between Russia and NATO and maintenance of strong economic and cultural relations between these two countries.

As in other cases of EU expansion entry of Bulgaria and Romania won't lead to the problems connected with Moscow's respond. Even hypothetical membership of Moldavia and Ukraine doesn't seem to be especially problematic for the Kremlin in spite of increasing rivalry between EU and Russia in the Black Sea region. Russia perceives EU as much less threat to security than NATO.

In the 1990s Russia faced to entry of Western oil companies into the Caspian region especially in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In 2006 the pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan was put into operation thus ending Russian monopoly on transition of Caspian oil to the world market. Russia, however, is still a major player in the Caspian and the Black Seas oil business, and Novorossiysk retains its role as a main terminal of the country for Russian and Kazakh oil transportation.

Gradually obtaining ownership of energy transportation infrastructure in different countries Russia turns energy into the strategic branch and tool to develop the policy, political influence and pressure through gas prices and supply monitoring. The country managed to strengthen and expand its positions in the natural gas market significantly. Fundamental change occurred in 2005 when "Gazprom" cancelled price subsidies for the clients from CIS countries and began to provide them at market prices. "Gazprom" insists on the replacement the gas transit payment in kind for cash as well. The fears that gas supply could be used by Russia as the tool of political pressure were confirmed during gas crisis at the beginning of 2009 when gas supply to Europe were stopped due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

An important strategic goal for Russia is to seal Caspian and Central Asian energy route to European market and redirect it through Russian monopoly supply lines. Thus, Russia is putting economic and political pressure to be able to buy gas predominantly

from such countries as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan thereby depriving international companies of the capacity to access their markets.

Europe and Russia compete for the Middle Asia gas. Gazprom manages to provide long term gas supplies from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan through the Kremlin power.

Other considerable differences in Russian foreign policy in the Black Sea region and consequently in the Balkans are: focus on military strategic aspects of security and defense; economic influence and consolidation of civilization axis; cultural tool of influence for clustering countries with a common religion and language culture; and certainly Russian energy strategy remains sensible for both subregions paving the way for market security provision and influence in Central and Western Europe.

There are no elements of aggression and territorial claims which some extremely Russophobic surroundings try to implement. With no doubt Russian intelligence monitors the situation in the world and the region carefully, so do NATO and EU. Taking into account straight threaten of military activities in the Black Sea by Russia and high military capabilities along its eastern borders Russian intelligence activities is customary and expected. But when this fact is served intelligence activities of the USA is omitted altogether. For instance, an intelligence centre with huge staff was constructed in the Balkans.

Commonly rhetoric supports western Balkan countries oftener than genuine steps. So called trade with Serbia 10 times lower than with Austria. Nevertheless attempts to restrict NATO expansion to the East clearly exist. This explains recent media knowledge of Russian and Serbian agreement on military cooperation where drafts on purchase of Russian weapon are included. Russian contribution in the Balkans is also related to the fact that it is able to slow down the influence of Turkey and Saudi Arabia and creeping islamization of the region.

TURKEY POLICY

After finishing of Cold War Turkey plays an important role in the promotion of economic, political and cultural cooperation in the Black Sea region. The country is an initiator and co-founder of BSEC located in Istanbul. In addition to the foundation of the organization Turkey is essential for its transformation from economic forum into the project-based institute. In BSEC Turkey cooperates with both Armenia and Greece having unsolved territorial disputes with them. It corresponds to the policy of good relationships and cooperation with all country's neighbors.

On basis of indisputable success of BSEC Turkey has started implementing the initiative to establish a regional security system. In April 2001 in Istanbul the task force of the Black Sea cooperation (BLACKSEAFOR) (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine) was founded (*International...*, 2020). It is a member of the six countries with access to the Black sea along with Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia. The mission of the organization aims at provision of humanitarian assistance, participation in rescue operations, struggle with terrorism and organized crime, arms smuggling and many others.

Maintaining control over the Black Sea straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles) has always been key aspect of Turkish policy in the region. Moreover, Turkey is rightly concerned about limited vessels sailing on this narrow waterway which is one of the busiest in the world. An accident caused by terrorism, extreme climatic conditions or just human error will be a disaster not only for international oil trade but for millions of Turkish citizens living along the Bosphorus coastline. To decrease these risks Turkey implemented restrictions for transit vessels size in 2002.

