



# Studia Wschodnioeuropejskie



**W poszukiwaniu nowej drogi**

**Proces suwerenizacji państw byłej rosyjskiej strefy wpływów**

**Redakcja naukowa numeru:**

Anna Jach  
Krystian Pachucki-Włosek  
Michał Kuryłowicz  
Katarzyna Kosowska  
Jan Brodowski  
Paweł Stawarz

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Warszawa 2025

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## Spis treści

### **Krzysztof Fedorowicz**

Erosion of the alliance - Armenia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) after 2016..... 6

### **Krzystian Pachucki-Włosek**

The role and importance of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Central Asian integration process ..... 22

### **Karolina Kotulewicz**

Impact of Romanian and Russian soft power on the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. Selected aspects..... 37

### **Jan Brodowski**

Facing difficult times. EU – Georgia relations current problems and challenges..... 63

### **Robert M. Roszkowski**

Ukraine in the context of its integration into NATO: a case study ..... 80

### **Oksana Naszczoczyn**

Kazachstan w polityce zagranicznej Republiki Tureckiej po zimnej wojnie..... 100

### **Aneta Strzemżalska**

Azerbaijan between Turkey and Russia after 2014: the Karabakh factor ..... 116

### **Maia Bregadze, Nana Amiranashvili**

The inception of the century-old strategic partnership between Georgia and Poland: a prism analysis of the "Republic of Georgia" newspaper..... 129

### **Aleksandra Oczkiewicz**

Diplomatic challenges of Tajikistan's sovereignty: a comparison of energy cooperation between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan in the early 2000s versus today (2019 - 2023)..... 137

**Kinga Anna Gajda, Michał Kuryłowicz**

Ukrainization of Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war..... 149

**Vakhtang Maisaia**

Geopolitical code and sovereignty in aegis of the Central Asian regional security perspectives: Kazakhstan case-study ..... 169

**Tomasz Kucharski**

“Derussification” of economic policy in Turkmenistan..... 184

**Dominika Folwarska-Gicala**

Language policy in Kazakhstan. Course of actions over the last few years ..... 197

**Katarzyna Kosowska**

Gastarbeiter as an impediment to sovereignization of Tajikistan ..... 206

**Dymitr Romanowski**

Orthodoxy in Ukraine: between the Second and Third Rome ..... 220

**Yevhenii Portnyi**

“State control of the Muslim ummah in the Volga-Ural region with a particular focus on Tatarstan..... 242

**Przemysław Żukowski**

Zjawisko oporu społecznego w odniesieniu do formacji Obrony Terytorialnej..... 264

**Robert Kłaczyński**

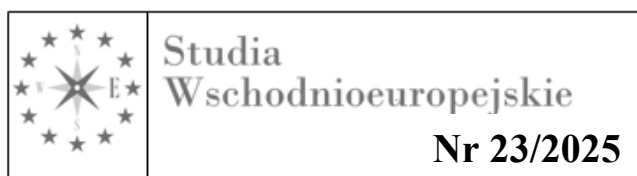
Wybrane aspekty polityki bezpieczeństwa władz powstańczych polskiej insurekcji 1863 roku w Królestwie Polskim oraz na kresach wschodnich Polski przedrozbiorowej ..... 278

**Alan Beroud**

Holding w prawie polskim: charakterystyka pojęcia, umocowanie normatywne, rola i znaczenie grup kapitałowych dla bezpieczeństwa polskiej gospodarki..... 291

*Krzysztof Fedorowicz*

Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza  
w Poznaniu



## **Erosion of the alliance - Armenia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) after 2016**

### **Introduction**

For the Republic of Armenia, cooperation within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is an integral part of its national security strategy, serving as a fundamental element in ensuring state security. For Yerevan, the guarantee lies in multilateral cooperation within the alliance, particularly the preferential conditions for military-technical supplies for allied states, which is of primary importance for Armenia. The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia also emphasizes the significance of CSTO activities in ensuring regional security and stability, as well as the comprehensive improvement of the air defense system within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and CSTO and the development of bilateral relations. It is also worth noting that, in addition to CSTO membership, Armenia's military-political cooperation and security are also based on a bilateral political-military alliance with Russia. For many years, these security components were a guarantee of Armenia's safety. However, membership in the CSTO practically made Armenia dependent on Russia and positioned Yerevan unequivocally as a pro-Russian state.

The purpose of this article is to present the progressive erosion of Armenia's alliance with the CSTO and Russia due to the evolutionary changes regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh issue in Armenia's foreign policy. For this article, it is assumed that the CSTO is not a military alliance protecting its member states from external threats but an organization maintaining Russia's sphere of influence in the post-Soviet area. The further analysis assumes the hypothesis that Armenia's membership in the CSTO after 2016 was characterized by deepening discrepancies regarding ensuring Armenia's national security due to the changing status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

### **CSTO and Russia as Armenia's Security Guarantee**

The Collective Security Treaty Organization is a collective security system comprising six former Soviet states. The alliance's origins date back to May 15, 1992, when the Collective Security Treaty, commonly known as the Tashkent Pact, was signed in the capital of Uzbekistan. The document was signed by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. A key provision is Article 4, which states: "If one of the member states is subjected to aggression by any state or group of states, it will be considered an aggression against all member states of this Treaty. In the event of an act of aggression against any of the participating states, all other participating states will provide it with the necessary assistance, including military aid, and support with the means at their disposal to exercise the right of collective defense."

In 1993, Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Georgia joined the Treaty. The Treaty came into force after ratification procedures on April 20, 1994, and was concluded for five years with the possibility of extension. However, in 1999, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan withdrew from membership. On April 2, 1999, the presidents of Armenia, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan signed a protocol extending its validity for another five years. Additionally, it was established that in case of threats to security, stability, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of one or more signatories, or threats to peace and security, member states would promptly activate a joint consultation mechanism to coordinate their positions and take measures to provide assistance and eliminate the threat<sup>1</sup>.

On May 14, 2002, the Collective Security Council in Moscow decided to grant the Collective Security Treaty the status of an international regional organization, transforming the existing structure into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). On October 7, 2002, in Chisinau, at the CIS summit, the presidents of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan approved the CSTO Charter. In December 2003, the CSTO Charter was registered with the UN Secretariat, and in 2004, the Organization received observer status at the UN General Assembly. The organization's goal is to strengthen international peace, security, and stability, and the collective protection of the independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of member states. The Organization operates with a preference for political measures over military means, strict respect for independence, voluntary participation, equal

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<sup>1</sup> Организация Договора о коллективной безопасности, за: <https://odkb-csto.org/25years/> (19.06.2024).

rights and obligations of member states, and non-interference in matters within the national jurisdiction of member states<sup>2</sup>.

In 2009, the Rapid Reaction Forces were created, consisting of military contingents and special forces of CSTO member states, totaling about 20,000 personnel capable of performing both military and special tasks. A year later, in 2010, the CSTO Peacekeeping Forces were permanently established, consisting of about 3,000 soldiers from member states, to be used both within the Organization's responsibility area by decision of the Collective Security Council and outside it under a UN Security Council mandate. For the first time, the Peacekeeping Forces were used in 2022 when the president of Kazakhstan requested CSTO Peacekeeping Forces to stabilize the situation during anti-government protests. According to the CSTO Collective Security Council's decision on January 6, 2022, the CSTO Peacekeeping Forces were deployed to the Republic of Kazakhstan for a limited period to stabilize and normalize the situation. These forces included units of the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Tajikistan. Their primary task was to protect important state and military facilities and assist Kazakhstan's law enforcement forces in stabilizing the situation and restoring order<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, annual exercises are conducted on the training grounds of one of the states, involving several thousand soldiers (e.g., in 2021 in Tajikistan and in 2022 in Kazakhstan).

Since its inception, this organization has been one of the fundamental pillars of Armenia's national security, which in 1992 was one of the co-founders of the first post-Soviet military alliance. From the beginning of Armenia's independence, security has been a priority issue. Armenia, entangled in a military conflict with Azerbaijan over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, assumed that Russia was the only guarantor of its national security. For this reason, Armenia joined all post-Soviet organizations under Russia's aegis, such as the CIS, CSTO, the Eurasian Union, and signed a military alliance with Russia, allowing Russian troops to be stationed at the base in Gyumri until 2044. Moscow became the sole supplier of arms, and Armenian officers trained in Russian military academies<sup>4</sup>.

Historical, cultural, and socio-political Armenian-Russian ties have for many years predisposed Armenia to the role of Moscow's most faithful ally in the South Caucasus. Partly

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<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> *Контингенты коллективных миротворческих сил ОДКБ направлены в Республику Казахстан*, za: [https://odkb-csto.org/news/news\\_odkb/kontingenty-kollektivnykh-mirotvorcheskikh-sil-odkb-napravleny-v-respubliku-kazakhstan/#loaded](https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/kontingenty-kollektivnykh-mirotvorcheskikh-sil-odkb-napravleny-v-respubliku-kazakhstan/#loaded) (19.06.2024).

<sup>4</sup> K. Fedorowicz, *Armenia – Rosja. Poglębiająca się erozja sojuszu*, „Komentarze IEŚ 971”, za: <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/armenia-rosja-poglebiajaca-sie-erozja-sojuszu/> (20.06.2024).



thanks to Russian assistance, Armenians in 1994 controlled about 90% of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions of Azerbaijan, proclaiming the internationally unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Republic of Artsakh). Through Russian mediation, a ceasefire was signed in May 1994<sup>5</sup>, which, however, did not ultimately end the conflict but shifted it into a long-term "frozen" phase<sup>6</sup>. This gave Moscow significant leverage for influence and interference in Armenia's economic, cultural, social, and political matters. The Armenian economy became almost dependent on Russia and its oligarchs, who became owners of gas, electricity, telecommunications networks, railways, and media. Russia became Armenia's "gateway to the world," a country where an increasing number of Armenians worked, studied, and lived. In turn, Armenia practically became a "Russian colony."

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had a significant impact on Armenia's security policy and military alliances. It was a fundamental issue<sup>7</sup>. The process of systemic transformation and the shaping of statehood in Armenia was closely tied to the rise of a new nationalist elite focused mainly on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. This issue became the main source of legitimacy for Armenian elites, with the formation of the new state and its institutions coinciding with the mobilization of armed forces to fight for disputed territories<sup>8</sup>. The fight for Nagorno-Karabakh became, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a generator of Armenian independence. Victory in the Nagorno-Karabakh war was the main goal and choice of the nation, and independence was one of the methods to achieve this goal. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh quickly ceased to be a territorial issue and became the center of political identification for Armenians. The idea of fighting for Nagorno-Karabakh became the main idea of an independent Armenian state<sup>9</sup>. To achieve this, it was assumed that an alliance with Russia and participation in post-Soviet military organizations like CSTO were necessary. For many years, Armenia was perceived as Russia's most faithful ally in the South Caucasus. Conversely, for Russia, Armenia was a stable

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<sup>5</sup> В. Казимиров, *Мир Карабаху. Посредничество России в урегулировании нагорно-карабахского конфликта*, Москва 2009, s. 146-158; С. Маркедонов, *Россия в процессе нагорно-карабахского урегулирования*, [za:https://mgimo.ru/library/publications/rossiya\\_v\\_protseesse\\_nagorno\\_karabakhskogo\\_uregulirovaniya/](https://mgimo.ru/library/publications/rossiya_v_protseesse_nagorno_karabakhskogo_uregulirovaniya/) (24.06.2024).

<sup>6</sup> A. Pomieciński, A. Tadevosyan, K. Fedorowicz, G. Ordyan, *Ludność cywilna wobec wojny w Górskim Karabachu. Antropologia straty i cierpienia*, Poznań 2023, s. 47-49.

<sup>7</sup> T. de Waal, *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York 2013, s. 141-144.

<sup>8</sup> Levon Abrahamian, an outstanding Armenian historian, writes about the influence of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue on the process of shaping the nationalist elite in Armenia in 1988-1990; L. Abrahamian, *Armenian Identity in a Changing World*, Costa Mesa California 2006, s. 218-224.

<sup>9</sup> K. Fedorowicz, *Transformacja ustrojowa w Armenii w latach 1991-2016*, Poznań 2017, s. 331.

element of the security system in this region, enabling the extension of Russian influence over neighboring states.

Armenia's functioning in the CSTO until 2016 proceeded smoothly. Both militarily and politically, Armenia was one of the leading participants in the alliance, distinguished by its above-standard activity in the organization's work. However, the increasing dependence on Russia led to Armenia's incapacitation on the international stage. Already in September 2013, then-President Serzh Sargsyan unilaterally decided not to sign the ready and agreed Association Agreement with the EU without any social or political consultations. Instead, he decided to join Armenia to the Eurasian Customs Union with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. He unilaterally made the geopolitical choice for his country and the political future of its people interested in cooperation with the EU. Armenia, faced with the choice of signing an association agreement with the EU or membership in the Eurasian Union, reaffirmed its military alliance with Russia. This decision became a turning point, initiating the slow erosion of allied relations between Moscow and Yerevan<sup>10</sup>. In the long run, the decision made by the president in 2013 led to social protests and the so-called "Velvet Revolution."

In mid-2015, mass several-month-long demonstrations took place in the center of Yerevan against the increase in electricity prices. Although the protests had a purely social background and were not directly aimed at Armenian authorities but against the Russian energy company Inter RAO UES, they were characterized by their universality and high intensity<sup>11</sup>. Although the protest concerned only the electricity price increase, it indirectly concerned Armenian-Russian relations and the subjectivity of Armenian society. Many strategic Armenian enterprises belong to Russian oligarchs, making all Armenians feel like residents of a colony where conditions are imposed without asking for consent<sup>12</sup>. The Russian side perceived these protests as the beginning of a color revolution and pressured Armenian authorities to quickly and effectively end the protests. However, Armenian authorities did not opt for open confrontation.

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<sup>10</sup> А. Искандарян, *Армении – 2013: сбор урожая*, „Кавказ 2013. Ежегодник Института Кавказа”, Ереван 2015, s. 36-37.

<sup>11</sup> K. Fedorowicz, *Konflikty na Kaukazie Południowym jako czynniki destabilizujące rzeczywistość społeczno-polityczną*, „Studia Europejskie”, 2015, nr 4 (76), s. 183.

<sup>12</sup> В. Давтян, *Энергетическая безопасность Армении и геополитические интересы России на Южном Кавказе*, Ереван 2012, s. 56-131.

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### 2016 – Problems with Allies

In 2016, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict "thawed," leading to the heaviest fighting since the ceasefire in 1994, known as the Four-Day War. Nearly 100 Armenians died due to the sudden and intense escalation of military actions. For the first time since 1994, some territory was lost. Additionally, the fighting revealed significant technological backwardness in the Armenian army. The myth of its invincibility and the assistance from its greatest ally, Russia, quickly crumbled as Russia not only failed to help Armenia but publicly announced the sale of weapons to Azerbaijan. Armenians, assured for the last 20 years of security guarantees from Russia and CSTO, felt betrayed in a crisis situation<sup>13</sup>. It turned out that allies, on whom Armenians relied, were selling arms to their opponents. Additionally, the Russian side suggested that Armenia return parts of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory<sup>14</sup>. This breached the previously stable foundations of the Armenian state despite its alliance with Russia and CSTO membership. The defeat in Nagorno-Karabakh, territorial loss, and revealed military deficiencies shook Armenian society, leading to a wave of protests and dissatisfaction. This social discontent ultimately led to mass protests paralyzing the entire country in spring 2018 and the so-called color revolution (the "Velvet Revolution"), resulting in the removal of the previous elites from power. Nikol Pashinyan, the leader of the protests, became the Prime Minister of Armenia<sup>15</sup>. Although Pashinyan, the initiator of the revolution and current Prime Minister, did not abandon the alliance with Russia, he tried to give it a real character. However, the fact that he gained power through a "color revolution" caused mistrust from the Russian side from the very beginning.

Although the broad exchange of elites in Armenia's political system did not have an anti-Russian character, and the new Prime Minister confirmed allied commitments to Russia and other members of the military alliance, the first serious problems in CSTO's functioning soon emerged. Even before the "Velvet Revolution," on May 2, 2017, Armenian General Yuri Khachaturov was appointed as CSTO Secretary-General. After Nikol Pashinyan took power in 2018, Khachaturov was accused of overthrowing Armenia's constitutional order along with other individuals on March 1, 2008. At that time, Khachaturov commanded Yerevan garrison

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<sup>13</sup> A. Jarosiewicz, M. Falkowski, *Wojna czterodniowa w Górskim Karabachu*, „Analizy OSW, 5.4.2016, za: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2016-04-06/wojna-czterodniowa-w-gorskim-karabachu> (20.06.2024).

<sup>14</sup> W. Górecki, *Górski Karabach – w co gra Rosja?*, „Analizy OSW”, 13.04.2016, za: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2016-04-13/gorski-karabach-w-co-gra-rosja> (20.06.2024).

<sup>15</sup> С. Григорян, *Армянская бархатная революция*, Ереван 2018.

units that brutally suppressed peaceful demonstrations, resulting in several deaths and over 200 injuries. He served as Deputy Defense Minister of Armenia and was the Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces from 2008 to 2016<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, the Armenian authorities initiated proceedings to prematurely remove Yuri Khachaturov from his position as Secretary-General of the CSTO. He was dismissed from the position in November 2018<sup>17</sup>.

The method of dismissal sparked violent opposition from the Belarusian authorities. Alaksandr Lukashenko expressed his opposition to the dismissal of Yuri Khachaturov from the position of secretary general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Lukashenko believed that the decision to dismiss him should be made by all CSTO members jointly, and not unilaterally by Armenia. He pointed to the need to maintain stability and continuity in the organization and argued that the general should remain in office until the end of his term or at least until a suitable successor is found by consensus. Armenia's decision to dismiss Khachaturov without full consultation with other CSTO members was seen by Belarus as a violation of the organization's principles<sup>18</sup>. It also caused the first differences of opinion on the functioning of the CSTO between Armenia and Belarus.

### **The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (the 44-Day War) and Its Consequences**

On September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan launched another war, commonly known as the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (or the 44-Day War). Its outcome dramatically changed the status quo in Karabakh that had existed since 1994<sup>19</sup>. This war likely became a turning point regarding conflicts in the post-Soviet area. Lasting only 44 days (from September 27 to November 10, 2020), it was one of the largest wars (excluding the current one in Ukraine) in the former USSR in terms of casualties (almost 7,000 soldiers on both sides), daily casualty rates, and the number of engaged soldiers (up to 200,000 on both sides in the final days of fighting). As a result of the heavy fighting, Azerbaijan gained control over most of the disputed area. Despite Yerevan's requests, Russia and CSTO did not help Armenia, merely enforcing a new ceasefire and the return of some territory by the Armenians<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Генсека ОДКБ обвинили в свержении конституционного строя в Армении, за: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/27/07/2018/5b5ae63f9a794702427fa1ab> (20.06.2024).

<sup>17</sup> Генсек ОДКБ Юрий Хачатуров освобожден от должности, за: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/5751189> (20.06.2024).

<sup>18</sup> Лукашенко назвал нездоровой ситуацию в ОДКБ, за: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-nazval-nezdorovoj-situatsiju-v-odkb-338919-2019/> (20.06.2024).

<sup>19</sup> Р. Пухов, *Буря на Кавказе*, Москва 2021, s. 26

<sup>20</sup> K. Fedorowicz, *Armenia – Rosja ...*, op. cit., s. 1.

After 44 days of intense fighting and the loss of parts of Nagorno-Karabakh, to prevent the complete extermination and deportation of all Armenians living in the area, a ceasefire agreement was negotiated under the compulsion of the Russian president. On November 10, 2020, the presidents of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan signed a ceasefire agreement to halt military actions. It was agreed to introduce an unconditional ceasefire across the conflict area and to leave troops on the front line<sup>21</sup>. The Armenian side committed to returning most of the previously occupied territories (about 70%) to Azerbaijan. The sides agreed that a Russian peacekeeping contingent of 1,960 soldiers would be deployed in the contact zone. It was also established that the Lachin corridor, connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, would remain under the control of Russian peacekeepers, and the Republic of Azerbaijan would guarantee the safe movement of citizens, vehicles, and goods in both directions within the Lachin corridor<sup>22</sup>.

The signed agreement did not definitively end the dispute but only halted the fighting. The implementation of the provisions was not carried out as planned. Even two years after the end of the fighting, there were territorial disputes in southern Armenia over the border delineation, excessive territorial occupation by Azerbaijan, armed skirmishes, incursions into Armenia, shelling of border villages, division of villages, road access blockages, etc<sup>23</sup>. Especially after the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, Russia was unwilling or unable to defend Armenians and fulfill its mandate.

In 2022, Azerbaijan attacked Armenian territory and occupied some border areas. Yerevan, as a CSTO member, again requested military assistance from the organization's signatories but did not receive it. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan publicly accused the CSTO of failing to respond adequately to Azerbaijani military actions. He argued that the CSTO's response was a failure for the organization itself. Contrary to established procedures, the CSTO did not even decide to conduct on-site monitoring, which justified the longstanding concerns of Armenian society that such a crucial military alliance for Armenia's security was ineffective. The Prime Minister noted that during the mass protests in Kazakhstan in January 2022, the CSTO needed only one day to decide to deploy troops, which significantly helped suppress the riots and avoid

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<sup>21</sup> A. Iskandaryan, *The Second Karabakh War, or the First post-soviet War*, Wien 2020, s. 1-12.

<sup>22</sup> Заявление Президента Азербайджанской Республики, Премьер-министра Республики Армения и Президента Российской Федерации, за: <http://special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384> (21.06.2024).

<sup>23</sup> A. Pomieciński, A. Tadevosyan, K. Fedorowicz, G. Ordyan, *Ludność cywilna ...*, op. cit., s. 63.

a coup. However, in the case of Azerbaijan's armed aggression against Armenia in 2022, the alliance was not even able to adopt a clear political stance on Azerbaijan's actions. Therefore, in September 2022, for the first time, the Armenian Prime Minister publicly suggested that Armenia might leave the CSTO<sup>24</sup>.

Since then, Armenian authorities have increasingly distanced themselves from the organization's activities. For instance, in 2022, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan publicly refused to sign the CSTO Security Council declaration in the presence of the presidents of member states. Consequently, Yerevan did not agree to hold the "Combat Brotherhood" military maneuvers on Armenian territory in 2023 and did not send an Armenian contingent to exercises in Kazakhstan (2022) and Belarus (2023)<sup>25</sup>.

### **Loss of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and Redefinition of Armenia's Alliance Policy**

A turning point in Armenia's relations with the CSTO and Russia was the lack of response from Russian peacekeepers to the nine-month blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan, contrary to signed agreements guaranteeing the free movement of people through the Lachin corridor. From December 12, 2022, due to the Azerbaijani blockade and the inaction of Russian peacekeepers, Nagorno-Karabakh was cut off from the outside world. Nearly 120,000 people were in blockade for nine months. Consequently, in September 2023, after a few days of intense fighting, Azerbaijan fully took control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and its authorities announced capitulation. Over 100,000 Armenians left the area within a few days, heading to Armenia.

The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh marked the end of Armenia's policy based on a political-military alliance with Russia. The erosion of this alliance had been visible for some time. The failure of Russia and the CSTO to meet their allied commitments repeatedly caused dissatisfaction from Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In early September 2023, the Armenian Prime Minister sent another critical signal to Moscow, stating that the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh had failed its

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<sup>24</sup> *Главное о критике Арменией ОДКБ и Кремля*, za: <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/386973> (21.06.2023).

<sup>25</sup> K. Fedorowicz, „*Bojowe braterstwo 2023*” na Białorusi – wojskowe manewry Organizacji Układu o Bezpieczeństwie Zbiorowym (ODKB), Komentarze IEŚ 945, za: <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/bojowe-braterstwo-2023-na-bialorusi-wojskowe-manewry-organizacji-ukladu-o-bezpieczenstwie-zbiorowym-odkb/> (21.06.2023).

mission. In a speech to the nation, he assessed that the collective security structures on which Armenia relied were ineffective, and allies showed weakness. In an interview with the Italian newspaper "La Repubblica," he accused Russia of failing to provide Armenia with security in the face of Azerbaijani aggression. He argued that Moscow had not fulfilled its obligations and was withdrawing from its previous role in the South Caucasus. He stated that Armenia could no longer rely on Russia as a security guarantor and announced the diversification of alliance ties. He also informed that Armenian-American military exercises would take place in Armenia in September 2023<sup>26</sup>. Additionally, for the first time, he decided to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine, where his wife paid a visit. Simultaneously, an Armenian local government delegation visited Bucha and also delivered humanitarian aid, which met with strong opposition from Moscow<sup>27</sup>. In Armenia, two Russian journalists were arrested on espionage charges.

The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh, which had been a priority issue and the most important element of national identity for many years, led to a radical change in Yerevan's perception of its allies' roles and the validity of participating in military organizations that fail in the most critical moment of modern Armenian history. The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh made Armenians realize the true value of fraternal relations with Russia. The state's foundations, based on an alliance with Russia and maintaining the disputed area, were in ruins. Armenia's participation in the CSTO came into question.

In February 2024, in an interview with French television, the Armenian Prime Minister announced the "freezing" of Armenia's participation in the CSTO, arguing that in 2021-2022 the organization had not fulfilled its obligations to Yerevan. He also accused the Russian authorities of calling for a coup<sup>28</sup>. He expressed particular concern about the kidnapping of a Russian deserter by Russian soldiers in Armenia and his transfer to Russia. When asked about the future of the Russian military base in Gyumri, Pashinyan noted that it was unrelated to the CSTO and regulated by other legal frameworks, and for the time being, the issue of its withdrawal was not being discussed<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's interview to Italian La Repubblica newspaper, za: <https://www.primeminister.am/en/interviews-and-press-conferences/item/2023/09/02/Nikol-Pashinyan-interview-La-Repubblica/> (21.06.2024).

<sup>27</sup> Armeńska delegacja odwiedziła Buczę. MSZ Rosji protestuje, za: <https://belsat.eu/pl/news/10-06-2024-armenska-delegacja-odwiedzila-bucze-msz-rosji-protestuje> (21.06.2021).

<sup>28</sup> Пашинян заявил о «заморозке» участия Армении в ОДКБ, за: <https://rtvi.com/news/pashinyan-zayavil-o-zamorozke-uchastiya-armenii-v-odkb/> (24.06.2024).

<sup>29</sup> Участие Армении в ОДКБ практически «заморожено», за: <https://factor.am/ru/51186.html> (24.06.2024).

The Armenian Prime Minister particularly criticized the stance of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh. He reminded that the Russian peacekeeping contingent was supposed to guarantee the safety of the civilian population, but due to its inaction and failure to meet obligations, a nine-month blockade of Karabakh occurred. As a result, in 2023, within a week, over 100,000 Armenians left their homes and native places in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>30</sup>. This situation was confirmed by the unexpected withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2024. This was a consequence of the elimination of the Armenian quasi-state but did not mean that Moscow had abandoned maintaining its influence in the region. Given Armenia's pro-European ambitions, suspension of membership in the CSTO, and distancing from Russia, this decision is primarily an attempt to "discipline" the Armenian "ally." The departure of Russians from Karabakh does not change Russia's current military potential in Armenia, which includes the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, the Erebuni airport in Yerevan, and Russian border guards on the border with Turkey and Iran<sup>31</sup>.

In May 2024, the Armenian authorities decided to stop funding the CSTO from their side, refused to pay the membership fee, and withdrew their representatives from all structures. Thus, Armenia physically ceased participating in the organization's current political and military activities<sup>32</sup>. Additionally, Armenia requested the cessation of work by Russian border guards under the Federal Security Service (FSB) at Yerevan airport.

In the military sphere, Yerevan began to diversify alliance ties, especially with India and France. As early as 2021, the Indian Foreign Minister visited Armenia, and a year later, the Armenian Defense Minister visited India to initiate defense cooperation. As a result, in 2023, India became the main arms supplier to Armenia, effectively replacing war-torn Russia in Ukraine. India quickly became a natural choice for Armenia as it maintains strategic partnerships with Russia and the USA and develops close cooperation with Iran<sup>33</sup>.

In Europe, France became Yerevan's natural ally. In October 2023, an Armenian-French agreement on military cooperation was signed, providing for the delivery of military equipment.

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<sup>30</sup> *Главное о критике Арменией ОДКБ и Кремля*, za: <https://www.caucasianknot.com/articles/386973> (24.06.2024).

<sup>31</sup> K. Fedorowicz, *Rosja wycofuje wojska z Górskiego Karabachu*, Komentarze Brief IEŚ nr1110, za: <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/kies-1110/> (24.06.2024).

<sup>32</sup> *Kolejny krok. Armenia przestała płacić na „rosyjskie NATO”*, za: <https://belsat.eu/pl/news/08-05-2024-kolejny-krok-armenia-przestala-placic-na-rosyjskie-nato> (24.06.2024).

<sup>33</sup> *Армения и Индия: от сотрудничества к стратегическому партнерству*, za: <https://www.civilnet.am/ru/news/769324/армения-и-индия-от-сотрудничества-к-стратегическому-партнерству/> (24.06.2024).



The French side also pledged to assist Armenia in reforming its armed forces<sup>34</sup>. In February 2024, the French Defense Minister visited Yerevan, resulting in the signing of a military cooperation agreement between France and Armenia. The agreement includes defense cooperation and joint efforts to develop the defensive capabilities of the Armenian Armed Forces to strengthen the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia. France committed to training Armenian officers at the Military Academy and sending military advisers specializing in ground and air defense to help Armenia defend against "possible attacks by potential aggressors" on the civilian population. Actions were taken to ensure military-technical cooperation between the two countries, and several agreements were signed for the purchase of specific types of weapons. Furthermore, in the first half of 2024, Armenian authorities publicly expressed their political will to deepen relations with the European Union<sup>35</sup>. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia, Alen Simonyan, announced that Armenia was ready to apply for EU candidate status. He argued that the direction providing the greatest security should be followed. The fact that Armenia is a democratic country is the greatest guarantee of security. He did not rule out the possibility of leaving the CSTO, emphasizing that public opinion consistently demands this from the political elites<sup>36</sup>.

Armenia's distancing from CSTO membership and Russia led to another diplomatic crisis with Belarus. In June 2024, American journalists from the "Politico" portal revealed that Belarus had supplied advanced military equipment to Azerbaijan from 2018 to 2022, used during the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The trade occurred despite Belarus and Armenia being formal allies in the CSTO. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan is not a member of the CSTO to which Belarus supplied weapons<sup>37</sup>. It turned out that Belarus sold weapons to Azerbaijan used in the war against its formal ally, Armenia. Minsk provided Azerbaijan with new electronic combat equipment and drone systems, upgraded old artillery equipment and supplied new ones, negotiated the delivery of modern artillery targeting systems, and agreed to deliver the mobile

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<sup>34</sup> *Ереван и Париж подписали соглашения о сотрудничестве в военной сфере*, за: <https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/32650590.html> (24.06.2024).

<sup>35</sup> *Министр обороны Армении и министр вооруженных сил Франции подписали в Ереване новые соглашения о сотрудничестве*, за: <https://www.rfi.fr/ru/кавказ/20240223-министр-обороны-армении-и-министр-вооруженных-сил-франции-подписали-в-ереване-новые-соглашения-о-сотрудничестве> (24.06.2024.)

<sup>36</sup> *Władze Armenii deklarują aspiracje do integracji europejskiej*, за: <https://belsat.eu/pl/news/29-02-2024-wladze-armenii-deklaruja-aspiracje-do-integracji-europejskiej> (24.06.2024).

<sup>37</sup> *The secret arms deal that cost Putin an ally*, за: <https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-documents-reveal-belarus-armed-azerbaijan-against-ally-armenia/> (24.06.2024).

anti-drone system Groza-S. Earlier, Belarusians supplied modern Polonez medium-range ballistic missile launchers.

The equipment supplied by Belarus was used "with destructive effect" against Armenia. Journalists noted that Belarus could not act without the silent consent of Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin<sup>38</sup>. The total volume of arms trade transactions between the two countries exceeded \$1 billion, and Belarus was one of Azerbaijan's main arms suppliers alongside Russia, Turkey, and Israel. The disclosure of this information led to a diplomatic crisis between Armenia and Belarus, mutual withdrawal of ambassadors, and public accusations by the Armenian Prime Minister against Minsk. Nikol Pashinyan announced that Yerevan was preparing to leave the CSTO and that he would never visit Belarus while Alexander Lukashenko remained in power or until the country apologized to the "Armenian people".

### Conclusions

After more than 30 years of functioning in the post-Soviet military alliance, the Armenian authorities made a bold decision to cease membership in this organization. The decision made many years ago to ensure security through membership in post-Soviet military-political organizations turned out to be a miscalculation. Since 2016, discrepancies in Armenia's functioning within the CSTO have been noticeable. Political changes in Armenia resulting from the "Velvet Revolution" in 2018 and the construction of a democratic rule of law state only deepened the existing problems.

The research conducted, the results of which are presented in this article, served to solve the research problem formulated by the author in the form of a statement that the CSTO, throughout its existence, was not a military alliance protecting its member states from external threats but an organization maintaining Russia's sphere of influence in the former USSR. Its activities focused on actions that made a given state dependent on the Russian Federation through a monopoly on arms sales (of Soviet type), training, the functioning of Russian military bases, and radical limitation of military cooperation with other organizations outside the Russian sphere of influence. The example of Armenia shows and proves that in the case of evolutionary political and social changes bringing a country closer to Western standards, Russia

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<sup>38</sup> *Białoruś dostarczyła Azerbejdżanowi broń używaną w wojnie ze swoim formalnym sojusznikiem - Armenią – Politico*, za: <https://belsat.eu/pl/news/14-06-2024-bialorus-dostarczyła-azerbejdżanowi-bron-uzywana-w-wojnie-ze-swoim-formalnym-sojuszniakiem-armenia-politico> (24.06.2024).

and the CSTO are ready to "abandon" a recent ally. The actions of the alliance towards Armenia presented in the article confirm the adopted hypothesis that Armenia's membership in the CSTO, especially after 2016, was characterized by deepening discrepancies in ensuring Armenia's national security. The "thawing" of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2016 and the "second Nagorno-Karabakh war" in 2020 led to a threat to state security and the necessity of defense. However, the lack of response from the CSTO to Azerbaijan's aggression against Armenia and the occupation of part of its territory in 2022 clearly showed that the alliance failed to fulfill its function of ensuring Armenia's security. Moreover, one of the alliance members (Belarus) sold weapons used against Armenia. Thus, by its stance, the CSTO confirmed that it is not a defense alliance but an organization guarding Russia's sphere of influence.

### **Streszczenie:**

Artykuł dotyczy polityki Armenii w zakresie bezpieczeństwa w kontekście jej członkostwa w Organizacji Układu o Bezpieczeństwie Zbiorowym i stopniowego spadku wydolności i atrakcyjności tej struktury dla omawianego państwa.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Sojusz, Armenia, Organizacja Układu o Bezpieczeństwie Zbiorowym

### **Key words:**

Alliance, Armenia, Collective Security Treaty Organization

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## **The role and importance of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Central Asian integration process**

### **Introduction**

Following the announcement of the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on 8 December 1991, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev began talks with the founding states, i.e. Russia, Ukraine and Belarus aimed at gaining membership for the newly formed Central Asian states. Subsequently, at a meeting in Ashgabat on 14 December 1991, it was agreed that any former Soviet republic could apply for membership in the CIS. This led to the signing of the Alma Declaration on 21 December 1991, by which eight states of the former USSR, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, joined the organisation<sup>39</sup>. In 1992, as a result of the signing of the Treaty of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan became part of a single military bloc with the Russian Federation<sup>40</sup>.

Continued cooperation with Russia raised the spectre of a continuation of the vassal model relationship, in which the Central Asian republics were reliant on submission to orders in Moscow. The independent republics sought to build reciprocal relations with the Kremlin based on equality, but disparities and dependence on economic support prevented this idea from being realised. As a result, the political leaders of the Central Asian states brought the issue of regional integration to the forefront. Kazakhstan's first president Nursultan Nazarbayev was particularly active in this aspect. A dispute with neighbouring Uzbekistan and Russia's inability to step into his role led to the project being abandoned. Russia's imperial policy towards the former Soviet

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<sup>39</sup> M. Michur-Ziemba, *Cele i zasady funkcjonowania Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw* „Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne” 2007, nr 1, s. 224-225.

<sup>40</sup> M. Raś, A. Włodkowska, *Bezpieczeństwo obszaru WNP* [w:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, R. Zięba (red.), Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2008, s. 349.

republics, which gained momentum after 2014, catalysed a return to the idea of Central Asian integration.

The article's main objective is to present the role and importance of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the process of Central Asian integration. To this end, Kazakhstan's efforts to make the regional alliance a reality in 1994-2005 and after 2014 are presented. The analysis of the collected materials allowed the thesis that without Kazakhstan's participation, it is not possible to build an alliance excluding Russia in the region. This is due to the economic potential and international position of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### **First attempt at integration (1994-2005)**

In 1994, Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the establishment of the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC)<sup>41</sup>. Already at the initial stage, problems arose in the form of a different foreign policy vision of the leaders of the states, as well as the settlement of issues that had not been resolved during the USSR period. Turkmenistan refused to participate due to its policy of neutrality. In addition, Turkmen-Kazakh relations were complicated by the failure to settle the issue of the division of deposits located on the shelf of the Caspian Sea. Tajikistan was not interested in participation due to internal problems in the form of civil war. In addition, a repulsive factor in Tajikistan's case was the affiliation of Uzbekistan, with which the country was in open conflict over water. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were interested in expanding dialogue and cooperation, but this was to complement the bilateral relations being built. Moreover, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov was vying with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev for regional leadership status.

Despite mutual animosities, Nazarbayev and Karimov signed an agreement 'On the Establishment of a Common Economic Space between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan' on 10 January 1994. According to its wording, the main objective was to deepen economic integration for the next six years through legislative changes that would enable the free movement of goods, services and capital. One of the leading tasks was to refine the convertibility of national currencies, which was an important step towards moving away from foreign trade settlements based on foreign currency. A key provision was the possibility

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<sup>41</sup> Р. Сухроб, *Российский фактор в интеграционных процессах Центральной Азии*, „Koinon” 2022, Т. 3, № 3–4, с. 180.

for other CIS states to join the Common Economic Space<sup>42</sup>. This option was exercised by neighbouring Kyrgyzstan on 16 January 1994. Following the accession of a third state, the prerequisites for the realisation of the Central Asian Economic Community were created, which was accomplished on 30 April 1994<sup>43</sup>.

Growing divergences manifested in attempts by Islam Karimov to impose his vision of integration on the other participants led to disputes. To curb this phenomenon, on the initiative of Kazakhstan, an agreement ‘On eternal friendship between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan’ was signed on 10 January 1997. The agreement guaranteed mutual respect for independence, inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit. In addition, the contracting parties renounced the use of any coercion of a political or economic dimension against each other. The concluded agreement also announced cooperation in the military aspect through a declaration on the creation of a Central Asian peacekeeping force battalion under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the fight against international terrorism and illegal drug trafficking. The provision for joint action to restore the balance of ecosystems in the Amu-Daria and Syr-Daria basins laid the groundwork for settling the issue of water sharing in the region<sup>44</sup>. Hence, in March 1998 Tajikistan decided to join the CWE.

To raise the profile of the forming regional alliance, the Central Asian Economic Community was transformed into the Central Asian Economic Community (CWG) on 17 July 1998. Already at the stage of the formation of the CWE and the signing of subsequent agreements, the members emphasised that their actions were not directed against any other state<sup>45</sup>. This was due to the need to maintain good relations with Russia, which was the guarantor of regional security. Hence, after the formation of the CWG, the Russian Federation was granted observer status. The assumption was that Moscow would support the building of the new alliance. Meanwhile, Russia was taking steps to break it up, as it posed a threat to the maintenance of the existing relations with the Central Asian republics based on the senior-vassal model. This was helped by the events of 1998-2000.

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<sup>42</sup> Договор о создании Единого экономического пространства между Республикой Казахстан и Республикой Узбекистан от 10 января 1994 года, <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/O9400000003> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>43</sup> Р. Сухроб, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Договор о вечной дружбе между Республикой Казахстан, Кыргызской Республикой и Республикой Узбекистан, подписанный в Бишкеке 10 января 1997 года, [https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z980000242\\_](https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z980000242_) [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>45</sup> Е. Винокуров, А. Либман, Н.Максимчук, *Динамика интеграционных процессов в Центральной Азии* „MPRA Paper” 2010, No. 20989, [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/20989/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_20989.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/20989/1/MPRA_paper_20989.pdf)



There were attempts on the life of Islam Karimov in 1999. The Uzbek leader accused Hezbollah of carrying them out with the help of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan<sup>46</sup>. According to the Uzbek leader, this was made possible by using Tajik territory as a training and attack base. The making of accusations against Dushanbe brought about a deterioration in Uzbek-Tajik relations. In the same year and in 2000, there were attempts to capture Uzbek and Kyrgyz territory by troops of Islamic radicals. This event has gone down in history as the Batken crisis. At the request of Bishkek, Tashkent also conducted a special operation on Kyrgyz territory. After the end of the conflict, Uzbekistan began the process of closing the border, which was contrary to the objectives of the CWG. In addition, during the Batkene crisis, Uzbekistan occupied territories that constituted the disputed area, which worsened Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations.

Uzbekistan's aggressive policy towards its neighbours may have led to a weakening of integration processes. Hence, the burden of sustaining integration fell to Kazakhstan. Thanks to the efforts of President Nazarbayev, on 28 February 2002, the participating states signed an agreement 'On the establishment of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation'<sup>47</sup>. The name itself suggested a broadening of cooperation beyond the economic aspect, which came to fruition at the Dushanbe Summit in October 2002 and led to the revision of 243 previously adopted integration documents. Among the most important changes were: the expansion of cooperation in the scientific-technical, environmental and security spheres; joint efforts to gradually create a common economic space; cooperation in the creation of a common infrastructure of unified transport, communication and energy systems; the pursuit of coordinated policies in the field of border control and customs; cooperation in the field of tariff policy; coordinated and concerted action on the rational and mutually beneficial use of water reservoirs, water and energy resources and water management facilities<sup>48</sup>. In addition, at a meeting of Heads of State in December 2002 in Astana, President Nursultan Nazarbayev led to the development of a common position, according to which strengthening the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (COW) corresponded to the strategic interests of the member states. In July 2003, at the Almaty summit, consortia were created to deal with energy, food and transport market issues, which was a milestone in the creation of the COW initiated by

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<sup>46</sup> А. Щерба, Н. Ахмедова, Е. Казьмина, "Исламское движение Узбекистана" как вызов стабильности на постсоветском пространстве „Постсоветские исследования” 2023, No. 6 (3), с. 356.

<sup>47</sup> Договор между Республикой Казахстан, Кыргызской Республикой, Республикой Таджикистан и Республикой Узбекистан об учреждении организации "Центрально-Азиатское сотрудничество" от 28 февраля 2002 года, [https://base.spinform.ru/show\\_doc.fwx?rgn=6973](https://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=6973) [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>48</sup> НОМАД, В столице прошел саммит глав государств Центральной Азии, <https://nomad.su/?a=3-200212280017> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

Nursultan Nazarbayev. At the same time, in order to raise internal funds for this objective, the COW sought assistance from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development<sup>49</sup>.

This brought Nursultan Nazarbayev to the forefront of the Central Asian region, which strengthened his international position. Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov could not reconcile with this development and began blocking initiatives within the COW to discredit Nazarbayev as a politician predisposed to lead an international organisation<sup>50</sup>. This coincided with the colour revolutions in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. These events demonstrated that Kazakhstan did not have sufficient strength and influence to step into Russia's shoes, which translated into closer cooperation by member states with Moscow. This became one of the reasons why Russia gained membership in the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation at the Dushanbe Summit in October 2004<sup>51</sup>.

Russia very quickly embarked on the process of dismantling the independence of the COW. On 7 October 2005, the last summit of the organisation took place, at which it was decided that the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation would be merged, de facto absorbed, by the Eurasian Economic Community. This process was sealed on 23 July 2006 with the protocol 'On the integration of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation into the Eurasian Economic Community'<sup>52</sup>.

Despite good cooperation with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev saw that the abolition of the organisation brought about the maintenance of relations based on a vassal-senior arrangement. Hence, on 26 April 2007, he proposed the creation of a Central Asian Union. This project was not realised due to the opposition of President Islam Karimov, who saw it as another attempt by Nazarbayev to regain his role as regional leader<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> А. Таксанов, *Что такое Организация Центрально-Азиатского сотрудничества и с чем его едят во время встреч глав государств региона*, <https://zonakz.net/2003/07/10/chto-takoe-organizaciya-centralno-azi/> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>50</sup> More: A. Zamaraiewa, *Kazachstan – Uzbekistan: rywalizacja o przywództwo w Azji Centralnej*, Pułtusk 2008.

<sup>51</sup> З. Курманов, *О перспективах интеграции стран Центральной Азии*, <https://center.kg/article/185> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>52</sup> Протокол Об интеграции Организации "Центрально-Азиатское Сотрудничество" в Евразийское экономическое сообщество, [https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P060000574\\_](https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P060000574_) [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>53</sup> N. Zhambekov, *Central Asian Union and the Obstacles to Integration in Central Asia* "CACI Analyst" 2015, <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13116-central-asian-union-and-the-obstacles-to-integration-in-central-asia.html> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

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### **Relaunching the idea of Central Asian integration**

In the decade since the idea of Central Asian integration was abandoned, there have been gigantic changes in regional politics. By 2014, the People's Republic of China had consolidated its economic influence in all five countries, significantly weakening Russia's position as a major economic partner. Surprisingly, the model of cooperation they applied did not differ from Russia's, i.e. Beijing treats the Central Asian republics as an area of penetration to obtain natural resources. An additional motivating factor became the desire to distance itself from the Russian Federation due to its tightened imperial policy, manifested by the annexation of the Crimean peninsula in March 2014. The asymmetry in relations not only with the Kremlin but also with Beijing brought the idea of integration back on the agenda.