In an attempt to reduce tanker movement through increasingly intensive straits Turkey has a direct interest in oil pipeline construction surrounding this waterway. The first detour route like this was carried out in 2006 with the introduction of Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline (*Baku...*, 2009) that transports the oil from Azerbaijan to Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. Several projects stipulated the offer of a detour route for oil transportation from the Caspian Sea to Europe: a pipeline from Turkish Black Sea port of Samsun to Turkish Mediterranean town of Ceyhan; a pipeline from Bulgarian port of Burgas to Greek Mediterranean town of Alexandroupoulos; a pipeline from Burgas through Macedonia to Albanian port of Vlora; a line from Romanian town of Konstantsa to Italian port of Trieste. At this stage the majority of the projects were abandoned and, you might say, some of them almost certainly were not realized due to financial, economic, and first of all environmental reasons.

The capacity of Turkey to become a significant country for gas and oil transit from Russia and also from the Caspian Sea region and the Persian Gulf strengthens its strategic value for EU. Geographically Turkey is close to the richest energy stores in the world; its share is estimated at more than 70% of world gas and oil deposits. It is interested in becoming a key transit hub for natural gas transportation from the Caspian region, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf to European markets. Being such centre will guarantee Turkey substantial fee income as well as a small proportion of transit gas for its own needs. Besides, Ankara is looking forward to decreasing its dependence on Russian import of natural gas. Moreover, Turkey hopes to become a key country for gas and oil transit to Europe with which it will be able to realize its future influence ambitions. With the construction of the pipeline Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and recently opened gas pipe “Turkish Stream” (*Putin...*, 2020) Turkey is turning into an important transit country for transportation of considerable quantities of crude oil especially from Azerbaijan and Russian natural gas.

USA POLICY

The interests of the USA in the Black Sea region lie in the prevention of Russian gas projects and furthermore, its own economic interests play a significant role. The USA military capacities are based on the Sixth USA Navy deployed in the Mediterranean Sea; the largest base Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo; the missile defense system “Aegis” on Deveselu base in Romania; along Bulgarian borders, their military presence in Turkey and Greece, and the warships in the Black Sea which have nothing in common with the USA security and motivated by other reasons (*There...*, 2020).

The USA strategy for the Black Sea region focuses on the USA and NATO military presence. All of this is relevant to the Balkans region where the USA strategic interests do not always coincide with EU interests.

The USA plans to privatize a strategically significant port of Alexandroupoulos is very important for Russia and in the Balkans. It is the key point of Greece and Bulgaria's gas pipe and Trans-Adriatic gas pipe. Alexandroupoulos located not far from the strait of Dardanelles that is under Turkey's control connects the Aegan and the Mediterranean Seas with the Black Sea.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also strategized for the Balkans region and at the end of June 2019 introduced "The Action Plan for harmful Kremlin's influence" with a number of essential missions including protection against disinformation, less Europe dependence on natural gas and reduction of EU trade with Russia (*Countering...*, 2020). The corporation RAND which informs the White House and Pentagon that there is no exclusively military solution to the security situation in the Black advises to dedicate efforts to information and hybrid operations, economic projects, air and coastal defense in Romania and Bulgaria, as well as strengthening defense capacity of Ukrainian and Georgian Armies (Maltsev..., 2019).

Congress' request to the USA of Pentagon's developing the Anti-actions Strategy for Russia in the Black Sea is still pressing. The argument containing in the request about the necessity to work together with allies and partners for contra-actions and attribution to Moscow the attempts of political influence in the Balkans and other parts of Europe means that in practice Washington needs allies and partners included in the document as well as new obligations and undoubtedly they will be of military nature.

NATO POLICY

NATO confirms its part of a constant participant of the Black Sea region after Bulgaria and Romania's entry into EU in 2004. NATO presence in the Black Sea region creates some tension in the relations between North Atlantic Treaty Organization, some of its members and Russia. Russia and Turkey repeatedly express their discontent by NATO presence in the Black Sea region claiming of their excessive militarization in the region. However, North Atlantic Treaty Organization is supposed to continue its expansion to the east due to NATO open door policy and new partnership with the countries of the Southern Caucasus.

NATO summit in April 2008 in the capital of Romania Bucharest (*Bucharest...*, 2008; *NATO...*, 2008) reiterated the readiness of North Atlantic Treaty Organization to continue contribution into the efforts of strengthening security and stability in the Black Sea region by promoting dialogue and cooperation between the countries of the region and NATO. The issue of energy security significance was raised at this meeting for the first time that is reflected in the final declaration. The Organization is eager to demonstrate equality of all State Members and symbolically recognize the countries joining the organization.

Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Turkey have a special responsibility for the security in the region as NATO members. As the Black Sea allies they have to support a co-

ordinated, fair and constant dialogue (bilateral and trilateral) and the approach directed to the development of NATO adequate strategy and tactics for security and stability provision in the region. NATO's support of "regional stability" assistance via effective use of existing mechanisms and initiatives is of great importance.

There is an opinion that the one who controls the Black Sea or dominates it can easily project the force towards European continent, primarily into the Balkans and Central Europe as well as into the East Mediterranean, the Southern Caucasus and the Northern Middle East.

The Black Sea region is the south-eastern flank of North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In case of a war the United States provides for movement of military forces to the north-eastern flank, but it doesn't mean that the south-eastern flank is non-essential. On contrary, it must ensure the approach of American troops which after docking with Greek ports go across Bulgaria in North-Eastern direction, and this maneuver has already been played in military exercises.

The key moment of NATO measurements is so called border presence along eastern borders defined as "prevention of potential use of force in the settlement of crises." Frankly speaking, before summit of NATO in Wales [20] the military organization hadn't had renovated plans and wartime measures for its North-Eastern flank and filling the gap seemed to be logic for every self-respected military structure and country. Nevertheless the deployment of military forces and the conduct of increasingly major military exercises have gone well beyond the role of defensive nature and increased tensions severely. This "advanced presence" is closer to us leaving aside the Baltic Sea region. It involves the deployment of an international brigade and divisional headquarters in Romania and constant presence of NATO warships in the Black Sea. Paradoxically, despite an apparent complication of the situation and risks associated with exaggeration of these front and military actions, a number of commentators in the media keep arguing that "this is a measurement of some reduction in escalation and prevention of confrontation."

However, the success of NATO strategy on presence in the Black Sea depends on close cooperation of three NATO State Members in the region: Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.

CONFLICTS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ENERGY SECURITY

One of the most urgent security problems in the Black Sea which has a major impact on realization of large energy projects is the existence of so called "frozen conflicts."

There are four such kind of unsolved conflicts in the region that emerged because of the dissolution of Soviet Union. Two of them are situated in Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), one is in Nagorny Karabakh (the argument between Armenia and Azerbaijan), and the fourth in Moldova (Transdnistria).

Unsolved conflicts have an important effect on large-scale infrastructure projects and transport nets for the wider region. The gas pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum and

pipeline form bonds between Azerbaijan and Georgia with Turkey but unsolved conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorny Karabakh are threatening the bonds by destabilization of two Caucasus republics.

Resolution of the conflicts and fight against external factors in the Black Region greatly can be achieved by means of active regional cooperation. In 1996 Bulgaria launched the process of coordination in South-Eastern Europe, Regional Cooperation Council became a successor of Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and useful projects appeared in the Black Sea region (*Southeast...*, 2020). But many initiatives eventually faded and lost their importance.

A few new programmes, such as the programme on digital technology for the Western Balkans under the chairmanship of Bulgaria in EU Council offered by European Commission, have shown almost nothing concerning their realization.

The capacities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization still exist which members are 12 countries possessing 20 working groups with Bulgarian adoption of their chairmanship during six months since January 1, 2019 (*Black Sea...*, 2019; *The Black...*, 2019).

The operation “The Black Sea Harmony,” started by Turkey in 2004 to which Russia and other Black Sea countries joined later, can be regarded as the respond to NATO expansion plans on its military influence in the Black Sea.

In February 2019 the idea of developing integrated approach to the Black Sea region raised at the Conference on Security in Munich.

At the meeting in Bucharest May 8–9, 2019 seven Black Sea countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine adopted the declaration of the ministers approving a new tool for the future development of their multilateral cooperation entitled “The General Black Sea Agenda” (*Bucharest Declaration...*, 2019). The texts in the adopted document allow structuring macroregional cooperation in the Black Sea to facilitate political, methodological and financial assistance that EU can provide for cooperation promotion between the Black Sea countries. New methods and forms of cooperation adopted in Bucharest turn this geopolitically complicated region into “EU macroregion” where the established methods and forms of effective cooperation are applied in regardless of the time when EU leaders would approve of EU Macroregional Strategy for the Black Sea project developed in European Commission.

CONCLUSION

The research hypothesis is confirmed. The Black Sea region is one of the strategically significant regions in the world. Its unique geographical location connecting the North with the South and the East with the West and its active participation in world production, transportation and consumption of energy resources are strong arguments to support its importance. The analysis has shown that the significance of the region will be greatly increasing because it becomes the corridor for energy resource provision from the oil and gas rich Caspian region and Central Asia to European and world markets. The importance of the Black Sea region for Europe energy security provision and avoidance of its energy dependence on Russia is recognized by all international

players. It also determines renewed interest of many leading countries and international organizations and their intention to carry out the policy of influence strengthening in the region.