Hence, at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank in Astana, Nursultan Nazarbayev expressed his interest in returning to the Central Asian integration project<sup>54</sup>. The Kazakh President emphasised that since the beginning of the 21st century, the five countries of the region had been expanding cooperation within the framework of the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank<sup>55</sup>. The Turkic Council, in which Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have actively participated since the 1990s, has also become a liaison. In 2014, Turkmenistan joined the organisation, heralding an opening towards regional integration.

Still, the most serious obstacle to the realisation of Central Asian integration remained the opposition of President Islam Karimov, who could not accept that Kazakhstan was given the role of regional leader. In addition, during Karimov's rule, Uzbekistan had strained relations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which made it difficult to develop common positions. The problem was resolved with Karimov's death in 2016. Uzbekistan's new president Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aware that Central Asian integration had failed due to his predecessor's tough opposition, set about improving relations with his neighbours. Tashkent's efforts brought about the organisation of the first consultative meeting with Central Asian presidents in March 2018 in Astana. This was a historic event, as it was the first meeting of representatives of all the

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<sup>54</sup> А. Косенов, *Назарбаев вновь заявил о важности центральноазиатской интеграции*, [https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/nazarbaev-vnov-zayavil-vajnosti-tsentralnoaziatskoy-254750/](https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nazarbaev-vnov-zayavil-vajnosti-tsentralnoaziatskoy-254750/) [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>55</sup> *Программа Центральноазиатского регионального экономического сотрудничества. Хорошие соседи. Хорошие партнеры. Хорошие перспективы*, <https://www.carecprogram.org/uploads/CAREC-Program-Brochure-ru.pdf> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

countries of the region since the absorption of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation into the Eurasian Economic Community. As such, courtesy declarations were expected. Meanwhile, the leaders, aware of the wasted decade, raised several issues of importance to the region, including the problem of water, energy sector development, security, and the development of economic cooperation. Also key was the declaration to organise such meetings on a cyclical basis with a frequency of once a year to ensure continuity in the dialogue<sup>56</sup>.

In November 2019, during another consultative meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan's leader Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed the establishment of an Investment Forum of Central Asian countries and annual meetings of the heads of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry to boost mutual investments. Kazakhstan also proposed the conclusion of a 'Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Cooperation for the Development of Central Asia in the 21st Century', which was finalised at the Fourth Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Leaders. This document is a breakthrough as it allows the countries of the region to develop a common position when dealing with external players, primarily the US, Russia and China<sup>57</sup>.

It was also a breakthrough in establishing cyclical meetings of the heads of foreign ministries to coordinate their policies about the interests of the region as a whole. The focus on making Central Asian integration a reality would not have been possible without a change in approach by Uzbekistan's new leader, who, unlike his predecessor, recognised Kazakhstan's primacy in the region. The change in position was due to several conditions:

- 1) Kazakhstan is an economic lever for the entire region. World Bank data for 2022 confirms this. Uzbekistan's GDP was USD 80.39 billion, Turkmenistan's USD 56.54 billion, Kyrgyzstan's USD 11.54 billion, and Tajikistan's USD 10.49 billion. Adding up the GDP of the four countries yields USD 158.96 billion, while Kazakhstan's GDP alone was USD 225.5 billion<sup>58</sup>. In addition, more than 80% of foreign investment in Central Asia is in Kazakhstan.
- 2) All transport routes, including pipelines, pass through the territory of Kazakhstan. Hence, to ensure the continuity of the transmission of raw materials, it is necessary for other entities to sell as well as buy natural gas and oil to maintain good relations with Astana.

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<sup>56</sup> А. Казанцев, А. Каженова, *Новый этап центральноазиатской интеграции*, <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/novyy-etap-tsentralnoaziatskoy-integratsii/> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>57</sup> А. Казанцев-Вайсман, *Вектор Байдена: почему США и страны Центральной Азии расширяют контакты*, <https://www.forbes.ru/mneniya/497156-vektor-bajdena-pocemu-ssa-i-strany-central-noj-azii-rassiraut-kontakty> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>58</sup> *The World Bank*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

- 3) Huge territory - 2.725 million square kilometres provides agricultural areas that benefit the entire region. Kazakhstan is the grain granary of Central Asia, supplying agricultural crops at more favourable prices than would be imported from other countries.
- 4) Kazakhstan is the only country in the region that can play a balancing role between Russia, China and the US, thanks to having good relations with all the empires, which cannot be said of the other countries in the region.
- 5) Kazakhstan, unlike the other countries of the region, has carried out an effective diversification of supply routes, gaining greater independence from the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.
- 6) In the plans to build a transport route for energy raw materials through the European Union, bypassing Russian territory, it is Kazakhstan that is the main interlocutor.
- 7) Kazakhstan, thanks to a faster development of the economy than in neighbouring countries, has become a place for citizens of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to seek work<sup>59</sup>.

Successful cooperation between Tashkent and Astana became possible not only due to Uzbekistan's recognition of Kazakhstan's primacy but also due to a change in the approach of the new President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kasym Zhomart-Tokoyev, who, in recognition of Mirziyoyev's contribution to the restoration of the idea of Eurasian integration, was able to abandon his leadership position in favour of partnership cooperation. The two partners have thus become equals, making the Tashkent-Astana axis of cooperation resemble the European tandem Berlin-Paris.

The interaction of these states is necessary in the prevailing international situation, where we have seen the achievement of a high level of strategic partnership between Russia and China over the years. For the region to retain a degree of independence, it is necessary to expand the formats of interaction between Moscow - Beijing - Central Asian states. To this end, the elevation of mutual relations to the status of a strategic partnership has been taking place for years. The first such step was taken by Kazakhstan with Kyrgyzstan in 2003 (agreement on alliance relations), with Uzbekistan in 2013, in 2015 with Tajikistan, and in 2017 with Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan's footsteps have been followed by other republics that have

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<sup>59</sup> Н. Казманов, *Проблемы центральноазиатской интеграции: политика и экономика* „Вестник Актюбинского университета им. С.Баишева” 2013, <https://articlekz.com/article/12226> [accessed on: 04.06.2024].

concluded similar agreements<sup>60</sup>. As of 2024, only the strategic partnership between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan does not exist, demonstrating the significant increase in the importance of neighbouring states in the politics of all Central Asian states.

Kazakhstan also provides a model for the other countries in the region on the issue of delimitation and demarcation of the state border. The delimitation process was completed with all neighbours in the early 2000s, while the latest demarcation agreements were concluded with Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in 2017<sup>61</sup>. Kazakhstan's example was followed by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, which also concluded a final agreement on the state border in January 2023. Thus, the last disputed section remained the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. The events of 2020-2022 led to an escalation of the conflict between Bishkek and Dushanbe. In the aftermath, Tashkent and Astana also became involved in resolving it. While showing neutral friendliness towards Kyrgyzstan, which is more concerned with reducing Russian influence. Success in this matter will lead to a decrease in the importance of the Collective Security Treaty for ensuring stability in the region, which in turn will increase the support of the Western world for the Central Asian integration process<sup>62</sup>.

Hence, the US reverted to the B5+1 format, which was initiated in 2015. The main reason for its creation was the growing tension between Russia and Western countries after Russia annexed Crimea. Cooperation with Central Asia was intended to pull the countries of the region towards the West, depriving Russia of alternative sources of supply for sanctioned goods. After the invasion of Ukraine began, Washington returned to the idea of the Central Asia-US format itself. On 19 September 2023, a summit of the leaders of the six countries took place during the 78th UN Session. However, initial declarations showed that American support would be limited to increased investment activity. Despite this turn of events, Kazakhstan sees this as an opportunity for itself. Thanks to the Americans' interest in the creation of a single market, with their help Astana would be able to realise the ideas pushed by Nursultan Nazarbayev back in the 1990s, which would position Kazakhstan as the country with the best vision for the integration of the Central Asian region. Kazakhstan is also seeking US support for the establishment of a UN Regional Centre for Sustainable Development for Central Asia and

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<sup>60</sup> Договор о союзнических отношениях между Республикой Казахстан и Кыргызской Республикой, <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z060000187> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>61</sup> Соглашение между Республикой Казахстан и Туркменистаном о демаркации казахстанско-туркменской государственной границы, <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/article/details/594?lang=ru> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>62</sup> Центральная Азия: идет процесс интеграции, <https://e-cis.info/news/566/110273/> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

Afghanistan in Almaty. The location of this facility on the territory of the republic would provide an opportunity to coordinate the process of economic integration of the region by playing the role of a re-distributor of financial resources<sup>63</sup>.

Kazakhstan also seeks to position the Middle Kingdom as the main representative of the region. This was borne out by the fact that the third meeting in June 2022 in the 'Central Asia - PRC' format was organised in Astana - the first in July 2020 took the form of a video conference, while the second was held in the Chinese city of Xi'an<sup>64</sup>. The key event was the Chinese declaration of non-interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region, which was a telling signal, looking back to the Russian intervention in Kazakhstan in January 2022. China has thus shown that it is interested in cooperating in partnership rather than from a hegemonic position. An indication of the growing importance of cooperation in this format is the establishment of the 'Central Asia - PRC secretariat'<sup>65</sup>.

Russia, like China, has already initiated the format of 'Central Asia-Russia' meetings in 2019. In the initial phase, these were held at the level of foreign ministers, and in October 2023, it first took the form of a summit at which the leaders of all six countries were present. Like China, Moscow sees Kazakhstan as a major partner. Hence, the summit was held in Astana, but it was dominated by security issues<sup>66</sup>. Nevertheless, attempts to limit Russian influence are also evident in this sphere.

In May 2024, the first meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Councils of the Central Asian states took place in the capital of Kazakhstan. According to the final declaration, the participating states pledged to expand cooperation on energy, food and transport and logistics security issues<sup>67</sup>. Thus, Kazakhstan is attempting to take over the role of coordinator of the dialogue on regional security, which hitherto fell to the Russian Federation. In addition, in terms

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<sup>63</sup> Eurasianet, *Страны Центральной Азии предварительно одобряют план США по интеграции*, <https://russian.eurasianet.org> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>64</sup> ИСАП, *Формат С+С5: долгосрочный проект взаимосвязанности Китая и Центральной Азии*, <https://www.isap.center/analytics/139> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>65</sup> Report, *В Сиане открылся секретариат "Центральная Азия-Китай"*, <https://report.az/ru/v-regione/v-siane-otkrylsya-sekretariat-centralnaya-aziya-kitaj/> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>66</sup> Е. Мухаметшина, И. Лакстыгал, *В Астане прошел первый саммит «Россия — Центральная Азия»*, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2022/10/14/945679-v-astane-proshel-pervii-sammit-rossiya-aziya> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

<sup>67</sup> Казинформ, *Страны Центральной Азии объединят усилия в трех направлениях безопасности*, <https://www.inform.kz/ru/strani-tsentralnoy-azii-obedinyat-usiliya-v-treh-napravleniyah-bezopasnosti-1c881a> [accessed on: 05.06.2024]; Liter.kz, *Гизат Нурдаулетов: Геополитическая и геоэкономическая турбулентность негативно влияют на безопасность ЦА*, <https://liter.kz/gizat-nurdauletov-geopoliticheskaya-i-geoekonomicheskaya-turbulentnost-negativno-vliiaut-na-sostoianie-bezopasnosti-tsa-1715871310/> [accessed on: 05.06.2024].

of security, Kazakhstan has returned to the integration agenda on the issue of strengthening military cooperation. A manifestation of this has become the systematic exercises of the armies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan 'Kalkon' (Russian Калкон), which have been organised since 2021<sup>68</sup>. In a similar format, Uzbekistan holds exercises with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The intensification of bilateral training has led to the organisation of joint exercises on the territory of Kazakhstan in July 2024, in which Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will participate in addition to the organising country<sup>69</sup>. The initiative undertaken is the nucleus for building a Central Asian military alliance, which is becoming increasingly necessary given the waning influence of the OUBZ in the post-Soviet area. Leading this effort until 2022 should be Uzbekistan, which had the strongest army in the region. The initiatives taken to modernise the Kazakh army after Russia started the war in Ukraine led to a situation where, by the beginning of 2024, the Kazakh Army was rated 58 out of 145 armies in the world. It was thus recognised as the third strongest army in the post-Soviet area after Russia and Ukraine, while it had previously been overtaken in the rankings by Azerbaijan, Belarus and Uzbekistan<sup>70</sup>.

Kazakhstan's assumption of the role of commander-in-chief of a regional military alliance is hampered by the fact that the country is a member of the OUBZ. In addition, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are in a similar situation. Hence, if the military alliance were to be tightened in the future, Kazakhstan would be forced to share the coordinating role with its two neighbours - neutral Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which resigned from the Collective Security Treaty Organisation in 2012.

### Summary

In conclusion, Kazakhstan between 1994 and 2004 played an extremely important role not only in the integration process of Central Asia but in the entire post-Soviet area. The solutions proposed by Nazarbayev became the prototype of the Eurasian Economic Union established in 2015. The main objective of the consolidation of the region's states in the 1990s and early 2000s was to strengthen their position vis-à-vis Russia, rather than to break ties with it, both economically and politically.

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<sup>68</sup> Курсив, *Узбекистан и Казахстан проведут совместные военные учения*, <https://uz.kursiv.media/2023-05-16/uzbekistan-i-kazahstan-provedut-sovmestnye-voennye-ucheniya/> [accessed to: 05.06.2024].

<sup>69</sup> Э. Кагалтынов, *Казахстан примет военные учения «Бірлестік-2024» с четырьмя странами в июле*, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6620727> [accessed to: 05.06.2024].

<sup>70</sup> И. Улитин, *Почему армию Казахстана признали лучшей в Центральной Азии*, <https://orda.kz/pochemu-armiju-kazahstana-priznali-luchshej-v-centralnoj-azii-381302/> [accessed to: 05.06.2024].



After 2014, almost all external players are interested in developing interactions between Central Asian states. Strengthening the position of individual states in the region, as well as of the five as a whole, does not harm any of the superpowers. Kazakhstan's economic and political strength makes integration impossible without this key state. On the other hand, Astana, despite its significant development, is not able to fully assume the role that Russia has so far held. Hence, the new opening after 2014 has led to a transformation of the role of Kazakhstan itself in Central Asian integration. While the Republic of Kazakhstan has retained its status as the main creator and implementer of integration policy, it should be noted that it has begun to share this competence with neighbouring Uzbekistan. The willingness to share this role demonstrates the Kazakh authorities' high level of interest in making regional integration a reality, which has remained an unfinished work since 1994. At this stage, many of the integration projects are bilateral, but they are essential to repair the relations between the five Central Asian states that were damaged during the presidency of Islam Karimov.

An extremely important point is that Kazakhstan's perseverance has succeeded in resurrecting cooperation in various sectors. The emergence of a desire for joint development has translated into real support for each other. This would not have been possible without Kazakhstan, which is the only country in the region with a sufficiently developed economy and international contacts to make this process a reality.

Hence, it is important to note that in the case of Central Asian integration, the Republic of Kazakhstan deserves to be called the 'heart of the region', which unites the interests of the other four, i.e. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Maintaining the current pace of mutual cooperation, it is inevitable that shortly, the foundations will be laid for the realisation of the Central Asian Union project proposed by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2007. Thus, it will be a success for Kazakhstan itself.

### **Streszczenie:**

Niniejsza praca analizuje rolę i znaczenie Republiki Kazachstanu w procesie integracji centralnoazjatyckiej, koncentrując się na jej politycznych, gospodarczych i społecznych aspektach w kontekście współczesnych wyzwań regionalnych. Kazachstan, będący największym państwem w Azji Centralnej, odgrywa kluczową rolę w kształtowaniu regionalnych struktur integracyjnych. W pracy uwzględniono również geopolityczne znaczenie Kazachstanu, które wynika z jego strategicznego położenia, zasobów naturalnych oraz zrównoważonej polityki zagranicznej, pozwalającej na utrzymanie stabilnych relacji z wieloma

globalnymi aktorami. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono wpływowi Kazachstanu na rozwój regionalnych procesów integracyjnych, w tym inicjatyw kluczowych inicjatyw. Ponadto, praca bada wyzwania, z jakimi mierzy się kraj w kontekście współpracy z innymi państwami regionu oraz rolę Kazachstanu jako stabilizatora w Azji Centralnej. Celem pracy jest wskazanie na znaczenie Kazachstanu jako motoru integracji regionalnej, jego strategiczne znaczenie w procesie współpracy Centralnej Azji oraz identyfikacja kluczowych czynników kształtujących dalszy rozwój tej współpracy.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Kazachstan, mocarstwa światowe, integracja centralnoazjatycka, Nursułtan Nazarbajew.

#### **Key words:**

Kazakhstan, world powers, Central Asian integration, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

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## **Impact of Romanian and Russian soft power on the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. Selected aspects**

### **Introduction**

The Republic of Moldova is a small state that was created as a result of the collapse of the former USSR. On August 27, 1991 The Republic of Moldova declared independence, which was first recognized by neighboring Romania on the same day<sup>71</sup>. In a short time, the independence of the republic was recognized by over 100 countries, including the Russian Federation<sup>72</sup>.

The emergence of the sovereign Republic of Moldova in the region of Central and Eastern Europe had an impact on the foreign policy of both Romania and the Russian Federation. Over the course of over thirty years, each of these countries has been building relations with Moldova in accordance with its own interests. Thus, it is in Romania's interest, as evidenced by the political and diplomatic actions undertaken by this country, for the Republic of Moldova to obtain full membership in the European Union. In turn, it is in the interest of the Russian Federation to keep Moldova in the Russian sphere of influence and to hinder the process of integration with the European Union.

Romania and Russia, striving to achieve the above-mentioned goals, use not only strictly political or strictly economic means, but other factors, including cultural ones, are becoming increasingly important. Strategic goals implemented by using the attractiveness of culture, value system or non-aggressive policy style are called soft power.

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<sup>71</sup> O. Stăvilă, *Relațiile Republicii Moldova cu România, în ultimele trei decenii*, <https://radiomoldova.md/p/26146/relatiile-republicii-moldova-cu-romania-in-ultimele-trei-decenii>, (5.06.2024)

<sup>72</sup> Niepodległość Republiki Mołdawii Federacja Rosyjska uznała w dniu 18.XII 1991 roku. [w] Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federația Rusă, <https://rusia.mfa.gov.md/ro/content/rela%C5%A3ii-politico-diplomatice>, (15.06.2024)

*Soft power*, a concept used by the American political scientist Joseph S. Nye<sup>73</sup> in 1990, is quite difficult to define. So what is soft power, a concept that has become popular in the statements of politicians, journalists, publicists and scientists? According to Joseph Nye:

*“It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion or payment. It arises from the attractiveness of a given country's culture, political ideals and implemented policies. When our policies are perceived as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is magnified.” [...] If you can make others admire your ideals and want what you want, you don't have to use carrots and sticks to get them to move in the direction you want. “Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and values such as democracy, human rights and individual opportunities are very attractive”<sup>74</sup>.*

Referring to the essence of soft power and its resources, according to Nye, *“...soft power is the power of attraction. In terms of resources, soft power resources are the resources that cause such attraction”<sup>75</sup>*. Therefore, the power of *soft power* lies in attraction, a certain lure that is supposed to lead to achieving what a given entity strives for and expects - *“Soft power is based on the ability to shape the preferences of others,”* writes Nye<sup>76</sup>.

In the mentioned book *Soft power. How to achieve success in world politics* Nye defined the sources that, in his opinion, constitute the *soft power* of a given country<sup>77</sup>:

1. Culture, especially that which takes into account universal values and those aspects of it that evoke admiration and respect;
2. Declared political values that do not lead to accusations of "double standards" towards allies and opponents;
3. The method of conducting foreign policy, consistent with accepted traditions, norms and the normative system.

According to the mentioned American political scientist, soft power functions in practice in three dimensions:

1. Everyday communication that deals with explaining the context of the decision-making process in foreign policy<sup>78</sup>,

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<sup>73</sup> Zob.: J. S. Nye, *Bound to the Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York, 1991; J. S. Nye, *Soft power. Jak osiągnąć sukces w polityce światowej*, tłum. J. Zaborowski, Warszawa 2007

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, s. 25

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, s. 35

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, s. 34

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, s. 40

<sup>78</sup> J.S. Nye, *Ameryka musi się liczyć z opinią innych*, „Dziennik” 21.IV 2024, s. 25; za: R. Potocki, D. Miłoszewska, *Rola soft power w środowisku międzynarodowym*, <https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/handle/10593/966>, (25.06.2024)

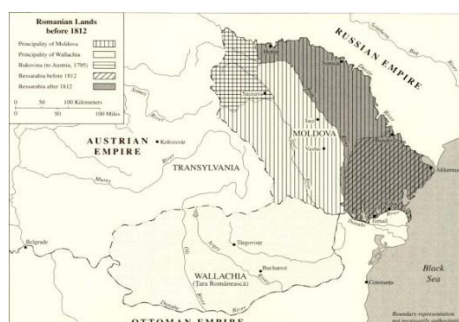
2. Strategic, within which ideas and simple advertising slogans are created - similarly to marketing or political campaigns;
3. Public diplomacy, which spends years maintaining contacts with specific people endowed with special authority.

This article is an attempt to present the following selected categories (understood as factors), such as history, language, education, media, citizenship and religion, which are present in the Romanian and Russian soft power policy towards the Republic of Moldova. The aim of the article is to try to answer several key questions related to the issues contained in the title of the article: Do the selected categories defining Romanian and Russian *soft power* strengthen or weaken the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova? What is the difference between Romanian and Russian *soft power* policies towards the Republic of Moldova?

### Historical factor

When attempting to present the importance of the historical factor in Romanian and Russian *soft power*, one should refer to the history of the area that today constitutes the territory of the modern Republic of Moldova, bordering Romania on the Prut River to the west and Ukraine to the north, east and south. The territory of the modern Republic of Moldova (except for Transnistria located on the left bank of the Dniester) was part of the historical geographical area called Bessarabia. From the second half of the 14th century until 1812, this land was part of the Moldavian Kingdom, one of the two historical Romanian states (along with Wallachia) (Map 1). In 1812 the area of Bessarabia (including today's right-bank Moldova, Budziak and Khotyn together with the surrounding lands) was annexed to the Russian Empire<sup>79</sup>.

#### Map 1. Romanian lands before 1812

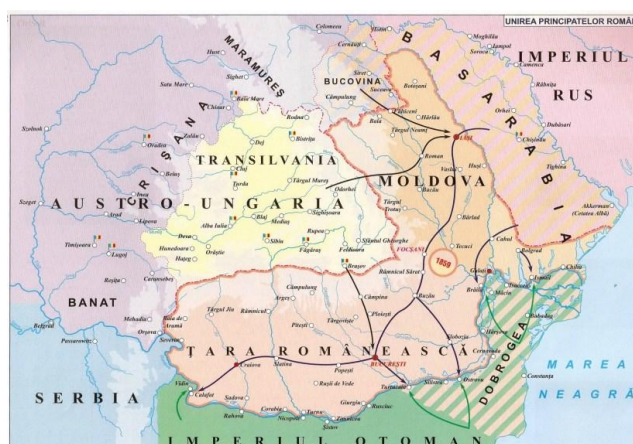


Source: Românitatea Basarabiei după autorii ruși, <https://timpul.md/articol/romanitatea-basarabiei-dupa-autorii-rusi-istorie.html>, (25/06/2024)

<sup>79</sup> On May 16, 1812 in Bucharest, a peace agreement was concluded between Turkey and Russia, which ended the Russian-Turkish war that had been going on since the end of 1806. See: В. Стати, *История Молдовы*, Кишинев 2014, s. 215-218

At the time when Bessarabia became part of the territory of the then Russia, the process of shaping the Romanian state took place, the borders of which continued to change until the end of World War II. On January 24, 1859, a formal merger took place - the so-called small unification (Romanian: Mica Unirea)<sup>80</sup> - the Moldavian Possession (without Bessarabia, except for the southern counties of Ismail, Cahul and Bolgrad<sup>81</sup>) and Wallachia (Map 2) into one state entity<sup>82</sup>. This is a newly established state since 1862. was called Romania, whose name was officially approved in 1866 Constitution<sup>83</sup>. On May 9, 1877 Romania declared independence. After the Balkan War (1877-1878) on the basis of the peace treaty concluded in San Stefano on February 19, 1878. between the Turks and the Russians and the Berlin Treaty of July 1, 1878 Romania's independence was recognized by world powers. These documents changed the borders of Romania. Then Romania took possession of Dobruja and lost the southern counties of southern Bessarabia - Ismail, Cahul and Bolgrad<sup>84</sup>. Three years later, on March 14, 1881, the Kingdom of Romania was proclaimed<sup>85</sup>.

### Map 2. United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859



Source: Unirea Principatelor de la 24 ianuarie 1859: aspecte premergătoare, <https://materialedeistorie.com/2018/01/24/unirea-principatelor-de-la-24-ianuarie-1859-aspecte-premergatoare/>, (1/07/2024 )

<sup>80</sup> Ion I. Jinga, *Momente decisive în istoria României: „Mica Unire” de la 24 ianuarie 1859*, <http://mpnewyork.mae.ro/local-news/2307>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>81</sup> O. Cristescu, V. Păsăilă. B. Teodorescu, R. Tomi, *Istoria Românilor. Epoca modernă și contemporană*, București 1995, s. 3-4

<sup>82</sup> V. Dulgieru, *Basarabia și unirea principatelor la 1859*, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325336514\\_BASARABIA\\_SI\\_UNIREA\\_PRINCIPATELOR\\_LA\\_1859](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325336514_BASARABIA_SI_UNIREA_PRINCIPATELOR_LA_1859), (1.07.2024)

<sup>83</sup> *De unde vine numele de România. Cine a folosit pentru prima dată această denumire și care este diferența între România și Țara Românească*, <https://historia.ro/sectiune/general/de-unde-vine-numele-de-romania-cine-a-folosit-576486.html>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>84</sup> O. Cristescu, V. Păsăilă. B. Teodorescu, R. Tomi, *Istoria Românilor...*, *op. cit.*, s. 66-72

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 75



Romania after the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I and the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918. expanded its territory to include Bessarabia (pursuant to the decision of the National Council of the Republic of Moldavia of March 27/April 9, 1918), Transylvania (this fact was confirmed in the Treaty of Versailles), Banat and Bukovina (November 15/28, 1918). This event, called the "Great Unification" (Romanian: *Mare Unirea*), in the historical memory of Romanians began a "golden age" in the country's history, called the Greater Romania period, until World War II<sup>86</sup>.

In turn, in the territory of the Russian Empire, on November 6-8, 1917 there was a coup d'état, after which in January 1918, the establishment of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was proclaimed. The Bolshevik regime led to the outbreak of the civil war, after which it ended on December 30, 1922. the Soviet Union (USSR) was established<sup>87</sup>. On October 12, 1924 the Soviet authorities, as part of the agreement with the Ukrainian SSR, created the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MSARR)<sup>88</sup> (Map 3) by combining the current territories of Transnistria and the lands east of it, up to the city of Balta, to allegedly protect the Moldovans against further attempts to violate their territory from Romania<sup>89</sup>.

### Map 3. Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic



Source:

[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mołdawska\\_Autonomiczna\\_Socjalistyczny\\_Republika\\_Radziecka](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mołdawska_Autonomiczna_Socjalistyczny_Republika_Radziecka), (2/06/2024)

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem, s. 97-103

<sup>87</sup> D. R. Marples, *Historia ZSRR. Od rewolucji do rozpadu*, Wrocław 2011, s. 53-98

<sup>88</sup> В. Стати, *История...*, *op. cit.*, s. 376

<sup>89</sup> D. R. Marples, *Historia ZSRR...*, *op. cit.*, s. 97-98

The international situation deteriorated in the late 1930s, mainly as a result of the intensification of aggression from Nazi Germany, the tolerance shown by the governments of France and England, and Moscow's skillfully concealed policy towards Germany. On August 23, 1939 the foreign ministers of Germany and the USSR concluded a non-aggression treaty, under which on June 28, 1940 the entire Bessarabia (i.e. the territory of the modern Republic of Moldova) and Northern Bukovina were annexed to the USSR. The Soviet Union annexed the territory of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Herta region with an area of 50,762 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 3.915 million<sup>90</sup>. On August 2, 1940, the Soviet authorities established the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR), annexing Transnistria, which was part of the liquidated MASSR (Map 4). The borders of the new republic did not fully coincide with the territory annexed by the USSR. The northern part of the occupied province (the Herta and Hotin regions) and the southern part (the Cetatea Alba and Ismail countries) became part of the Ukrainian SSR<sup>91</sup>. In 1941 Thanks to the alliance with the Third Reich, Romania managed to regain the lost lands and also occupy the areas of the Ukrainian SSR located further east, up to Bohu. In 1944 as a result of the Red Army's counteroffensive, this area returned to the USSR<sup>92</sup>.

**Map 4. Administrative and territorial division of the Republic of Moldova**



- Pink color – Gagauz Autonomy
- Orange color – Transnistria

Source: <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mo%C5%82dawia#/media/Plik:Moldadm.png>, (1/07/2024)

<sup>90</sup> M. Gribincea, *Basarabia în primii ani de ocupație sovetică (1940-1959)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, s. 17

<sup>91</sup> P. D. Aligica, *Romanian-Moldova reunification: Thee scenarios*, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/romania-moldova-reunification/>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>92</sup> O. Cristescu, V. Păsăilă. B. Teodorescu, R. Tomi, *Istoria Românilor...*, op. cit., s. 171-186

The territory of the modern Republic of Moldova is perceived by the authorities in Bucharest as historical Romanian land, which is reflected in Bucharest's policy. Officially, relations between Bucharest and Chişinău are considered special, and representatives of the Romanian political class compete with each other in declarations of help and support for the eastern neighbor, referring to the national, cultural and linguistic community<sup>93</sup>. In practice, Romania's policy towards Moldova and bilateral relations are shaped not only by sentiments, but also by political pragmatism. It is in Romania's interest to ensure its security not only in the medium term, but also in the long term<sup>94</sup>. This is due to the fact that Romania and Moldova are located in the part of Central and Eastern Europe, where the interests of the European Union, the Russian Federation and NATO currently intersect<sup>95</sup>.

However, the territory of the Republic of Moldova is perceived by the Russian Federation, which declared itself the heir of the former USSR, as the so-called "*near abroad*". This concept assumes that the countries to which it refers have special historical ties with Russia and that relations between them and Russia should be of a special, close nature. The concept of "*near abroad*" implies that these countries are not perceived in Russia as fully sovereign, equal subjects of international relations. However, they are considered a "*natural*" zone of Russia's special interests and influence, and the development of relations with these countries is considered a priority of Russian foreign policy<sup>96</sup>. Therefore, Russia considers the territory of the former USSR, including Moldova, to be its natural sphere of political, military and economic influence. The influence of third countries on this territory is treated as threatening Russian interests.

### The language factor

Since the declaration of independence by the Republic of Moldova, the historical facts presented above have had a strong impact on the process of shaping the identity of citizens and the state language. In the years 1812-1918, the inhabitants of Bessarabia, isolated from the nation-building and state-building processes taking place in the rest of the Moldavian Kingdom

<sup>93</sup> O. Stăvilă, *Relațiile Republicii Moldova cu România...*, op.cit.

<sup>94</sup> Ministerul Afacerilor Externe României, *Reperete acțiunii diplomatice a României. Realizări și cifre. 2022*, București 2023, s. 18-25

<sup>95</sup> F. Pintescu, *Relațiile bilaterale dintre Republica Moldova și România în perioada 2000-2010. Considerații geo-economice și geopolitice*, [in] „Revista Moldovenească de drept internațional și relații internaționale”, nr 3, 2011, p. 33

<sup>96</sup> W. Rodkiewicz, *Rosja i jej sąsiedzi – postimperialny syndrom*, [w] „Rosja i jej sąsiedzi”, Zeszyt nr 40, Instytut Studiów Strategicznych, Kraków 2000, s. 14

and Wallachia, were subjected to intense Russification activities. The policy of Russification was to denationalize non-Russian nations through the forced imposition of Russian national and spiritual values. In order to maintain its dominance, the Russian Empire used commonly known methods and practices of ousting the titular nation from the annexed territory. Representatives of other national groups were encouraged to settle in Bessarabia, including: Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Gagauzians, Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Swiss, etc., arrived here massively. The policy of assimilation was applied to these communities, which led to fundamental changes in the ethnic structure. The use of the Romanian language and languages of other ethnic groups was banned, and family names, town and street names were distorted. Over time, the Russian language began to dominate in local administration, church liturgy and education<sup>97</sup>. The process of Russification was facilitated by the fact that the indigenous population of Bessarabia consisted of as many as 95% illiterate peasants<sup>98</sup>.

After Bessarabia was incorporated into Romania in 1918. Bucharest quickly took steps to promote Romanian identity among the inhabitants of the newly annexed province. Bessarabia was one of the most ethnically diverse regions of Romania. In 1930, 352,000 people lived in Bessarabia Russians, 314 thousand Ukrainians and 205 thousand Jews. Each of these groups had their own grievances against the Romanian authorities. Most Russian teachers and officials were removed from the local administration, and the few who remained were forced, under threat of expulsion, to use the Romanian language. Such actions were met with resistance from the Slavic population. Until 1938 on the territory of Bessarabia there were no longer schools with Russian and Ukrainian as languages of instruction<sup>99</sup>.

In the case of the Moldavian ASSR, which was never part of the Romanian state, only about 30% of the inhabitants spoke Romanian<sup>100</sup>. The Soviet Union promoted the existence of the "Moldovan" language and nation in this area. After the USSR occupied Bessarabia in 1940. and the creation of the MSSR, the new republic proclaimed the existence of a "Moldovan" nation separate from the Romanian one, which was to be symbolized by a separate "Moldovan"

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<sup>97</sup> V. Tomuleț, *Besarabia în epoca modernă (1812-1918)*, Chișinău 2014, s. 434-435

<sup>98</sup> K. Całus, *W cieniu historii. Stosunki rumuńsko-moldawskie.*, Warszawa 2015, s. 10

<sup>99</sup> Ch. King, *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, California 2000, s. 43-46

<sup>100</sup> C. Pântea, *The Ethno-Demographic Evolution of Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic*, "Codrul Cosminului" 2008, vol. 14, s.170, [w] [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44796848\\_The\\_Ethno-Demographic\\_Evolution\\_of\\_Moldavian\\_Autonomous\\_Soviet\\_Socialist\\_Republic](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44796848_The_Ethno-Demographic_Evolution_of_Moldavian_Autonomous_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), (2.07.2024)

language. To emphasize this difference, the "Moldovan" language was written in the Cyrillic alphabet, while the Romanian language was written in the Latin alphabet<sup>101</sup>.

The issue of Bessarabia was not discussed in the public space in the first years of communist Romania for political reasons. It was only at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s that the then government of Romania became more interested in the Bessarabian issue, but it was an instrument used for internal policy purposes to build political position and social support within the country. Raising the topic of Bessarabia was a way to emphasize Romania's certain independence from Soviet influence. In turn, the Bessarabia issue was quite boldly discussed in Romanian scholarship, which not only officially began to talk about the annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR, but also called this event an "*act of Soviet imperialism*" or "*Soviet occupation*". Romanian science openly began to emphasize the Romanian character of the lands beyond the Prut, as well as to include the history of the region in studies presenting the history of Romania<sup>102</sup>.

**Table 1. Dynamics of the use of the "Moldovan", Romanian and Russian languages in the Republic of Moldova in 1989-2014, in thousands**

Details	1989	2004*	2014*
<b>Population</b>	4 335,36	3383,33	2804,80
<b>"Moldovan" language</b>	3 070,43 (91,6%)	2 029,85 (60%)	1544,73 (55,1%)
<b>Romanian language</b>	169,08 (3,9%)	558,51 (16,5%)	707,96 (22,8%)
<b>Russian (as native language)</b>	446,41 (9,6%)	380,80 (11,3%)	263,52 (9,4%)
<b>Russian (as a second language)</b>	1962,11 (45,26%)	540,99 (15,99%)	394,13 (14,1%)

\* - excluding Transnistria

Source: own study based on: Anuarul Statistical Republicii Moldova, 1992, Chişinău 1994, p. 65; Biroul Naţional de Statistică al Republicii Moldova, <https://statistica.gov.md/>, (2/07/2024)

<sup>101</sup> B. Zdaniuk, *Nazwa języka a konsolidacja państwa. Kontrowersje wokół wyroku Sądu Konstytucyjnego Republiki Mołdawii z 5 grudnia 2013 roku*, [w] J. Wojnicki (red.), „Kształtowanie ładu demokratycznego w państwach Europy Środkowej i na Bałkanach. Szanse i zagrożenia.”, Warszawa 2015, s. 158

<sup>102</sup> K. Całus, *W cieniu historii...*, op. cit., s. 14-16

According to the censuses conducted in 2004 and 2014, 75.8% and 73.7% of Moldova's inhabitants, respectively, declare themselves to be ethnic Moldovans, while only 2.2% and 6.9%, respectively, consider themselves Romanians<sup>103</sup>. After 1991 changes in Moldova and the number of speakers of "*Moldovan*", Romanian and Russian languages. Taking into account the data contained in Table 1, it should be noted that after 1989 the number of users of the "*Moldovan*" language decreased by almost 50%, while the number of users of the Romanian language increased more than fourfold. A downward trend is noted both in the number of Russian language users, both in the group declaring it in the "native language" category (a decrease of almost 41%), and among the group for which this language is a "language of communication" with other citizens of the country (a decrease by 80%).

As we know, language is a key feature of ethnic group and national identity. On December 5, 2013 The Constitutional Tribunal of the Council of Ministers recognized the Romanian language as the state language. According to the judge of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Prime Minister, Aurel Băieșu, the name of the state language should be "Romanian" and not "*Moldovan*". Meanwhile, in Moldova, 60-70% of the population believes that the spoken language is "*Moldovan*". According to A. Băieșu, this state of affairs is the result of Soviet propaganda, which emphasized that "*Moldovan*" is a language separate from Romanian and whose content has become embedded in the consciousness of citizens<sup>104</sup>.

Romania, for its part, is taking steps to promote the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova. For this purpose, it organizes and finances various types of programs, courses and internships addressed to Moldovan citizens, especially teachers, students and pupils. However, the Russian Federation is concerned about the decreasing importance of the Russian language in the Republic of Moldova. And so, in 2018 The Constitutional Tribunal of the Prime Minister decided that the "*Act on the Functioning of Languages in the Territory of the MSSR*" of 1989 is outdated<sup>105</sup>, and from September 2018 Russian is no longer a compulsory subject in schools in Moldova. In 2021 The Constitutional Tribunal of the Council of Ministers stated that the Russian language cannot be the language of interethnic communication because it is the language of one of the national minorities<sup>106</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova, <https://statistica.gov.md/>, (2.07.2024)

<sup>104</sup> B. Zdaniuk, *Nazwa języka a konsolidacja państwa...*, op. cit., s. 167

<sup>105</sup> Ю. Семенова, *Русский язык в Молдавии может потерять свой статус?*, <https://www.dw.com/ru/русский-язык-в-молдавии-может-потерять-свой-статус/a-44071637>, (2.07.2023)

<sup>106</sup> *Textul briefing-ului susținut de Președintele Curții Constituționale, Domnica Manole, pe 21 ianuarie 2021, (statutul limbilor vorbite pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova)*, <https://www.constcourt.md/libview.php?l=ro&id=2068&idc=7&t=/Media/Noutati/Textul-briefing-ului-sustinut-de-Preedintele-Curtii-Constitutionale-Domnica-Manole-pe-21-ianuarie-2021-statutul-limbilor-vorbite-pe-teritoriul-Republicii-Moldova/>, (3.07.2024)

The Russian Center for Science and Culture opened in Chisinau in February 2009. The main directions of its activities are: promotion of Russian culture, Russian education and science; supporting compatriots; strengthening the position of the Russian language; protection of historical and monumental heritage; public diplomacy and youth exchange. The center organizes a variety of events: educational fairs and presentations of Russian universities, courses, seminars and training for teachers, as well as competitions, olympiads and quizzes for pupils and students. including Russian language courses<sup>107</sup>.

Another "soft power" entity in Moldova is the non-state center for supporting and popularizing the Russian language and culture "Russkiy Mir" Foundation. Its main goal is to popularize the Russian language and support Russian language learning programs abroad. The main areas of the foundation's activities include: dissemination of the Russian language; helping to disseminate objective information about Russia, supporting the Russian diaspora abroad; assistance in expert support for Russian foreign policy; assistance in the export of educational services to Russia. Branches of the Foundation have been established in Moldova - in Chisinau, Balti, Comrat and Tiraspol, which operate within local universities. Unfortunately, the Foundation's activities have decreased significantly in recent years. They operate the so-called "Russian language cabinets", but no events are organized and the book collection is not updated<sup>108</sup>.

### **Educational factor**

Science and education are an important part of "soft power" policy. Romanian education policy is a clear example of the application of this factor. Cooperation in the fields of education, scientific research and culture between Romania and the Republic of Moldova is implemented on the basis of a number of agreements. The first of them is the "*Agreement on cooperation in the field of science, education and culture*" concluded between the governments of the two countries in Chisinau on May 19, 1992 and in force since December 27, 1993<sup>109</sup>. Moreover, cooperation in the field of education is based on periodically concluded Protocols between the

<sup>107</sup> О Представительстве, <https://moldova.rs.gov.ru/about-russian-houses/#f6f9502db02577593e7035a7d4924c96>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>108</sup> О. В. Ушурелу, *Российская мягкая сила в Молдавии особенности и эффективность применения*, Московский Государственный Обласной Унивеситет, Мытищи 2019, s. 120 – 122, <https://www.dissercat.com/content/rossiiskaya-myagkaya-sila-v-moldavii-osobennosti-i-effektivnost-izmereniya>, (2.07.2024)

<sup>109</sup> Zob.: *Acord din 19 mai 1992*, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/31067>, (1.07.2024); C. Paunescu, S. Cebotari, *Aspectele cheie ale relațiilor moldo-române*, s. 33, <https://old.aap.gov.md/files/publicatii/ri+/articole/20/03.pdf>, (2.07.2024)

Ministry of Education of Romania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Moldova.

**Table 2. Number of scholarships awarded to citizens of the Republic of Moldova by the Government of Romania in 2012-2026**

Details	2012-2015	2016-2019	2022-2026
Pre-university education	1500	950	950
First cycle studies	2800	1100	1100
Second cycle studies	550	100	450
Third cycle studies	150	50	50
Postgraduate studies	-	50	-
Total	5000	2250	2550

Source: opracowanie własne na podstawie: *Cooperarea în domeniile educației, cercetării științifice și culturii între România și Republica Moldova, continuată prin trei acorduri*, <https://gov.ro/ro/print?modul=sedinte&link=cooperarea-in-domeniile-educatiei-cercetarii-tiintifice-i-culturii-intre-romania-i-republica-moldova-continuada-prin-trei-acorduri>, (1.07.2024); *România și Republica Moldova continuă colaborarea în domeniul educației în perioada 2016-2019*, <https://www.gov.ro/ro/guvernul/sedinte-guvern/romania-i-republica-moldova-continua-colaborarea-in-domeniul-educatiei-in-perioada-2016-2019>, (1.07.2024); *A fost semnat Protocolul de colaborare între Ministerul Educației și Cercetării al Republicii Moldova și Ministerul Educației din România pentru perioada 2022-2026*, <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/fost-semnat-protocolul-de-colaborare-intre-ministerul-educatiei-si-cercetarii-al-republicii>, (1.07.2024)

As shown in Table 2, over the years the Romanian government has been awarding scholarships to Moldovan citizens pursuing bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies. Until the 2015/2016 school year, the Romanian government awarded 5,000 scholarships to citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Since the 2016/2017 school year, the number of scholarships offered by the Government of Romania to citizens of the Republic of Moldova has decreased by 2,250. This is mainly due to the fact that since 2017, a large number of applicants from Moldova had Romanian citizenship and could apply as Romanian citizens under general rules.

On February 11, 2022 A document was signed that defines the framework for cooperation for 2022-2026. Based on this document, the Romanian Ministry of Education and Science will award 2,550 scholarships every year, of which 950 are scholarships for pre-university education, 1,100 scholarships at bachelor's level, 450 - at master's level and 50 - at doctoral level. Based on this document, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova will award



200 scholarships every year to young people from Romania at three levels of higher education. According to data from the Romanian Ministry of Education, in 2022, 14,000 people studied and studied in Romania. citizens of the Republic of Moldova<sup>110</sup>.

As part of cooperation and in accordance with the main provisions of the Protocol for 2022-2026, the parties will: - implement the academic mobility program<sup>111</sup>:

- conduct practical internships and training for students and teaching staff of pre-university, university and research education institutions;
- develop the expansion of universities in the Republic of Moldova;
- develop and harmonize school curricula, in line with European educational practices; - exchange publications and specialist materials;
- develop partnerships between pre-university education providers, school inspectorates, teachers' homes or equivalent institutions;
- develop partnership between specialized agencies reporting to both ministries;
- implement joint projects within the framework offered by regional and European programs in the field of education and vocational training.

Also, the sphere of science and education is an important part of the Russian so-called "*soft power*" in Moldova. Even in the former USSR, education was of great importance in terms of spreading influence around the world, thanks to which connections with societies and elites of third countries appeared. Moreover, if we refer to all concepts of foreign policy of the Russian Federation, special attention is paid to education. The Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova on August 17, 1994. concluded at the government level the "*Agreement on cooperation in the sphere of culture and science*", which entered into force on September 30, 1994<sup>112</sup>. On the basis of this agreement, on September 27, 2006 the parties signed an Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Youth of the Prime Minister on cooperation in the field of education<sup>113</sup>. In addition, inter-ministerial agreements and cooperation protocols were signed. According to the

<sup>110</sup> V. Guțu, *14.000 de tineri basarabeni studează în România, un număr dublu de români pleacă la facultăți peste hotare*, <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/tineri-basarabeni-romania-numar-dublu-romani-facultati-pest-hotare-4223600>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>111</sup> *A fost semnat Protocolul de colaborare între Ministerul Educației și Cercetării al Republicii Moldova și Ministerul Educației din România pentru perioada 2022-2026*, <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/fost-semnat-protocolul-de-colaborare-intre-ministerul-educatiei-si-cercetarii-al-republicii>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>112</sup> Посольство Рупублики Молдова в Российской Федерации, [w] <https://russia.mfa.gov.md/ru/content/двух-сторонняя-правовая-база>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>113</sup> *Соглашение между Министерством образования и науки Российской Федерации и Министерством просвещения и молодежи Республики Молдова о сотрудничестве в области образования от 27 ноября 2006 г.*, <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/1900422>, (1.07.2024)

signed documents, the Ministry of Education of Russia provided assistance to the Republic of Moldova in the preparation of national staff - specialists in various fields, and also organized training for teachers to improve their qualifications and provides school textbooks to Russian-speaking schools, mainly located in Transnistria<sup>114</sup>.