Dynamic international processes increasingly push the Balkans and the Black Sea regions from the margins into the one of the geopolitical world interests centres. It isn't just a geographical position which makes it the bridge between Europe and Asia. It is also an outer border of NATO and EU from which the relevant conclusions and arguments are drawn. Its economic capacity and natural resources fields especially in the Black and Caspian Seas region as well as the value of energy and transport routes passing through it within the New Silk Road have drawn the attention of many countries and trans-national companies making it the subject to debates, strategies and plans of many countries and organizations such as NATO and the European Union.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is the analysis of the state of energy security in the states of the Black Sea region in terms of the geopolitics and geostrategies of different regional and international political forces. Energy security is interpreted as the provision of steady energy supply from different types and sources (diversification) and energy market stability. Energy security analysts have always emphasized the importance of energy and energy policies, but too often focused solely on the utilization of resources as an element of political power. The problem of energy and its security is often viewed as vague, misunderstood or unsolvable, with countries hostage to threats with hazardous consequences. A quality selection of analytical and statistical resources has been made to identify energy security problems, such as the growing dependence of most advanced industrial countries on oil and gas supplies, and increasing demand from developing economies for fuel. The objectives of the study are based on the notion of the regional division between the states of the Black Sea basin. The results of the study are founded on the analysis of the operations of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the geostrategic and geopolitics interests of the major players in the Black Sea region in the context of their energy security. The article is concluded with the suggestion of a potential solution to the problem of uneven geographic distribution of energy resources such as oil and gas on the political map of the world. The political instruments for influencing energy security in the EU,

NATO, USA, Russia and Turkey are analyzed in the article. Recommendations for reducing potential conflicts in the Black Sea region and minimizing the impact on the energy security of the states involved by providing a steady energy supply are given.

Keywords: energy security, energy-related factor, the Black Sea region, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, geopolitics, geostrategy, international relations

BEZPIECZEŃSTWO ENERGETYCZNE W REGIONIE MORZA CZARNEGO: GEOSTRATEGIA A GEOENERGIA

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest analiza stanu bezpieczeństwa energetycznego w państwach regionu Morza Czarnego w aspekcie geopolityki i geostrategii różnych regionalnych i międzynarodowych sił politycznych. Bezpieczeństwo energetyczne rozumiane jest jako zapewnienie stabilnych dostaw energii z różnych rodzajów i źródeł (dywersyfikacja) oraz stabilność rynku energii. Analitycy bezpieczeństwa energetycznego zawsze podkreślali znaczenie energii i polityki energetycznej, ale zbyt często skupiali się wyłącznie na wykorzystaniu zasobów jako elementu władzy politycznej. Problem energii i bezpieczeństwa energetycznego często jest nieokreślony, niezrozumiały lub nierozwiązywalny, a państwa pozostają praktycznie bezradnymi zakładnikami zagrożeń niosących niebezpieczne konsekwencje. W celu zbadania problemów związanych z bezpieczeństwem energetycznym, takich jak rosnąca zależność najbardziej rozwiniętych krajów uprzemysłowionych od dostaw ropy i gazu, oraz rosnące zapotrzebowanie gospodarek rozwijających się na paliwo, dokonano wyboru jakościowego zasobów analitycznych i statystycznych. Cele pracy nawiązują do pojęcia podziału regionalnego między państwami basenu Morza Czarnego. Wyniki badania opierają się na analizie działalności Czarnomorskiej Organizacji Współpracy Gospodarczej i interesów geostrategicznych i geopolitycznych głównych graczy regionu Morza Czarnego w kontekście jego bezpieczeństwa energetycznego. W artykule przedstawiono sugestię potencjalnego rozwiązania problemu nierównomiernego rozmieszczenia geograficznego surowców energetycznych, takich jak ropa i gaz, na politycznej mapie świata. Przeanalizowano polityczne instrumenty wpływania na bezpieczeństwo energetyczne w regionie UE, NATO, USA, Rosji i Turcji. Podano zalecenia dotyczące ograniczenia potencjalnych konfliktów w regionie Morza Czarnego i zminimalizowania ich wpływu na bezpieczeństwo energetyczne zainteresowanych państw przy stabilnych dostawach energii.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo energetyczne, czynnik energetyczny, region Morza Czarnego, Organizacja Współpracy Gospodarczej Morza Czarnego, geopolityka, geostrategia, stosunki międzynarodowe