On the website of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in the Russian Federation, you can read that higher education institutions operating at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia offer citizens of the Republic of Moldova 13 scholarship places in first-cycle studies, second-cycle studies and doctoral studies, including 3 places in the State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (MGIMO University) and 10 places in the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. In turn, the Federal Agency for Cooperation with CIS Countries, Compatriots from Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnicestvo) offers 500-550 scholarships annually to citizens of the Republic of Moldova who want to study in Russia<sup>115</sup>.

Taking into account the above information, it should be noted that in 2007, the Republic of Moldova was awarded 330 scholarships, including 200 - for full studies, 7 - for postgraduate and doctoral studies, 70 - for improving the qualifications of teachers and lecturers of the Russian language<sup>116</sup>. In turn, in 2023 citizens of Moldova, similarly to 2021, could apply for 600 scholarships<sup>117</sup>. Moreover, most Russian universities are located in regions of Russia that are not popular among Moldovan youth, as they are aware of Russia's infrastructural and logistical difficulties.

The situation in the field of education in Transnistria is slightly different. The main university, Transnistrian State University, educates staff in Russian educational programs and also issues a certificate of compliance of education with Russian standards. This university belongs to the Association of Russian Universities<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> О Российско-молдавском сотрудничестве в гуманитарной сфере, <https://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/md/1738153/>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>115</sup> Ambasada Republicii Moldova în Federația Rusă, *Relații culturale*, <https://rusia.mfa.gov.md/ro/content/rela%C5%A3ii-culturale>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>116</sup> О Российско-молдавском сотрудничестве..., *op. cit.*

<sup>117</sup> Квотная кампания 2024/2025 учебного года, <https://moldova.rs.gov.ru/announcement/kvotnaya-kampaniya-na-2024-2025-uchebnyj-god/>, (1.07.2024)

<sup>118</sup> О Российско-молдавском сотрудничестве..., *op. cit.*

### **Media factor**

The promotion of culture and lifestyle is also carried out using the media and television. For example, the entertainment industry plays a particular role in shaping the attractiveness of the Romanian (i.e. "European") lifestyle and creating a positive image of the country. Since 1999 in the information space of the Republic of Moldova there is a television channel "PRO TV", which in turn belongs to the Romanian company Media Pro, officially owned by the American company Central European Media Enterprises<sup>119</sup>. On December 1, 2013 The Romanian Television Society in Moldova has launched the TVR Moldova channel. The aim of the activity is to promote Romanian culture and language, traditions and customs that constitute the identity of the Romanian nation. The station, through programs produced in Romania, the Republic of Moldova and purchased from foreign partners, supports the process of integration of the Republic of Moldova with the European Union. The station broadcasts TVR1, TVR2, TVR3 and TVR International programs. The media offer includes news, sports, Romanian and foreign films, theater plays, entertainment productions, musical and folklore shows<sup>120</sup>. In 2020, the Cotidianul TV-CTV channel began broadcasting in Moldova, which was founded by a group of young Romanian journalists and launched with the support of the US Embassy in the Republic of Moldova as part of the Independent Media Support Program run by the US Department of State. The new channel is broadcast in Romanian on cable television and its network includes news and entertainment programs<sup>121</sup>. In turn, in 2024 the Romanian media group Clever Group will launch two television channels in Moldova with the consent of the Audiovisual Council of Moldova. The first of them - Prima TV Moldova will have a general profile, while the second Cenemaraton Moldova - is a film channel that will broadcast Romanian and Moldovan films<sup>122</sup>. Since 2011, "Radio Chişinău", owned by the Society of Romanian Radio and Television Broadcasters (99% of shares) and "Romanian Center for Book and Culture" S.A., has been broadcasting in Moldova. (1% of shares)<sup>123</sup>.

Moreover, in 2023 in Moldova, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, there were 84 newspapers/publishing houses with an annual circulation of 12 million copies.

<sup>119</sup> *Transparența proprietății furnizorilor de servicii media*, <https://protv.md/contacts>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>120</sup> *Despre noi*, <https://tvrmdova.md/page/despre-noi.html>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>121</sup> *Two new television channels to start working in Moldova soon*, <http://www.infotag.md/culture-en/287748/>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>122</sup> *Clever Group of Romania to launch two TV channels in Moldova*, [https://www.ipn.md/en/clever-group-of-romania-to-launch-two-tv-channels-in-7967\\_1104517.html#ixzz8g214WQRs](https://www.ipn.md/en/clever-group-of-romania-to-launch-two-tv-channels-in-7967_1104517.html#ixzz8g214WQRs), (3.07.2024)

<sup>123</sup> *Registrul furnizorilor de servicii media de radiodifuziune sonoră*, <https://consiliuaudiovizual.md/registers/registrul-furnizorilor-de-servicii-media-de-radiodifuziune-sonora/>, (3.07.2024)

47 newspapers were published in Romanian. Of the 138 magazines published, 49 were published in Romanian<sup>124</sup>. In Moldova, the most popular newspapers published in Romanian are "Timpul", "Adevărul Moldova", "Literatura și Arta". All these entities receive great systemic support from the Ministry of Relations with the Romanian Diaspora<sup>125</sup>.

In turn, in Moldova, only commercial printed publications are published in Russian: "Wiadomości Moldovaskie", "Nezawisimaja Moldova", "Argumenty i Fakty", "Kommersant Plus", "Panorama", "Komsomolskaya Pravda - Moldova", as well as publications Russian community: "Pole Rosyjskie", "Russian Album", "Nasze Pokolenie" and "Bulletin of the Slavic University". In the Internet space, there are several news and information agencies that operate in Russian, as well as websites of organizations of Russian compatriots<sup>126</sup>.

According to the legislation of the Republic of Moldova, until 2014, local television broadcast 85% of its broadcasting time in the state language. The life of the Russian diaspora was reported in half-hour programs once a week on less popular television and once a month on the Republican radio station. ORT, "Nit", RTR-Moldova, STS, Accent TV, NTV were broadcast in Russian. Some television programs were broadcast in Russian on the "Jurnal TV" television channel. Russian broadcasts were rebroadcast by the radio station "Radio Moldova". However, since 2014 it has become normal practice for cable operators not to include Russian language TV channels in their TV packages. The state monopoly Moldtelecom, under the pretext of choosing operators independently, refused to resolve controversial situations. After high-level Russian-Moldovan negotiations with the Moldovan side, broadcasting of the RTR-Moldova program was resumed<sup>127</sup>.

However, in January 2018, the Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, Andrian Candu, approved the law adopted by deputies amending the Broadcasting Code, according to which the broadcasting of Russian news and analytical programs was banned in the republic. Despite the fact that the then-president Igor Dodon vetoed the law twice, it was adopted by the Constitutional Tribunal of the republic, bypassing the president<sup>128</sup>.

At the end of February 2022, after Russia launched a "*special military operation*" in Ukraine, the Parliament of the Prime Minister introduced a state of emergency in the republic

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<sup>124</sup> Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova, [www.statistica.md](http://www.statistica.md), (3.07.2024)

<sup>125</sup> Departamentul pentru Românii de Pretutindeni, <https://dprp.gov.ro/web/legistatie/>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>126</sup> С.И. Чернявский, *О положении русскоговорящего населения в Белоруссии, Молдавии и на Украине*, <https://www.interanalytics.org/jour/article/download/129/85>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>127</sup> Ibidem

<sup>128</sup> Андриан Канду утвердил поправки в Кодексе телевидения и радио, [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/ru/andrian-kandu-utverdil-popravki-v-kodekse-televideniya-i-radio-7967\\_1039290.html#ixzz8g2aO10m8](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/ru/andrian-kandu-utverdil-popravki-v-kodekse-televideniya-i-radio-7967_1039290.html#ixzz8g2aO10m8), (3.07.2024)

for a period of 60 days. During this time, the broadcast of Russian television programs was limited and access to the news websites "Sputnik Moldova", Eurasia was blocked Daily (eadaily.com). On June 2, 2022, the Parliament of Moldova adopted a package of legislative changes regarding the country's information security. The amendment to the Code on Audiovisual Media Services banned the rebroadcasting of news, television and radio programs with news, analytical, military and political content, as well as films with military content from countries that have not ratified the European Convention on Transborder Television, including Russia<sup>129</sup>. It was established that the limit for content in Russian would be no more than 20% of the total volume of broadcast programs<sup>130</sup>. On June 22, 2022 a law banning the broadcasting of news programs from Russia came into force. In turn, on December 16, 2022 the licenses of six channels were suspended, including "First in Moldova", "RTR-Moldova", "Accent-TV", "NTV-Moldova", "TV-6", "Orhei-TV"<sup>131</sup>. In turn, October 22 2023 The Information and Security Service of the Prime Minister informed about blocking access to 22 Russian Internet resources<sup>132</sup>.

### Citizenship

Romania's policy of making it easier for citizens of the Republic of Moldova to obtain Romanian citizenship is probably one of the strongest tools for building Romanian *soft power* in this country since Moldova gained independence.

Since the 1990s, the Romanian government has been actively implementing a program aimed at attracting citizens of the Republic of Moldova to Romanian citizenship. In accordance with the Law "On the Return of Romanian Citizenship to Persons Who Lost It for Political Reasons" and the Law "On Romanian Citizenship"<sup>133</sup>, it can be obtained by persons born in Romania before June 28, 1940 and their descendants. Since Romania joined the European Union in 2007, citizen trials have intensified. A Romanian citizen's passport allows free movement within the European Union. Receiving it has become more desirable and attractive

<sup>129</sup> Law on combating misinformation passed in final reading, [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/law-on-combating-misinformation-passed-in-final-reading-7967\\_1090175.html#ixzz8g2ipdYqq](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/law-on-combating-misinformation-passed-in-final-reading-7967_1090175.html#ixzz8g2ipdYqq), (3.07.2024)

<sup>130</sup> Sandu about law on disinformation: We ensure an objective information space, [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/sandu-about-law-on-disinformation-we-ensure-an-objective-information-7965\\_1090649.html#ixzz8g2iOhMGn](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/sandu-about-law-on-disinformation-we-ensure-an-objective-information-7965_1090649.html#ixzz8g2iOhMGn), (3.07.2024)

<sup>131</sup> Liliana Vițu: TV channels whose broadcast licenses were suspended constantly violated law, [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/liliana-vitu-tv-channels-whose-broadcast-licenses-were-suspended-constantly-7965\\_1094136.html#ixzz8g2gGC6b0](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/liliana-vitu-tv-channels-whose-broadcast-licenses-were-suspended-constantly-7965_1094136.html#ixzz8g2gGC6b0), (3.07.2024)

<sup>132</sup> SIS blocks access to 22 websites, [https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/sis-blocks-access-to-22-websites-7967\\_1100295.html](https://www.ipn.md/index.php/en/sis-blocks-access-to-22-websites-7967_1100295.html), (3.07.2024)

<sup>133</sup> Legea nr 21 din 1 martie 1991 cetățeniei române, [https://data.globalcit.eu/NationalDB/docs/ROM%20Citizenship%20law%201999%20\(as%20republished%20in%202000,%20original\).pdf](https://data.globalcit.eu/NationalDB/docs/ROM%20Citizenship%20law%201999%20(as%20republished%20in%202000,%20original).pdf), (3.07.2024)

for pragmatic Moldovans who want to go outside their country in search of work. In 2009, the Romanian Parliament simplified the citizenship procedure. This right was granted to all former subjects of the Kingdom of Romania, which included the territory of modern Moldova, parts of the Odessa and Chernivtsi oblasts of modern Ukraine, as well as their descendants up to the third generation. Additionally, knowledge of the Romanian language became optional, as did residence in Romania<sup>134</sup>.

According to the general population census of 2014, approx. 150 thousand Moldovan citizens confirmed that they are Romanian citizens (approx. 5% of the population). According to the estimates of politicians, NGOs and the media, this number was higher, because in research by the SOROS Foundation branch, the total number of people "*living in former Romanian territories*" and being people who acquired Romanian citizenship in the years 1991-2012 could be as high as 400,000. people<sup>135</sup>. In turn, according to data from the Ministry of Justice of Romania, in the period from January 2010 until November 5, 2021 over one million Moldovan citizens received Romanian citizenship<sup>136</sup>. The number of people living in Moldova who participate in the Romanian elections is also growing rapidly, for example, in the second round of the presidential elections in Romania, the number of voters increased from 2009. until 2014 three times (from 12.3 thousand to 35.6 thousand people)<sup>137</sup>. For example, in the parliamentary elections that took place on June 9, 2024. 52 polling stations were opened in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, while in 2019 Romania only opened 36 polling stations in Moldova<sup>138</sup>.

If we take into account the policy of the Russian Federation towards the citizens of Moldova, it has suffered a number of failures. For example, the number of Moldovan citizens working in Russia is decreasing every year. At the beginning of 2014 in Russia there were a little over 600,000. citizens of Moldova, while at the beginning of 2021 – only about 150 thousand. Until January 2022 approximately 75,000 remained on Russian territory. citizens of

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<sup>134</sup> K. Całus, *W cieniu historii...*, op. cit., s. 27

<sup>135</sup> S. Panainte (red.), *Redobândirea cetățeniei române: o politică ce capătă viziune.*, Fundația Soros România., București 2013, s. 18, [http://www.fundatia.ro/sites/default/files/ro\\_125\\_Raport%20Cetatenie.pdf](http://www.fundatia.ro/sites/default/files/ro_125_Raport%20Cetatenie.pdf) (07.07.2024)

<sup>136</sup> А. Дмитриева, *1027091 граждан Молдовы получили гражданство за последнее 11 лет*, <https://nokta.md/1-027-091-grazhdan-moldovy-poluchili-rumynskoe-grazhdanstvo-za-poslednie-11-let/>, (3.07.2024)

<sup>137</sup> В. Кирилов, И. Путинцев, *Влияние Румынии в Молдавии: форма и эволюция унионизма*, [w] „Современная Европа”, 2018, №3, s. 42

<sup>138</sup> *Romanian citizens on June 9 will elect 33 Romanian members of European Parliament*, [https://www.ipn.md/en/romanian-citizens-on-june-9-will-elect-33-romanian-members-7965\\_1104713.html#ixzz8g33DBrBf](https://www.ipn.md/en/romanian-citizens-on-june-9-will-elect-33-romanian-members-7965_1104713.html#ixzz8g33DBrBf), (5.07.2024)

this country, most of whom had Russian citizenship<sup>139</sup>. Moreover, at the end of 2021 the State Duma approved the law "*On Citizenship*". This document deprived Moldovan citizens of the right to obtain Russian citizenship under a simplified procedure. However, this law was upheld for the inhabitants of Transnistria, where Russian was recognized as the "state" language. According to the leader of Transnistria, 300,000 people live in the region. Russian citizens<sup>140</sup>.

### **Religious factor**

Since its incorporation in 1812 area of Bessarabia to the Russian Empire. The Orthodox Church was subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate. By the mid-19th century, the Orthodox Church of Moldova had undergone significant Russification. The situation changed in 1918. the annexation of the territories of Moldova (excluding Transnistria) to Romania, as a result of which the Moldavian Archeparchy was incorporated into the Romanian Orthodox Church. This state of affairs lasted until 1940... when the USSR authorities took intensive steps to eliminate the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church and forced the faithful to come under the jurisdiction of Moscow. The Bessarabian metropolis was degraded to the level of an eparchy and incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church. The property of the former Bessarabian Metropolis was nationalized, destroyed or transferred to the Russian Church. Orthodox clergy from the Romanian Church were exiled or murdered. As a result, the Soviet authorities managed to take full control over the remaining church structures in Moldova in just a few years<sup>141</sup>.

On the wave of perestroika, the Russian Orthodox Church, regaining its freedom of action, began to regain its influence in Moldova. In September 1990 two months after Moldova declared its sovereignty, Russian Patriarch Alexei II, during his visit to Chişinău, created a new diocese of Bielecki, with Peter Păduraru as its bishop. In January 1991, the Holy Synod in Moscow decided to establish the Metropolis of Chisinau and All Moldova (abbreviated as the Metropolis of Moldova). The pro-Romanian Moldavian Popular Front, then ruling in Chisinau, was reluctant to increase the influence of the Russian Church, but apart from suspending the official registration of the new metropolis, it did little to limit it. The situation changed in September 1992, when Bishop Peter was officially suspended for his pro-Romanian beliefs and,

<sup>139</sup> Кишинев отметил рост числа молдавских граждан, желающих вернуться на родину из России, <https://www.interfax.ru/world/866208>, (5.12.2023)

<sup>140</sup> Молдаване не смогут получить российское гражданство по упрощенной процедуре, <https://esp.md/ru/sobytiya/2023/04/21/moldavane-ne-smogut-poluchat-rossiyskoe-grazhdanstvo-po-uproshchennoy-procedure>, (5.12.2023)

<sup>141</sup> K. Calus, *W cieniu istoriei...*, op. cit., s. 30-31

together with a group of priests, announced the establishment of the autonomous Bessarabian Metropolis. She also asked the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Theoxitus I, to include the self-proclaimed Metropolis in the Romanian Church in the diocese council. On December 19, 1992, Teoxyt I, without consulting Moscow, decided to restore the Orthodox Bessarabian Metropolis in the Republic of Moldova. The temporary management of this metropolis, until the election of a metropolitan from among the episcopate of the Romanian Church, was entrusted to Bishop Piotr Bielecki<sup>142</sup>.

The authorities of Moldova finally registered the Metropolis of Chisinau and All Moldova, established in 1991, in 1993, and the Bessarabian Metropolis only in 2002. Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the Moldavian Orthodox Church, subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate, has been losing influence in the republic in favor of the Bessarabian Metropolis. According to Moldovan analyst Victor Gotișanu, *"the basic reason is the support of the Orthodox Church in Russia for the war in Ukraine. This church is perceived by the inhabitants of Moldova as an "outpost" of the Kremlin and an advocate of the Russian invasion of Ukraine"*. Disappointment is growing among the Moldovan Orthodox clergy, and over the past two years, there have been more and more frequent cases of Orthodox parishes transferring from the Chisinau Metropolis to the structures of the Bessarabian Metropolis. The political situation inside Moldova also contributes to the weakening of the ratings of the Chisinau Metropolis. Before the Action and Solidarity Party and President Maia Sandu took power in Moldova, the Moldovan Orthodox clergy operated alongside the pro-Russian government. This government issued diplomatic passports to clergy and diplomatic license plates for their vehicles. The current authorities, headed by the President of the Republic of Moldova, put an end to this by simply moving to a secular state model<sup>143</sup>.

## Conclusions

Regarding the contemporary situation of states, P. Winczorek writes that *"it is difficult to talk, remaining in the sphere of facts, about the full and complete sovereignty of states. This concerns primarily external sovereignty. States are so interconnected and dependent – politically, economically, militarily, culturally – that one of them cannot claim to be completely independent of the others"*<sup>144</sup>. However, in his analysis of sovereignty, W. Wallerstein divides

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<sup>142</sup> Ibidem, s. 31

<sup>143</sup> Эксперт: подчиненная Москве православная церковь теряет влияние в Молдове из-за позиции России в войне, <https://www.pap.pl/ru/russian/news/ekspert-podchinennaya-moskve-pravoslavnyaya-cerkov-teryayet-vliyanie-v-moldove-iz-za>, (5.12.2023)

<sup>144</sup> P. Winczorek, *Nauka o państwie*, Warszawa 2005, s. 70



this category into internal and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty means that the state conducts policy and establishes laws that it considers appropriate, and also indicates entities that are obliged to obey the laws. External sovereignty means that other states, both directly and indirectly, do not have the ability to exercise power on the territory of another state<sup>145</sup>. Referring these issues to the problem of the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova, it should be concluded that the sovereignty of this country is determined first by external factors, and then by internal factors. All aspects of Romanian and Russian *soft-power* policy towards the Republic of Moldova mentioned in the article affect its sovereignty. First of all, it involves a number of problems. The first is the issue of internal separatism, i.e. the existence of Transnistria, which is not integrated with the rest of the state, and the establishment of the Gagauz Autonomy, which does not shy away from expressing anti-government sentiments. The second issue is the problem of shaping the national identity of the population living in the Republic of Moldova, which does not have a uniform ethnic trunk. The third issue is the existence of clear political divisions in society, which in turn affects the election results.

Romania's *soft-power* policy has been very active and consistent since the recognition of the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. Russian *soft-power* policy depends on the internal and external political situation occurring inside and outside the Republic of Moldova. Romanian *soft-power* is diversified in its offer of initiatives, which not only contributes to the growing importance of the Romanian language, but also causes an increase in interest in the "European lifestyle" in the Republic of Moldova. Russian *soft-power* is largely based on resentments referring to Soviet times, which seem less attractive compared to the Romanian offer of initiatives. Moreover, Russia's *soft-power* towards Moldova is currently negatively affected by the commencement of February 24, 2022. Russia's "special operation" on Ukrainian territory, contributing to reducing its influence.

### Streszczenie:

Artykuł podejmuje próbę przedstawienia wpływu rumuńskiej i rosyjskiej *soft power* na suwerenność Republiki Mołdawii. W związku z tym, w artykule ujęto takie wybrane kategorie, rozumiane jako czynniki, jak: historia, język, edukacja, media, obywatelstwo czy religia, które są obecne w rumuńskiej i rosyjskiej polityce *soft power* wobec Republiki Mołdawii. W artykule zastosowano metodę historyczną oraz zaprezentowanie związków przyczynowo-skutkowych w celu udzielenia odpowiedzi na pytania badawcze: Czy wybrane kategorie określające

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<sup>145</sup> I. Wallerstein, *Koniec świata jaki znamy*, Scholar, Warszawa 2004, s. 87 – 106

rumuńską i rosyjską *soft power* wzmacniają czy osłabiają suwerenność Republiki Mołdawii? Czym się różni rumuńska i rosyjska polityka *soft power* wobec Republiki Mołdawii? Rumuńska *soft-power* jest zróżnicowana w swojej ofercie inicjatyw, co powoduje wzrost zainteresowania „europejskim stylem życia” w Republice Mołdawii. Rosyjska *soft-power* w dużym stopniu bazuje na resentymentach odwołujących się do czasów radzieckich, które w stosunku do rumuńskiej oferty inicjatyw wydają się mniej atrakcyjne.

### Słowa kluczowe:

Republika Mołdawia, Rosja, Rumunia, polityka soft-power, suwerenność, historia, współczesność

### Key words:

Republic of Moldova, Russia, Romania, soft-power policy, sovereignty, history, present day

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## **Facing difficult times. EU – Georgia relations current problems and challenges**

On November 28, 2024, Irakli Kobakhidze, the Prime Minister of Georgia, announced at a press conference that the decision had been made to suspend negotiations with the European Union until 2028<sup>146</sup>. In response to this decision, Georgians once again took to the streets of Tbilisi and other cities. However, this time, they were not protesting electoral irregularities related to the parliamentary elections held on October 26, 2024, but rather against the abandonment of Georgia's constitutional commitment to pursue membership in the European Union. In reaction to the Georgian government's position, the EU Ambassador to Georgia, Paweł Herczyński, stated that everyone had "woken up in a completely new reality"<sup>147</sup> and that the appropriate decisions would be made by the EU Council.

It is therefore worth asking whether the EU was prepared for such a turn in Georgian policy. Or was the apparent freezing of relations between the EU and Georgia in recent years not only due to the particular interests of the Georgian political class, but also to the lack of an idea and vision on the part of the EU on how to counteract the processes taking place in Georgia? Two contexts remain key. The first resulting from bilateral relations. The second being the result of changes taking place in the EU's relations with its eastern neighbourhood as a result of Russia's aggressive policy.

The considerations in the article cover the period 2022-2024. The outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war (February 24, 2022), which radically changed the situation of the countries of

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<sup>146</sup> GD Aborts EU Accession, "Civil.ge", 28.11.2024, <https://civil.ge/archives/638801>

<sup>147</sup> Amb. Herczyński : A completely New, "Heartbreaking" Reality, "Civil.ge", 29.11.2024, <https://civil.ge/archives/639126>

the former Soviet Union, and the decision of the Georgian authorities to withdraw from integration constitute a kind of censorship here.

### Research approach

As part of the research, the positions of the EU, including those of the Council, the EU President and the head of EU diplomacy, and the statements of the EU representative in Georgia, were analyzed. The EU position was compared with the position expressed by the Georgian authorities and their assessments of EU-Georgia relations. At the same time, the considerations were based on the conclusions resulting from the author's interviews conducted during a research visit to Georgia in 2023. At that time, the interlocutors included representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia, representatives of the government administration, analytical centers, and the academic community. The research approach presented in the article is close to the functionalist school which entrust the role to the international organizations in performing those tasks that the state is unable to perform on its own<sup>148</sup>. At the same time, it is assumed that international organizations of all types transcend state borders and exert a significant influence on the governmental entities and transnational entities that constitute them<sup>149</sup>.

### Background

In accordance with the provisions of the Georgian Constitution - Article 78 – “Integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures” – “the constitutional bodies shall take all measures within the scope of their competences to ensure the full integration of Georgia into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization”<sup>150</sup>. For years, Georgia was considered as the leader of the post-Soviet area (excluding the Baltic countries) in striving for full EU membership. The analysis of relations between Tbilisi and Brussels has been the subject of many studies<sup>151</sup>. This article focuses on current events. However, it is impossible not to mention

<sup>148</sup> Kuźniak B. (2024), Międzyrządowe organizacje międzynarodowe [in:] Haliżak E. (ed.) Encyklopedia Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Warszawa.

<sup>149</sup> Baylis J., Smith S., The Globalization of the World Politics. An introduction to international relations, Oxford University Press 2005,

<sup>150</sup> Constitution of Georgia, Legislative herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/30346?publication=36>

<sup>151</sup> Giuashvili T. (2025), The European Union's Strategic Test in Georgia, [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/ifri\\_giuashvili\\_eu\\_georgia\\_strategic\\_test\\_2025.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/ifri_giuashvili_eu_georgia_strategic_test_2025.pdf); Sabanadze N., EU-Georgia Relations: A Local Show of the Global Theater,



key moments in mutual relations. The most important ones include: the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (2014), the adoption of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA, entered into force in 2016) and the abolition of the visa regime for Georgian citizens (2017). At the same time, it is worth noting the financial support provided by the EU to Georgia, which, for example in the form of non-repayable grants the Neighbourhood Development and Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe mechanism (NDICI-GE), amounted to a total of EUR 340 million just in 2021-2024<sup>152</sup>. In March 2022, the Georgian government submitted a formal application for EU membership. In June 2022 Commission recommends candidate status and outlines 12 key priorities, which were endorsed by European Council. Not all recommendations have been fulfilled. In the Commission's assessment, 9 out of 12 key priorities received a positive assessment. At the end of 2023, European Council granted candidate status on the understanding that Georgia takes relevant steps set out in Commission's recommendation. The years 2022-2024 are particularly important because it was then that the formal application for membership was submitted and then there was a clear shift in the attitude of the Georgian authorities towards the EU. The main reason should be considered to be the departure from democratic standards and actions contrary to European values, which resulted in a freezing of relations over time. The culmination of negative phenomena occurred successively from 2022 and finally in 2024 the EU finds the Georgian government's course of action jeopardised Georgia's EU path, leading to a halt of accession process. Importantly, the Georgian authorities' reaction to the war in Ukraine had a significant impact on Georgia-EU relations, and this was decidedly different from that presented by the broadly understood Western world community. The failure to adopt EU sanctions against Russia, the lack of unequivocal condemnation of aggression or allowing the transit of goods to Russia resulted in a weakening of Georgia's position in relations with the EU. At the same time, the introduction of regulations restricting the activities of the media and the third sector became not only the cause of social protests, but also an increasingly clear discrepancy between the Georgian authorities and EU institutions. A warning signal for Georgia was the failure to grant it the status of a candidate state in 2022, when such status was granted to Ukraine and Moldova. The decision regarding Georgia was postponed, at the same time

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<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/11/eu-georgia-relations-a-local-show-of-the-global-theater?lang=en&center=europe>

<sup>152</sup> Georgia 2024 Enlargement Package Factsheet, European Commission, 30.10.2024, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/georgia-2024-enlargement-package-factsheet\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/georgia-2024-enlargement-package-factsheet_en)

indicating the areas in which the Georgian authorities should take specific actions. Despite the failure to fulfil the formal framework, the political decision of the EU Council in December 2023 granted Georgia the status of a candidate state. At that time, parliamentary elections scheduled in Georgia for autumn 2024 were awaited with hope, which in the opinion of many was to be not only a test of the real intentions of politicians in Tbilisi but also a chance to renew relations.

### **EU position**

The key event determining the intensification of the EU enlargement policy with new member states was the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in February 2022. The sense of threat combined with the need to take political action determined the leaders of European countries to make tangible decisions. The position expressed by the EU President von der Leyen reflected the necessity of action. „Let me stress that I am deeply convinced that the decision that we have taken today strengthens us all. It strengthens Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, in the face of Russian aggression. And it strengthens the European Union. Because it shows once again to the world that the European Union is united and strong in the face of external threats<sup>153</sup>. However, the EU's decision was not unconditional. It required Georgia to take steps to enable further reforms. For years, Georgia was considered a leader and was the country with the most advanced level of accession. However, when the decision was made to grant candidate country status, Ukraine and Moldova were given priority. The fact that Ukraine, despite not meeting even a part of the requirements, was treated as a priority is not surprising. A strong political signal was necessary. Nevertheless, Moldova was not as advanced as Georgia, but nevertheless it received strong support from France and obtained the candidate status that Georgia was not granted. This was due to the lack of readiness of the EU countries to grant candidate status to three countries at once. Ukraine was the most important. Moldova and Georgia fought for the second position. Georgia, despite its advancement in the process of implementing EU standards, did not receive the long-awaited candidate status. The situation was disappointing for Georgia. The then Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili described the European Council's decision as "political" and "not based on merit" expressing his belief that Georgia would receive

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<sup>153</sup> Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel and President Macron on the EU membership applications by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-president-von-der-leyen-joint-press-conference-president-michel-and-president-macron-eu-2022-06-24\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-president-von-der-leyen-joint-press-conference-president-michel-and-president-macron-eu-2022-06-24_en)

candidate status "very soon"<sup>154</sup>. The decision of the European Council, although disappointing for Georgia, was also a warning signal. The EU made it clear that the attitude of the government in Georgia and the decisions they made were not in line with the direction of political actions and the values of the European community. First of all, the lack of a clear position of the Georgian authorities on the war in Ukraine should be mentioned here. Despite the solidarity expressed by Georgian society with the fighting Ukrainians, the position of the Georgian government was far below the expectations of society, but also of the EU. The lack of a quick and clear condemnation of Russian aggression, while not introducing sanctions at the same time, was a clear example of the differences between Georgia and the EU. Georgia not only did not introduce sanctions, but also, as demonstrated by journalists from DW (Loophole Caucasus, 2024), became a transit country for goods going to Russia. Georgia did not close its border with the Russian Federation, which contributed to the uncontrolled influx of Russians when Vladimir Putin announced mobilization. The government in Tbilisi justified its actions by saying that it wanted to protect the country from war because after Ukraine, it would be Georgia's turn. Creating a state of threat and strengthening fear in society, as well as constructing a narrative about a "Global War Party" contributed to the deterioration of relations with the European Union. The ruling party, Georgian Dream, even began to accuse the EU of wanting to drag Georgia into war. This constructed message will dominate until the parliamentary elections in October 2024. At the same time, it is worth noting the EU's lack of determination towards Georgia. In talks held by the author in March 2023 (a year after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine) with representatives of the diplomatic corps of EU countries accredited in Georgia, a clear lack of determination shone through. On the one hand, diplomats were aware of all the shortcomings of the Georgian authorities, but they were unable to diagnose how to reverse the negative phenomena. The "high stakes" game, preventing Georgia from sliding into Russia's zone of influence, overshadowed all other premises. The belief that the decision on whether or not to grant candidate status would again be a political decision was widespread. The decision at the EU Council was to be made at the end of 2023, but already in the spring there was a widespread conviction that Georgia would not meet the criteria. No one among the diplomats expected the deoligarchization of political life. Nevertheless, no one expected that the Georgian authorities would seek to radically tighten the course. One of the diplomats even stated that regardless of whether the Georgian authorities fulfilled the criteria or not, the status of candidate

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<sup>154</sup> EU June decision on Georgia's candidate status "not based on merit" – PM, "Agenda.ge", 27.12. 2022, <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/5058#gsc.tab=0>

country would be granted because its failure would mean losing Georgia to Russia. This attitude of both the EU and the Georgian authorities was visible before the escalation of the crisis over the law on so-called foreign agents. In the spring of 2023, Georgia was swept by a wave of protests related to the parliament's work on the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the provisions of which corresponded with the regulations introduced in the Russian Federation in 2012 and significantly contributed to the liquidation of civil society. The readiness to implement Russian solutions was a clear signal of a departure from European values. At that time EU High Representative Josep Borrell expressed strong opposition to Georgia's proposed law. He described the draft law as a "very bad development" for Georgia and its people, warning that it could "seriously affect its ties with the EU" highlighting the potential diplomatic repercussions (EU condemns Georgia..., 2023). Although in 2023 social protests and international pressure finally led to concessions from the government, the topic of the controversial act returned in the spring of 2024. However, at that time the EU could not use the key argument because in December 2023 the EU Council decided to grant the status of a candidate state to Georgia. The question therefore arises whether the EU could have acted differently. Did it consider all possible scenarios? Or rather it found itself in a hopeless situation and was unable to predict the consequences of its decisions. It can be argued that due to the situation in Ukraine, the EU could not afford to lose Georgia. However, EU decision-makers did not take into account the fact that the Georgian Dream is not really interested in integration because it would ultimately mean a probable loss of power. That is why they reached for a controversial law again, which hit Georgian society. And this time, society took to the streets not only in the capital Tbilisi, but also in Kutaisi and Batumi. President von der Leyen also issued a statement: "I am following the situation in Georgia with great concern and I condemn the violence in the streets of Tbilisi. Georgia's citizens are demonstrating their strong attachment to democracy. The Georgian government should heed this clear message. The European Union has also clearly expressed its concerns regarding the law on foreign influence. The Georgian people want a European future for their country. In recognition of these aspirations, the European Council in December gave Georgia candidate status and set out a clear path to the opening of accession negotiations. We expect the Georgian government to take swift action on the measures they have committed to take as a candidate country. Georgia is at a crossroads. It should stay the course on the road to Europe"<sup>155</sup>. What should be noted is that by granting Georgia the status of a candidate state a

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<sup>155</sup> Statement by President von der Leyen on the situation in Georgia, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-president-von-der-leyen-situation-georgia-2024-05-01\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-president-von-der-leyen-situation-georgia-2024-05-01_en)

few months earlier, the EU lost a key tool for exerting pressure on the Georgian government. The expression of expectation that the Georgian government will remain on the road to Europe in accordance with its commitments remained unanswered. The statement by High Representative Josep Borrell<sup>156</sup> was similar in tone: "The EU has clearly and repeatedly stated that the spirit and content of the law are not in line with EU core norms and values. It will undermine the work of civil society and independent media while freedom of association and freedom of expression are fundamental rights at the core of Georgia's commitments as part of the Association Agreement and of any EU accession path. The adoption of this law negatively impacts Georgia's progress on the EU path. The choice on the way forward is in Georgia's hands. We urge the Georgian authorities to withdraw the law, uphold their commitment to the EU path and advance the necessary reforms detailed in the 9 steps"<sup>157</sup>. Despite the clear disapproval of the most important EU representatives for the actions of the authorities in Tbilisi, it ultimately did not bring any results. The next statement issued at the end of May 2024 by the High Representative with the European Commission carried a very clear and unambiguous message. It reads: "We urge the Georgian authorities to reverse this trend and to return firmly on the EU path. There is still time to change the dynamics - but a strong commitment by the governing authorities is needed. The EU and its Member States are considering all options to react to these developments. We continue to stand with the Georgian people and recognise the choice of overwhelming majority of them for a European future for their country"<sup>158</sup>. However, the harsh tone did not change anything and the law was adopted. The EU and the US decided to limit cooperation with Georgia. The waiting period for the parliamentary elections scheduled for the autumn began. At stake was not only the issue of their democratic course, but also the further course of action of the Georgian authorities in relations with the previously key partners. It was expected that the democratic election process would result in a possible change of power, which would withdraw from unfavorable decisions. The parliamentary elections, which took place on October 26, 2024, aroused much controversy. According to the final report, they were not free from reservations. The OSCE stated that "reports of intimidation and pressure on voters

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<sup>156</sup> Statement by the European Commission and the High Representative Josep Borrell on the Parliamentary elections in Georgia, [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-european-commission-and-high-representative-josep-borrell-parliamentary-elections-georgia-2024-10-27\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-european-commission-and-high-representative-josep-borrell-parliamentary-elections-georgia-2024-10-27_en)

<sup>157</sup> Statement by the European Commission and the High Representative Josep Borrell on the Parliamentary elections in Georgia, [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-european-commission-and-high-representative-josep-borrell-parliamentary-elections-georgia-2024-10-27\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/statement-european-commission-and-high-representative-josep-borrell-parliamentary-elections-georgia-2024-10-27_en)

<sup>158</sup> Ibidem.

that negatively impacted public trust in the process"<sup>159</sup>. The EU also issued an appropriate statement: "on the Central Election Commission of Georgia and other relevant authorities to fulfill their duty to swiftly, transparently and independently investigate and adjudicate electoral irregularities and allege thereof. Those irregularities must be clarified and addressed. That is a necessary step to re-building trust in the electoral process"<sup>160</sup>. These calls fell on deaf ears. Despite objections regarding the election process, the results announced by the State Election Commission were favorable to the ruling party. Georgian Dream won for the fourth time and did not intend to change course. Not only was the first session of the new parliament called in a questionable manner (boycotted by the opposition, which did not recognize the election results). What is more, the Prime Minister of Georgia announced the suspension of the negotiation process with the EU until 2028. In December, a new president was elected<sup>161</sup>, but the decision of the National Assembly was not recognized by Salome Zurbashvili, who has been in office since 2018, believing that the elections were held illegally. In this context it is worth to mention that the newly elected president Mikheil Kavelashvili in 2023 was one of the main initiators of the first version of the law on foreign agents.

### **Georgian position**

The presented course of events and the position of the European Union prompt us to ask about the premises behind the decisions of the Georgian authorities. At the same time, in order to fully understand the contemporary relations between Georgia and the EU, one needs to quote the statements of key Georgian politicians. However, what should be paid special attention to, is the clear contradiction between the position of the authorities and the expectations of Georgian society. According to public opinion polls, almost 80% of respondents express the expectation that Georgia should be admitted to the European Union<sup>162</sup>. The Georgian authorities, by deciding to withdraw from negotiations with the EU, acted against the will of society, which became the cause of the protests. Social discontent in Georgia is often expressed in an extremely spontaneous way (protests, riots), but the uninterrupted and continuous nature

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<sup>159</sup> Georgia, Parliamentary Elections, 26 October 2024: Final Report, OSCE 20 December 2024, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/584029>

<sup>160</sup> Statement by the European Commission..., op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> According to the amendment to the Constitution in 2024, the president was not elected in direct elections for the first time.

<sup>162</sup> Taking Georgians' pulse Findings from October-November 2023 face to face survey, NDI December 2023, [https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia\\_GGF%20poll\\_October\\_2023\\_Eng\\_VF.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia_GGF%20poll_October_2023_Eng_VF.pdf)

of street protests lasting for many weeks is a kind of unprecedented phenomenon <sup>163</sup>. In order to understand the position of Georgian Dream, which has been in power since 2012, one must be aware of the principles of this party's functioning. The key figure of the group is its founder and the richest Georgian, Bidzina Ivanishvili. When he entered politics, he indicated that his main goal was to remove President Mikheil Saakashvili from power. After winning the parliamentary elections and serving as prime minister for a year, he stepped into the background, formally not holding any office. Nevertheless, since then he has remained a key figure in the country's political and business life. Over the years, he has built a system of dependencies around himself that, in the opinion of many observers, resembles an oligarchy. By appointing successive prime ministers or presidents, Ivanishvili actually has full power. Therefore, the condition postulated by the EU to deoligarchize political life in Georgia seems impossible to meet. Unclear political and business connections mean that the implementation of EU standards is contrary to the interests of Ivanishvili and his closest circle. Equally important for years was the unclear relationship of this politician to Moscow. It should be noted that Ivanishvili acquired a significant part of his wealth by running a business in Russia in the 1990s. Considering the state of the state and the nature of the business ventures conducted in Russia at that time, many issues remain shrouded in mystery. The claim that Ivanishvili himself fears the Kremlin and the possibility of incriminating materials against him seem to be well-founded. These arguments may have an impact on his decisions and have led to the opposition accusing him of a pro-Russian stance for years. Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine and a full-scale war between the two countries became a real test of Ivanishvili's credibility. Taking into account the aforementioned conditions, it is not difficult to understand the attitude of the Georgian authorities in the Ukrainian context. Mikheil Saakashvili's relationship with Ukraine was not without significance, although in a broader context it can be treated as secondary. Saakashvili, who was Ivanishvili's main political opponent, after leaving Georgia (at the end of his term as president in 2013), actively participated in the political life of Ukraine. After returning to Georgia, he was imprisoned, where he remains to this day, serving a prison sentence. The Ukrainian side often raised Saakashvili's issues in bilateral contacts. Russia's attack on Ukraine was, as already emphasized, a challenge for the European Union, but above all it caused far-reaching concerns in the former Soviet republics. More than thirty years after the collapse of the USSR, concerns about the Kremlin's revisionist and aggressive policy, but above all undermining the previous world order, were a key question in many capitals. It should

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<sup>163</sup> By the time the article was submitted to the editor in March 2025, the protests had already lasted 100 days.

be remembered that from the Georgian perspective, concerns about Moscow's aggressive policy are completely justified. This is evidenced by Georgia's dependence, lasting with a short break since the 19th century, first on the Romanov Empire and then on Soviet power. In the context of contemporary relations, it is enough to recall the lost war of August 2008 and the loss of part of the territory. The Russian Federation formally recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Thus, at the level of Georgian society, the topic of open armed conflict with Russia is a traumatic experience<sup>164</sup>, while at the political level it allows for the manipulation of fears and social moods to achieve the intended goals. The Georgian authorities have adopted an ambivalent position towards the conflict in Ukraine. They have skillfully used the opportunity to formally submit an application for EU membership (submitting a formal application right after Ukraine). However, they have not taken into account that it is not possible to apply for full membership and, on the other hand, take actions contrary to the interests of the EU. From the Georgian perspective, some of the actions taken have brought benefits (e.g. in the economic sphere), but for the EU, the decisions taken in Tbilisi were at least ambiguous. Georgia's failure to accept sanctions contributed to economic growth and record GDP<sup>165</sup>. The possibility of transporting goods covered by the ban was also beneficial from the point of view of Georgian small entrepreneurs. It should be remembered that Georgia is a poor country and the possibility of intensifying economic activity remains limited. Therefore, the steps taken by the Georgian Dream were beneficial from the point of view of Georgian citizens, but not from the point of view of Brussels. Other decisions of the Georgian authorities have not brought such clear effects. Maintaining an open border with the Russian Federation was a chance for Russian citizens to escape *en masse* from mobilization. However, no one predicted the drastic increase in living costs resulting from the influx of Russians, the crisis on the real estate market, and finally the complete lack of control over who crossed the border and stayed in Georgian territory. The attitude towards the war in Ukraine and the position adopted by the Georgian authorities was most accurately summed up by Kakha Kaldze, the mayor of Tbilisi and a prominent politician of Georgian Dream, who stated: "We have gone through all this, and we know how much trouble war can bring to a country. Even today, we have not yet been able to

<sup>164</sup> Brodowski J.(2019), *Gruzja po rewolucji róż. Obraz przemian polityczno-społecznych w latach 2003-2018*, Kraków.

<sup>165</sup> World Bank, GDP (current USD) – Georgia, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2023&locations=GE&start=1987&view=chart>



heal these wounds; we still face many problems after the 2008 war," adding "If someone wants to open a second front, they have the Baltic countries, let them open it."<sup>166</sup>.

Based on the research conducted, we can state that although the Ukrainian context was important in the dialogue with Brussels, it was not crucial. The most important were political issues related to the government's actions towards citizens and the introduced legal regulations. The aforementioned law on foreign agents should be considered a real measure of the authorities' intentions. Leading politicians of Georgian Dream took the position that Georgians are a proud nation and do not agree to interference in the country's internal affairs. In the authorities' opinion, the interference was the support for the third sector in Georgia that was not controlled by the state. It should be remembered that people associated with the Georgian Dream have been sitting at the level of central and local government, as well as in the most important state institutions for over a decade. Today, only the third sector remains outside the control of the authorities. Restricting external financing and stigmatizing non-governmental organizations or independent media will lead to full control of political and social life in Georgia by the ruling party. This goal was also part of the ideological narrative of conservative values that were at odds with those promoted by the EU. Georgian Dream politicians often emphasized the importance of Georgian tradition and cultural distinctiveness. Ivanishvili claimed that "It is with these unique national traditions and identity that we should join the common European family"<sup>167</sup>, which guided the Georgian Dream's actions to base its efforts towards the European Union on its own principles. Ivanishvili was echoed by Kobakhidze: "The recent and expected global processes show that the efforts to protect our centuries-old traditions and national identity need to be further strengthened," Kobakhidze also said: "today, so-called liberals put the identity of countries and nations all around the world at risk."<sup>168</sup>. The statements of Kobakhidze, Kaladze ("We all aspire to embrace European values, including myself. However, Georgia must exercise independent judgment and not blindly adhere to European directives"<sup>169</sup> and Ivanishvili himself ("The fate of Georgia should be decided by the Georgian

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<sup>166</sup> Tbilisi Mayor Kaladze to West: 'Stop Demanding a Second Front in Georgia', "Caucasus Watch" 24.05.2024, <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/tbilisi-mayor-kaladze-to-west-stop-demanding-a-second-front-in-georgia.html>

<sup>167</sup> Ivanishvili: A free, independent, sovereign Georgia – this is our Georgian dream, "Georgia Today", 29.04.2024, <https://georgiatoday.ge/ivanishvili-free-independent-sovereign-georgia-this-is-our-georgian-dream/>

<sup>168</sup> CPAC: PM Kobakhidze Defends Christianity, Identity from "So-Called Liberals", "Civil.ge", 25.04.2024, <https://civil.ge/archives/601368>

<sup>169</sup> Foreign Donors Backing Radical Ideologies in Georgia, Claims Tbilisi Mayor, "Caucasus Watch" 12.04.2024, <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/foreign-donors-backing-radical-ideologies-in-georgia-claims-tbilisi-mayor.html>

people”<sup>170</sup> were part of the ongoing dispute between liberal and conservative values. They also defined the attitude towards relations with the EU, placing national identity in the perspective of integration. The ruling party, escalating anti-EU and anti-liberal rhetoric, and defending its policy related to the war in Ukraine, adopted a pro-Kremlin narrative about the "Global War Party". It is enough to recall one of Ivanishvili's speeches: "The main reason for the Global War Party's aggression towards Georgia is that it failed to turn Georgia into a second front despite great efforts"<sup>171</sup>. These basic messages will dominate and escalate in the analyzed period. At the same time, the ruling party will fuel the internal political dispute by not recognizing the election protests. Ivanishvili's nomination of a candidate for the presidency who was clearly associated with the aforementioned rhetoric only deepened the polarization of society and contributed to the escalation of tensions and further protests. The EU's position was not only ignored, but openly criticized. Ambassador Herczyński, who presented it, became the target of open attacks and accusations. In the official position issued by Prime Minister Kobakhidze the day after announcing the decision to suspend negotiations with the European Union until 2028, the Prime Minister attacked the EU diplomat: "It is unfortunate that the EU Ambassador - Mr. Pawel Herczynski - became involved in the disinformation campaign. However, considering the fact that the EU Ambassador was directly engaged in election campaigning before the elections, supporting the radical opposition and opposing the ruling party, which is a gross violation of the Vienna Convention and democratic electoral principles, his disinformative statement was not particularly surprising to us. Mr. Pawel Herczynski, who before the elections claimed that Georgia's integration process into the EU had been halted, is now claiming that the process was allegedly stopped by the Government of Georgian government"<sup>172</sup>. The Prime Minister's statement can also be seen as a summary of relations with the European Union.

The dispute between the Georgian ruling party and the EU has evolved over the years. The way Georgian Dream has governed has been burdened with undermining the standards of a democratic state of law (lack of transparency in elections) and a lack of respect for civil rights (introduced legal regulations). Ivanishvili, not ultimately interested in EU integration, has re-vectored the paradigm of relations with the European Union that has been prevailing in

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<sup>170</sup> Ivanishvili: A free, independent..., op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>172</sup> Statement made by H.E. Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister of Georgia at the Press-Conference on November 29, 2024, Government of Georgia, 29.11.2024, [https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=603&info\\_id=90382](https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=603&info_id=90382)

Georgian foreign policy for years. Based on fears related to war and the attachment of society to conservative values, he has positioned Georgia in opposition to the European Union, while at the same time inscribing his actions into a narrative consistent with the Kremlin's interests.

### **Conclusions**

The analysis carried out allows to state that the EU's policy towards Georgia in the period under review was reactive in nature. The actions taken were a result of the internal situation (actions of the ruling party) and the crisis in the post-Soviet area resulting from the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The EU was unable to predict or counteract the negative actions of the Georgian authorities. It was also unable to adapt its offer to the changing situation. The granting of the status of a candidate state was largely due to an unsuccessful balance of profits and losses. The failure of the Council to grant the status of a candidate state would have been used by the Georgian authorities as another argument in the public debate, fitting into the narrative according to which Georgia, with its tradition and values, is ready for membership, but the EU does not want to accept it. A negative decision would also have been in line with Russian interests and Moscow's policy aimed at limiting the influence of the West in the post-Soviet area. A negative decision would also have been inconsistent with the expectations of the majority of Georgians, who for years had seen their future in the EU community. Nevertheless, granting the candidate status became a kind of trap, because the Georgian authorities could once again announce that it was thanks to them that progress was being made in relations with the EU, while at the same time taking previously criticized and sanctioned actions that were in line with the conservative way of thinking of the ruling elites. Introducing the law on foreign agents without fear of not being granted the candidate status, as well as holding elections that deviated from Western standards led to the most serious constitutional crisis in the history of modern Georgia. At the same time, the Georgian dream blamed the EU for the situation and accused it of interfering in internal affairs. The decision expressed by the Georgian Prime Minister was the culmination of a process that had been ongoing for several years. It was also incompatible with the interests of the EU, because the redirection of Georgian foreign policy and the turn towards Russia were what the decision to grant the candidate status for membership was supposed to prevent.

**Streszczenie:**

Artykuł koncentruje się na relacjach Unia Europejska – Gruzja. Autor koncentruje się na wydarzeniach, jakie miały miejsce między wybuchem wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej (24 lutego 2022 r.) a decyzją władz gruzińskich o zawieszeniu procesu negocjacyjnego z UE (28 listopada 2024 r.). Opierając się na oficjalnych oświadczeniach władz UE i Gruzji, a także na badaniach przeprowadzonych w Gruzji w 2023 r., podejście autora jest bliskie szkole funkcjonalistycznej. W podjętych rozważaniach autor stara się odpowiedzieć na pytanie, czy UE była gotowa odpowiednio zareagować na procesy zachodzące w Gruzji, a w szerszym kontekście na skutki wojny. Kluczowe znaczenie przypisuje działaniom władz gruzińskich, na które UE pozostała reaktywna.

**Słowa kluczowe:**

Gruzja, Unia Europejska, stosunki międzynarodowe, instytucje demokratyczne,  
Partia Gruziańskie Marzenie

**Key words:**

Republic of Georgia, European Union, international relations, democratic institution,  
Georgian Dream party,

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## Ukraine in the context of its integration into NATO: a case study

### The legacy of the USSR

Pursuant to the agreement signed on 8 December 1991 in Białowieża by the leaders of three republics – Boris Yeltsin (RSFSR), Leonid Kuchma (UkSSR) and Stanislav Shushkevich (BSSR)<sup>173</sup> – regarding the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and subsequently extended in Alma-Ata on 21 December 1991 to include the remaining republics (with the exception of the Baltic states and Georgia)<sup>174</sup>, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) ceased to exist both as a subject of international law and a geopolitical entity<sup>175</sup>. This transformation was, in part, facilitated by the so-called ‘parade of sovereignty’, which began as early as 1988. This process led to successive declarations of sovereignty and ultimately independence by all republics within the former Soviet state. In line with this process, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) also progressed towards sovereignty. On 16 July 1990, its leaders issued a declaration of sovereignty, followed by a declaration of independence on 24 August 1991<sup>176</sup>. To make this declaration legally binding, a republican referendum was held on 1 December 1991, in which the citizens of the UkSSR were asked to vote on the independence declared earlier that year. The outcome of the referendum was clear: the Ukrainian people overwhelmingly supported Ukraine’s independence from the USSR.

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<sup>173</sup> *Protokół do Porozumienia o utworzeniu Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw podpisanego 8 XII 1991 r. w Mińsku przez Republikę Białoruś, Federację Rosyjską (RFSRR), Ukrainę*, [in:] Cz. Mojsiewicz, *Wspólnota Niepodległych Państw*, Poznań 2000, pp. 99-100.

<sup>174</sup> *Deklaracja Ałmacka*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>175</sup> *Porozumienie o utworzeniu Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 95-99.

<sup>176</sup> T. A. Olszański, *“Trwałe państwo. Trzydziestolecie niepodległości Ukrainy”*, Komentarze OSW, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, No. 404 24 August 2021, pp. 1-3.



Following this, Ukraine was to be governed by a president, who would be elected through general elections<sup>177</sup>.

In this manner, Ukraine and 10 other countries appeared on the world map. While they did not identify themselves as direct heirs to the Soviet Union, they became actively involved in managing the legacy of the dissolved Soviet state.

As a newly established political entity, Ukraine faced a number of challenges that typically affect young states. However, it also had to confront issues that were unique to post-communist and post-Soviet countries.

The most pressing challenge, although preliminary, was the question of the role and significance of the CIS, which bore no resemblance to the former USSR yet sought to integrate the post-Soviet space. Thus Ukraine had to define its position and role within the CIS. A further significant issue was the presence of Russian military forces — comprising bases and garrisons — on the territory of an independent Ukraine.

The future of the newly established Ukraine was uncertain. Its development would be shaped by two mutually exclusive trajectories. On the one hand, there was the possibility of Ukraine evolving into a democratic state with a free-market economy, aiming to join the broader democratic international community alongside other newly independent states. On the other hand, its development was also influenced by the persistent ambition to restore an imperial Russia that rejected the new geopolitical order. This intention was evident from the outset, as illustrated by Russia's intervention in Moldova's internal affairs, later recognised as the beginning of a process of 'gathering Russian lands'<sup>178</sup>.

After gaining independence, Ukraine found itself in a relatively advantageous position compared to other former Soviet republics. This was due, in part, to the structural elements it inherited from the federal state. In contrast to the increasingly unstable situation in Russia, Ukraine had the opportunity to build a state that was structurally, economically and militarily robust.

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<sup>177</sup> The term of office of the President of Ukraine is regulated by the Constitution of 28 June 1996. The first President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, held the position from 5 December 1991 to 19 July 1994, and his successor Leonid Kuchma from 19 July 1994 to 23 January 2005

<sup>178</sup> A. Jach, *A new "gathering of Russian lands": Russia's return to imperialism*, "Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i praktyka. Security. Theory and practice.", 2022, No. 1 (XLVI).

It was also in the interest of the West to facilitate the transformation of Ukraine into a state in which the elements of a democratic political system would be firmly established, alongside guarantees of external, economic and energy security<sup>179</sup>.

In the political sphere, the structures inherited from the USSR formed the basis for the creation of new state institutions and frameworks. Legislative and executive bodies (such as the parliament, the government and the newly established post of president) as well as ministries could be retained in their existing form and then subjected to a process of democratisation and adaptation to meet new needs and challenges. This approach was applied, among other areas, to the diplomatic service (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), internal services (including the militia and the KGB), and other state organs. Gradually, the new geopolitical entity began to gain recognition in the international arena. On 2 December 1991, Ukraine was acknowledged as an independent state by the Russian Federation, Poland and Canada. By the end of 1992, its independence had been recognised by further 129 countries. The same was true for international organisations. In 1992, Kyiv joined, among others, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, renamed OSCE in 1995). In 1995, Ukraine became a member of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Council of Europe. Ukraine's status in the United Nations had already been established in 1945, when it was a founding member alongside the USSR<sup>180</sup>. Thus, the statehood and independence of Ukraine were swiftly recognised and validated by the international community.

Economically, the newly established state had a solid foundation for further development, particularly in agro-industry, mining, heavy industry and electrical machinery. Unlike the USSR as a whole, the territory of the UkSSR was one of the most developed and industrialised regions. In 1992, Ukraine's GDP per capita stood at USD 2,550, compared to Poland's USD 4,840 and the Russian Federation's USD 6,350<sup>181</sup>. It is important to note, however, that the relatively high figure for the Russian Federation was primarily driven by the export of energy resources rather than by its industrial and economic potential. In 2014, these figures were as

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<sup>179</sup> R. Grosset, *Czynniki kształtujące poziom bezpieczeństwa państwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo i Technika Pożarnicza*, Centrum Naukowo-Badawcze Ochrony Przeciwpowarowej im. Józefa Tuliszkowskiego – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy, Józefów 2010, Vol. 3, pp. 9-16.

<sup>180</sup> Ukraine, along with Belarus, was granted separate status as a political entity as early as 1945, with the result that both republics became members of the UN. As a result, the USSR had not one, but three votes at the UN until 1991.

<sup>181</sup> <https://pl.tradingeconomics.com>, 17 July 2024, 15.00

follows: Ukraine USD 6,210, Poland USD 12,000, and the Russian Federation USD 9,490. In 2023, the figures were: Ukraine USD 6,480, Poland USD 17,300, and the Russian Federation USD 10,400<sup>182</sup>.

For comparison, the GDP per capita for selected former Soviet republics in the years indicated was as follows: Armenia – USD 837.57 (1992), USD 3,540 (2014), USD 5,570 (2023); Belarus – USD 2,570 (1992), USD 6,210 (2014), USD 6,480 (2023); Moldova – USD 2,230 (1992), USD 2,740 (2014), USD 369 (2023); Kazakhstan – USD 4,890 (1992), USD 10,500 (2014), USD 11,700 (2023)<sup>183,184</sup>.

Ukraine thus possessed considerable potential for further economic development. However, as subsequent years have shown, this potential was squandered due to a variety of factors. Among the most significant were the strong influence of the Russian and pro-Russian community on political decisions, which led to Ukraine's dependency on Moscow, particularly in the economy and energy sectors, as well as the accumulation of property by the communist *nomenklatura*, resulting in the formation of an oligarchic system.

One area with significant development potential was the space and defence industry. Following the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine inherited between 15% and 30% of the Soviet space sector. Its primary asset in this field was a near-monopoly on the production of rocket engines for space exploration and military purposes. Additionally, much of the infrastructure for testing rockets and space systems was within Ukraine's borders<sup>185</sup>. These advantages were closely tied to the country's arms manufacturing capabilities. As in the space industry, over 30% of the defence industry and around 20% of the associated research and development infrastructure were also based in Ukraine<sup>186</sup>. The strengths of Ukraine's arms sector included the production of rockets for artillery and anti-aircraft systems, armoured weaponry, components for ship propulsion systems, aerospace technologies (particularly in transport aviation), small arms and a wide range of artillery, anti-tank weapons and small arms ammunition.

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<sup>182</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>183</sup> Ibidem

<sup>184</sup> Like in the case of the RF, the GDP is generated primarily by export of energy resources.

<sup>185</sup> I. Słomczyńska, *Pomiędzy technologią i bezpieczeństwem. Ukraiński sektor kosmiczny po 1992 roku*, Instytut Europy Środkowej, Lublin 2021, Rocznik 19, Zeszyt 1, pp. 65-70.

<sup>186</sup> [https://www.wojskonews.pl/article,ukrainski\\_przemysl\\_zbrojeniowy\\_i\\_jego\\_osiagniecia\\_w\\_zakresie\\_eksportu.html](https://www.wojskonews.pl/article,ukrainski_przemysl_zbrojeniowy_i_jego_osiagniecia_w_zakresie_eksportu.html), 7 June 2024 17.00.

While the democratisation of Ukraine's political system and the achievement of full economic and energy independence were not fully realised<sup>187</sup>, the country's arms industry functioned effectively and developed steadily during the first decade of its independence. Over this period, Kyiv gradually emerged as one of the world's significant arms exporters<sup>188</sup>. However, this situation began to shift after Vladimir Putin assumed the presidency of the Russian Federation in 2000. Through political pressure and economic leverage, Putin gradually curtailed Ukraine's development potential in the civilian and defence sectors. He partly achieved this by exploiting the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, as well as leveraging influence over the military leadership and the security services. These destabilising actions were further exacerbated by the lack of a strong sense of national identity among many Ukrainians. It is important to note that the Russian Federation's approach to Ukraine stemmed from a strategic vision, rooted in a deeply held conviction articulated by President Putin in 2005. According to Putin, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century, with Russians portrayed as the victims of this process. As a result, the Russian Federation viewed it as its duty to safeguard the interests of Russian-speaking populations wherever they resided<sup>189</sup>, which was a direct response to Ukraine's changing national trajectory.

## II. The Budapest Memorandum as a guarantor of sovereignty?

The most pressing challenge for the newly established Ukrainian state was to preserve and safeguard its sovereignty. A key priority in this regard was the formation of an independent armed forces. Following a decision by the Supreme Soviet of the UkSSR on 24 August 1991, Ukraine assumed control over all Soviet military units and bases located within its territory, as well as the arms, military technology and ammunition stationed there. By the same decision, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine was established to oversee the personnel and manage the military resources acquired. A particularly significant issue that required attention was the nuclear arsenal that remained on Ukrainian soil after the dissolution of the USSR<sup>190</sup>. This matter was of considerable concern also to the West, as the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to the

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<sup>187</sup> A. Izbiańska, „*Stosunki polityczno-ekonomiczne Rosji z Ukrainą po 1991 r.*”, *Prace naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu*, Wrocław 2019, vol. 63., no. 3, pp. 31-32, DOI: 10.15611/pn.2019.3.03

<sup>188</sup> E. Skons, R. Weidacher, „*SIPRI Yearbook 2000*”, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford University Press 2000. pp. 299-333.

<sup>189</sup> Annual State of the Nation Address delivered by President Putin before the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 25 April 2005.

<sup>190</sup> A. Romanowska, „*Armia ukraińska-nowy początek*”, *Wiedza Obronna – Kwartalnik Wiedzy Obronnej*, Warszawa 2018, Vol. 264-265, No. 3-4, pp. 84-87.

emergence of several new, potentially unstable states in place of one nuclear superpower that was to some extent predictable. The uncertainty surrounding the control of nuclear weapons created a sense of insecurity, making the issue central to both Ukraine's national security and its territorial integrity. However, it soon became apparent that the legal and structural aspects surrounding the nuclear weapons and their delivery systems within the newly independent state were complicated complex matter.

Originally, the armaments in question were part of the Soviet Union's military infrastructure and were under the control of the Strategic Missile Command (responsible for intercontinental ballistic missiles)<sup>191</sup> and the Missile and Artillery Command (which oversaw tactical nuclear payloads)<sup>192</sup>. Following the dissolution of the USSR, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine found themselves in possession of nuclear arsenals. However, in practice these newly independent states had no control over these weapons – neither active (the ability to launch them) nor passive (the ability to prevent their launch). The entire system of decision-making, command, control, security and logistics remained firmly under Moscow's authority. The governments of these states were not even aware of the locations or quantities of nuclear weapons housed within their borders. Research into available documents, conducted by the author of this article, supports this assertion. In the case of the three former republics in question, there is no official data regarding the number of ballistic missiles or nuclear warheads on their territories. The Budapest Memorandum and its annexes similarly fail to specify the amounts of nuclear armaments transferred to Russia<sup>193</sup>. In the case of Ukraine, various sources – primarily the media – report widely varying figures, ranging from 1,000 to 8,000 nuclear warheads. Yet none of these sources provide references to the original documents upon which these figures are based. According to expert estimates, the actual number of warheads was likely around 1,900, including approximately a dozen warheads for intercontinental ballistic missiles<sup>194</sup>.

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<sup>191</sup> Ракетные Войска Стратегического Назначения.

<sup>192</sup> Tactical nuclear weapons are missiles and artillery warheads with a power of 0.1 kT to 100 kT and a range of up to 500 km.

<sup>193</sup> Data obtained by the author of the article in unofficial contacts from representatives of the Disarmament Control Branch of the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of Defence and representatives of the OECD in Vienna.

<sup>194</sup> Ibidem.

Given the above, it can be concluded that in actuality Kyiv possessed no independent nuclear capability and had no influence over the potential use of nuclear weapons located on its territory by Russia.

The conditions outlined above had a significant impact on the context in which the Memorandum was adopted. The primary catalyst for the Memorandum was the START I treaty (1991), signed by the United States and the USSR, which resulted in substantial reductions in strategic nuclear weapons on both sides. However, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent *de facto* presence of part of the Soviet arsenal on the territories of three newly independent states, it became necessary to adapt the treaty provisions to the new geopolitical realities. This adaptation was achieved through the Lisbon Protocol, signed on 23 May 1992, which incorporated the three former Soviet republics as parties to the START I treaty. The protocol required these states to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to transfer any nuclear weapons on their territories to the Russian Federation<sup>195</sup>. Consequently, on 5 December 1994, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation and Ukraine signed the Budapest Memorandum<sup>196</sup>, in which the first three signatories affirmed their ‘respect for the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine’s existing borders’<sup>197</sup>, while Ukraine committed to transfer its nuclear weapons to the Russian Federation.

From the beginning of the negotiations, Ukraine sought comprehensive security guarantees from the United States concerning the integrity and inviolability of its borders. However, Washington, adhering to its pragmatic approach in similar agreements, maintained its position of offering security assurances without any legally binding commitments<sup>198</sup>. As a result, the Budapest Memorandum ended up being a declaratory agreement rather than a legally binding one. Ukraine ultimately accepted this arrangement, recognising that a declaratory agreement was preferable to the absence of any agreement at all.

An additional safeguard for states relinquishing nuclear capabilities, including Ukraine, was a draft resolution presented by France, China, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, which was approved by the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 11 April 1995 under

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<sup>195</sup> A. Kleczkowska, „*Memorandum Budapesztańskie – umowa międzynarodowa czy niewiążące porozumienie?*”, *Władza Sądzenia*, Łódź 2021, No. 20, pp. 149-150.

<sup>196</sup> <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%203007/Part/volume-3007-I-52241.pdf>, 23 May 2024, 11.30.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 1, translated by the Author

<sup>198</sup> *Ibidem*.

Resolution No. 984<sup>199</sup>. This resolution required the UNSC and the nuclear-armed permanent members of the Council to provide assistance to NPT signatories in the event of a direct attack or when the threat of such aggression was imminent. In such circumstances, the UNSC was responsible for coordinating and providing the necessary assistance. In essence, this resolution merely reiterated the obligations outlined in § 4 of the Budapest Memorandum. However, its effectiveness was called into question following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. In response to the newly emerged crisis, and likely due to a combination of shock and disbelief, the West imposed delayed and largely ineffectual sanctions on the Russian aggressor. Ironically, it was Russia – one of the signatories and guarantors of both the Memorandum and Resolution 984 – that became the aggressor, rendering the UNSC, and the UN as a whole, powerless in this situation<sup>200</sup>.

In this context, another significant issue deserves attention. For the guarantors of the Budapest Memorandum (excluding the Russian Federation), the translation of the document itself proved problematic. While the Memorandum was signed in English, Russian and Ukrainian, it contained many imprecise terms and phrases that allowed for varying interpretations<sup>201</sup>. As a result, the differing understandings of the document's provisions became, after the annexation of Crimea, one of the contributing factors to the delayed response from the United Kingdom, the United States and the broader international community, including the absence of military support for Ukraine. Simultaneously, Kyiv's interpretation of the Memorandum served as the basis for its claims for military assistance and its efforts to shape the international narrative regarding the implementation of the agreement.

Is the Budapest Memorandum a legally binding document? The majority of global experts consider it to be primarily declaratory, rather than a legally binding agreement, meaning it does not compel the United States or the United Kingdom to take military action in the event of a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity<sup>202</sup>. Consequently, by relinquishing its nuclear arsenal, Ukraine placed its security in the non-binding Memorandum and its legal counterpart, UNSC Resolution 984. Despite offering the potential for support in the event of unlawful aggression,

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<sup>199</sup> <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/984>, 22 VI 2024. 11.00.

<sup>200</sup> A. Kleczkowska, „Memorandum Budapesztańskie – umowa międzynarodowa czy niewiążące porozumienie?”, *Władza Sądzenia*, Łódź 2021, No 20, pp. 154-158.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 147.

the resolution ultimately failed to fulfil its obligations. This inaction enabled Russia to persist with its aggression, culminating in a full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022.

### III. Ukraine – NATO

One of the most significant early indicators of the impending dissolution of the Soviet Union was the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact (WP). The process began in May 1989, when the Political Consultative Committee of the Pact adopted a document ‘On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Member States’, which marked a departure from the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine.<sup>203</sup> Subsequently, at the Bucharest summit in July 1991, the leaders of the WP member states recognised the right of each country to independently determine its security policy. The changing geopolitical landscape of the time considerably diminished the influence of the Soviet Union, which in turn fostered greater autonomy for states within Russia’s sphere of influence. This shift created, among other things, the opportunity for individual countries to sign agreements for the withdrawal of Russian troops stationed on their territory and their return to Russia<sup>204</sup>.

On 25 February 1991, the foreign and defence ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states signed an agreement in Budapest to cease cooperation and dissolve the Warsaw Pact’s Joint Command. Subsequently, on 1 July 1991, the political structures of the Pact were formally disbanded in Prague, marking the definitive end of the organisation.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, the alternative for the newly independent states in terms of collective military security was the establishment of the United Armed Forces within the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)<sup>205</sup>. These arrangements were formalised by the Collective Security Treaty (CST), signed in Tashkent on 15 May 1992. However, Ukraine opted not to join the CIS and, as a result, was compelled to explore alternative means of ensuring its external security. These alternatives primarily involved the development of legal and treaty frameworks governing Ukraine’s relations with other states, the establishment of both bilateral and multilateral economic partnerships, and active

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<sup>203</sup> Doctrine establishing subordination of the interests of individual WP member states to the priorities of the community of socialist states.

<sup>204</sup> R. Kałużny, „*Układ Warszawski 1955-1991*”, *Zeszyty Naukowe WSOWL*, No. 1 (147) 2008, pp. 191-192.

<sup>205</sup> Statut Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw, Układ o Bezpieczeństwie Zbiorowym [in:] Cz. Mojsiewicz, *Wspólnota Niepodległych Państw*, Poznań 2000, p. 114.



participation in initiatives aimed at promoting peace and military cooperation. Additionally, Ukraine sought to strengthen its ties with international organisations and military structures.

Initially, Ukraine did not clearly define its primary security orientation. Situated within the Russian sphere of influence, it had to consider the Kremlin's resurgent power politics, which were supported by the Russian-speaking minority, particularly in the south-east of the country. Conversely, the western regions of Ukraine adopted a more pro-Western stance, viewing improved relations with NATO and the European Union as key to achieving rapid economic development and the democratisation of state structures and institutions<sup>206</sup>. As a result, during the early years of the newly independent state, it was crucial for Ukraine to maintain a careful balance in its relations with both the West and the East.

The main hindrance to Ukraine's early engagement with NATO during this period was the leadership of the Ministry of Defence, which maintained strong ties with their counterparts in the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, the first official bilateral contacts with NATO occurred as early as 1991-1992. These initial interactions led to Ukraine's invitation to participate permanently in the meetings of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994, Ukraine formally applied to join the PfP programme. The next phase of cooperation culminated in the signing of the 'Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine' in Madrid on 9 July 1997, followed by the establishment of the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv<sup>207</sup>.

Ukraine gradually established a legal framework to facilitate its cooperation with NATO and, ultimately, to pursue membership in the Alliance. This culminated in the decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine on 23 May 2002, when the Ukrainian government officially resolved to seek NATO membership.

In the meantime, bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of counter-terrorism, arms control and disarmament, gained significant dynamics. Ukraine's partnership in arms control was particularly remarkable. Its adherence to agreements such as the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaties, the Vienna Document 1999 (VD '99), and the Open Skies

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<sup>206</sup> A. Olech, „Uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego: członkostwo Ukrainy w NATO”, Researchgate, 15 August 2019, p. 2.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335175026\\_Uwarunkowania\\_bezpieczenstwa\\_miedzynarodowego\\_czlonkostwo\\_Ukrainy\\_w\\_NATO\\_2019](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335175026_Uwarunkowania_bezpieczenstwa_miedzynarodowego_czlonkostwo_Ukrainy_w_NATO_2019), 10 March 2024. 22.00.

<sup>207</sup> Ibidem, p. 4.

Treaty demonstrated Ukraine's commitment to transparency and the fulfilment of its international obligations. Additionally, a key element of cooperation involved so-called soft learning, wherein Ukrainian soldiers enhanced in NATO training bases their skills in areas such as English language proficiency, SERE procedures<sup>208</sup>, as well as tactical and operational planning.

However, following 2006, cooperation between Ukraine and NATO experienced a marked decline, primarily due to the growing influence of pro-Russian political factions within the Ukrainian parliament. The situation worsened after Viktor Yanukovich assumed the presidency in 2010, with a complete shift in national security priorities towards closer ties with Russia, effectively halting further cooperation with NATO.

It might appear that the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, followed by the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022, have understandably stalled Ukraine's integration processes. However, when we consider the primary criteria for accession to the North Atlantic Alliance, Ukraine's current situation presents a rather surprising case.

In evaluating Ukraine's potential for NATO membership, it is essential to focus on the core criteria that the Alliance sets for prospective members. The fundamental requirement for accession is, above all, the geopolitical stability of the candidate state. NATO assesses each candidate individually<sup>209</sup>, with particular emphasis on three key areas of verification: political, legal and military.

Following 24 February 2022, NATO member states largely voiced strong support for Ukraine's right to self-defence, firmly condemning Russia as the aggressor on the international stage. These declarations translated into a further deterioration of relations with Moscow, alongside the imposition of additional economic and financial sanctions targeting key sectors of the Russian Federation's economy and industry. Furthermore, a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements were signed, providing both material and symbolic support to Kyiv. Numerous high-level visits, particularly by President Zelensky to NATO member states, including the United States, as well as reciprocal visits from leaders of NATO countries, significantly improved Ukraine's standing in the international arena. As a consequence, several security-related agreements were reached, facilitating the transfer of arms, ammunition,

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<sup>208</sup> Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape.

<sup>209</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm?selectedLocale=pl](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=pl), 7 May 2021. 15.30.

intelligence, financial assistance, and expanding the opportunities for Ukrainian personnel to receive training at NATO facilities. One of the most significant of these agreements was the 10-year security pact signed between the United States and Ukraine in Puglia on 10 June 2024.  
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A country which represents a breach in NATO's unified stance towards Ukraine is Hungary. Several factors contribute to this position, including Budapest's economic dependence on Russian energy resources and the foreign policy of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's right-wing government, which seeks to enhance Hungary's role within the EU by destabilising both its domestic and foreign policies. Additionally, Hungary sees itself as a potential mediator between the EU, NATO, Ukraine and Russia. Another aspect is Orbán's focus on improving the situation of the Hungarian minority in Ukrainian Transcarpathia, with relations with Kyiv being contingent upon progress in this area<sup>211</sup>.

Similarly, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has shown limited support for Ukraine, particularly in terms of military aid. While he acknowledges the necessity of providing medical and humanitarian assistance, he has expressed reservations about further EU action in support of Ukraine. Fico's remark that Ukraine's aspiration to join NATO could potentially trigger World War III has caused considerable discontent among NATO member states.<sup>212</sup>

In this context, a distinctive position is assumed by Türkiye. As a NATO member, it provides military support to Ukraine while maintaining strong relations with Moscow. This balanced stance is likely influenced by Ankara's historical experience, its reliance on Russian gas, and its efforts to preserve a favourable trade balance. Furthermore, Türkiye aims to mediate conflicts in the Middle East, a region it considers part of its sphere of influence.<sup>213</sup>

A similar, albeit differently motivated, approach has been adopted by China. While officially condemning the military resolution of conflicts and advocating for peace talks, China seeks primarily to weaken Russia and position itself as a potential mediator in peace

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<sup>210</sup> Kyiv concluded a similar agreement with Japan on the same day. Previously, Ukraine had concluded similar agreements with 15 other countries, including Germany, the UK and France.

<sup>211</sup> V. Jóźwiak, „Węgry wobec wojny rok po rozpoczęciu rosyjskiej inwazji”, *Biuletyn PISM* No. 38 (2659) 4 April 2023.

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.wprost.pl/swiat/11750461/fico-przeciwko-ukrainie-w-nato-premier-slowacji-o-iii-wojnie-swiatowej.html>, 11 July 2024. 22.30.

<sup>213</sup> K. Strachota, A. Michalski, „Ostrożność i wyczekiwanie. Turcja wobec wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej.”, *Komentarze OSW, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich*, No. 429, 10.03.2022.

negotiations. Should Beijing successfully broker a peace agreement, it could expand its economic influence in Europe.

In contrast, other NATO countries, mainly the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Baltic states and Poland, have fully supported Ukraine. The United States and the United Kingdom, in particular, hold significant sway within the Alliance, and their financial and technical assistance has been instrumental in enabling Ukraine's armed forces to sustain their military operations. This support has in turn encouraged other NATO members (with the exception of those previously mentioned) to provide arms, ammunition, and logistical assistance to Ukraine within their capacities.

Given these dynamics, it can be argued that the current geopolitical situation in the West is largely favourable for Ukraine. Assuming the Ukrainian-Russian conflict were to end with a lasting peace agreement, the present geopolitical climate suggests that Ukraine – either with neutrality or with minimal Russian opposition – would likely achieve rapid accession to NATO.

However, in the cases of Hungary, Slovakia and Türkiye, it can be anticipated that these countries would raise specific objections, aimed not at blocking or delaying Ukraine's accession entirely, but rather at securing tangible benefits for themselves.<sup>214</sup>

The legal aspects of admitting new members to NATO structures are regulated by Art. 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>215</sup> It does not determine the timeframe in which the candidate should meet the criteria for admission into the alliance.<sup>216</sup> Considering the above geopolitical situation, in the case of Ukraine we could theoretically expect a very rapid positive decision on accession.

The foundation of the Treaty are the provisions of Art. 4, Art. 5, and Art. 6 (where the second point is important for the analysis here). However, the international society is insufficiently aware of their actual significance.

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<sup>214</sup> See the case of the accession of Finland (2023) and Sweden (2024) and the initial objection of Türkiye and Hungary.

<sup>215</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm), 7 May 2021, 15.30.

<sup>216</sup> In the case of Czechia, Poland and Hungary this took place 8 years after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined 5 years later. Slovenia did it 13 years after the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia – 18 (2009), Montenegro – 26 (2017), and Northern Macedonia – 29 (2020). In the case of Finland, the accession process was completed within a year (2023), and in the case of Sweden, within two (2024).

Art. 4 pertains to consultations in the event of a threat to territorial integrity, political independence or security of any member states.<sup>217</sup> Undoubtedly, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict gave rise to a number of factors that have had a destructive impact on these three spheres. While identifying and combating these factors, Ukraine acts as NATO's equal partner.

Art. 5 has given rise to the largest number of erroneous interpretations. The wording<sup>218</sup> 'will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such actions as it deems necessary, including the use of force' does not establish the obligation that soldiers of each NATO member must be delegated into the region of active conflict or threatened by such. Collectivity of defence assumes the possibility that one or multiple member states of NATO may limit its participation to activities outside the conflict region, such as intelligence support, transfer of military equipment and ammunition (without delegating military personnel), ensuring logistic support, communications and transportation outside the area of military operations, medical support, delegating observers and/or military advisors, etc. All these activities fully demonstrate the notion of participating in collective defence. In the case of Ukraine, these conditions have been fully met.

The content of Art. 6 establishes the criteria that must be met to speak of an armed attack on one or more NATO member states.<sup>219</sup> The second part of this article stipulates among other things that an attack on 'vessels or aircraft of any of the Parties (...) stationed on (...) the Mediterranean Sea'. In the context of US ships struck in the Mediterranean Sea by Russian radioelectronic warfare systems and the destruction by Russian air defence forces of NATO surveillance UAVs carrying out missions over the international waters on this sea, we can assume that Russia's provocations are aimed directly at NATO and can be considered a direct attack on one or more of its member states. In such cases, the attacked states remain at the level of an 'adequate response' so as not to escalate the existing conflict.

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<sup>217</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm), 7 V 2021, g. 15.30.

<sup>218</sup> Ibidem, 'The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such actions as it deems necessary, including the use of force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result of thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.'

<sup>219</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm), 7 May 2021, 15.30.

The provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty do not regulate the question whether a candidate state can apply while engaged in armed conflict with another state. Within NATO itself there is a precedent of Greece and Turkiye, which have remained in a state of frozen armed conflict over the territory of Cyprus since 1974, although both states joined NATO in 1952. However, considering today's geopolitical situation, we can hardly expect NATO to agree to the accession of a new member that is in an open armed conflict of very high intensity, as is Ukraine. What is considered a priority is stable political situation of a given state, its adherence to democratic principles as well as the permanence and stability of its borders, particularly if that state were to be NATO's border (flank) state.

The third key area in the accession process is the military dimension. This is largely determined by full interoperability and an adequate level of training (combat capability) and logistic support.

According to NATO definition, interoperability means 'the ability to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve Allied objectives'.<sup>220</sup>

Ukraine has extensive experience in operational-military cooperation with NATO, gained i.a. through its involvement in the PfP programme as well as regular joint exercises such as '*Kozacki Step*' (Cossack Steppe) and '*Sea Breeze*'. Additionally, in 1998, a NATO-Ukraine joint working group was established to reform the Ukrainian armed forces. In the mid-2000s, a Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalion commenced operations in Kosovo. During the '*Iraqi Freedom*' operation, the Ukrainian contingent functioned within the Multi-National Force-Iraq from August 2003 to the end of 2008, with 1650 soldiers in total participating in that mission.<sup>221</sup> In 2007 a Ukrainian unit participated in counterterrorist actions in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the '*Active Endeavour*' operation. These activities significantly contributed to raising the compatibility level of the Ukrainian command system, both in international and internal aspect.

This cooperation significantly intensified after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. The effects of proper cooperation became visible after 24 February 2022, when the Russian

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<sup>220</sup> A. Jóźwiak, P. Owczarek, D. Ćwik, I. Betkier, „*Ocena zdolności bojowej jednostek wojsk lądowym elementem wspierającym interoperacyjność NATO*”, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne S.A., Gospodarka Materiałowa i Logistyka 2019, Vol. 5, pp. 229-242.

<sup>221</sup> G. Ciechanowski, „*Wielonarodowa Dywizja Centrum-Południe wojskowy instrument walki z terroryzmem w Iraku 2003–2008*”, Researchgate, June 2022, pp. 165-170.

forces were neutralised and forced to retreat from Kyiv area. The dynamic development of this conflict has resulted in a continuous increase in the interoperability level. Deliveries of artillery and rocket systems, and recently also multirole F-16 aircraft for the Ukrainian side led to practically full compatibility between the command systems of NATO and Ukraine. Moreover, the level of training of Ukrainian commanding officers and soldiers (continuously improves at NATO training centres), compounded by the combat experience of the last two years, places the Ukrainian armed forces among the best-trained and most experienced armies in Europe.

The third area of verification is *sensu stricto* military. Its main elements are weaponry and military technology equipment, ammunition and ordnance<sup>222</sup> as well as logistic and technical support. These components are also subject to strict standardisation.

Besides the destruction of enemy soldiers and equipment,<sup>223</sup> the primary concept behind the use of munitions is the possibility of effective interaction between different categories of military equipment made by different manufacturers. What binds them together are communications systems and the so-called battlefield command systems. Thus unification of command and communications systems is an essential requirement. All equipment must work in the indicated frequency range and follow the developed algorithms for proceeding. From a technological point of view, it is not complicated. A more difficult task is standardisation of vehicle mechanics as in this case, due to the diversity of such munitions and their equipment, it is not always possible to use replacement parts. An effective solution is to use the so-called basic platforms that can be used to create a variety of weapons systems, adapted to the use of standard ordnance.

The standardisation of ordnance technical data, particularly ammunition calibers, makes it possible to use it in munitions from different manufacturers, which simplifies significantly the storage, maintenance and distribution system; this principle is also applicable to incendiaries. In the case of repair and maintenance facilities, using uniformised components and handling equipment speeds up diagnostics, service and repair processes.

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<sup>222</sup> Ammunition, grenades, explosives, incendiaries, etc.

<sup>223</sup> This includes primarily ships, aircraft, helicopters, UAVs, tanks, armored personnel carriers, all types and kinds of artillery, small arms as well as transport, repair and evacuation vehicles, and technical means of communication, reconnaissance, radioelectronic warfare, etc.

Standardisation in these areas significantly facilitates ensuring technical and logistic support. Uniform procedures for storing, use and servicing munitions and ordnance significantly reduce handling costs and speed up acquisition and distribution.

However, the priority in these areas are people. Their appropriate training and experience have a decisive impact on the quality of tasks discharged. Familiarity with the equipment handled and the possibilities it offers as well as experience gained during training and military operations translate directly into effectiveness in actual fight.

In this context, the level of interoperability of the Ukrainian forces with NATO should be considered as high. A marked increase occurred as a result of intensified cooperation after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The training of Ukrainian command staff led to the implementation of NATO planning and operation procedures. A factor of equal importance is the transfer of munitions and ordnance from NATO. While at the beginning of 2022 ca. 75% of Ukrainian munitions were Soviet-made, currently this number has dropped to 45-55%. The post-Soviet equipment delivered from other states has been significantly upgraded to NATO specifications, particularly with regard to communications as well as command and fire-control systems (in artillery and aviation). As the equipment obtained from the Alliance member states is standardised, the Ukrainian armed forces had to adapt to ensure that both military operations and technical and logistic support are compliant with procedures currently in force in NATO.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

In the case of Ukraine, the self-determination process took a sinusoidal course. Initially, the authorities attempted to maintain a balance between the East and the West, with the eye on the opportunity to continue cooperation with the newly established post-Soviet states in the areas that dominated USSR economy. However, the intensifying processes of Russia's imperialistic activity created a direct threat to political sovereignty and economic independence of Ukraine. On the other hand, Western states provided conditions facilitating faster democratisation and economic development. Thus the alternative at that time was to cooperate either with the CIS-CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) or EU-NATO bloc. What became the turning point was the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Seeing the resurgence of Moscow's superpower-style, aggressive actions, Ukrainian society began to perceive cooperation with the EU and NATO as a guarantee of their security. There was no direct correlation of this shift in perception and the accession to the EU and NATO, which has been a separate process.



However, the basic prerequisite for joining these organisations is internal stability, high level of democratisation as well as permanent and stable state borders. As mentioned, neither NATO nor the EU is interested in admitting countries that are in a state of armed conflict.

The analysis of the current geopolitical situation demonstrated that in the case of Ukraine, the conditions are theoretically favorable for accession (apart from the ongoing military conflict with Russia). ‘Convincing’ Hungary and Slovakia to support the enlargement process would be a matter of NATO’s internal policy. What may seem unsettling, however, is the increasing significance of right-wing parties in NATO member states. The recent elections in Germany, France and Italy show that if these political groups become capable of impacting policies of these countries, they can slow or even block Ukraine’s possible accession. We have to consider the possibility that during the next decade these parties can fully take over the power not only in the above states, and that their openly expressed pro-Russian attitude can turn out to be an obstacle impossible to overcome.

NATO has been taking a multifaceted approach to the cooperation with Ukraine. As regards this country’s possible admission, the Alliance would increase its strategic capabilities, creating at the same time a buffer zone for Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. However, what should be simultaneously considered is Russia generating a series of aggressive anti-NATO activities, stemming from the fact that Moscow perceives Ukraine as its sphere of influence.

Another area of NATO’s activity is keeping the direct conflict to Ukraine and Russia only. This is supposed to prevent its spreading while also contribute to permanent political, military and economic weakening of the Russian Federation.

The efforts to reduce Russian military strength also take a variety of directions. While lowering Russia’s combat potential, NATO simultaneously uses the territory of Ukraine as a kind of testing ground. Such activity is not the sole prerogative of NATO; however, there is no doubt that the Alliance has the greatest opportunities here. Testing weapons system gives its manufacturers a chance to sell them in a realistic time perspective, and not only on the Ukrainian market. Another aspect is the possibility of obtaining up-to-date intelligence on armament, on tactical and operational capabilities as well as changes occurring in this sphere, and on the morale of Russian armed forces.

Taking into account the analyses and data quoted above, we can quite justifiably conclude that Ukraine mostly meets NATO accession criteria, and the only factor halting this process is

active military conflict with Russia. Assuming a realistic timeframe, we can determine the possible accession date with high probability. It depends on two basic factors: a permanent end to the conflict and the possibility of restoring the full combat potential of the RF after the conflict ends.

Based on available data,<sup>224</sup> it can be assumed that the armed forces of the RF will require approximately a decade to rebuild their military potential to the pre-conflict level. Following this, an additional minimum of five years should be devoted to monitor Russia's geopolitical and military activity, with particular attention to any potential continuation of its imperial ambitions or renewed attempts at territorial aggression. Hence the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO can be realistically considered at least 15 years after permanent peace between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is established.

#### **Streszczenie:**

Artykuł dotyczy aktywności Ukrainy w kontekście członkostwa w NATO oraz czynników wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych oddziałujących na ten proces

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Ukraina, Integracja, NATO

#### **Key words:**

Ukraine, Integration, NATO

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## Kazachstan w polityce zagranicznej Republiki Tureckiej po zimnej wojnie

*“Aynı kökten beslenen bir ulu ağacın farklı dallarıyız”*

*Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu*

Turcja to kraj położony na dwóch częściach Eurazji, ponieważ 97% jej terytorium znajduje się w Azji (Anatolia), a tylko 3% w Europie (Tracja), jak wskazano w podręczniku „Geografia świata tureckiego” (*Türk Dünyası Coğrafyası*)<sup>225</sup>, który można uznać za wyraźny dowód inicjatyw integracyjnych Ankary w zakresie realizacji idei zjednoczenia krajów świata tureckiego. Jak zauważył były ambasador Kazachstanu w Turcji, C. Tüymebayev, narody tureckie są bezpieczną przystanią, ponieważ uważane są za najbliższych braci<sup>226</sup>. Kraje te łączy czynnik językowy, etniczny i historyczny, który nabrał znaczenia po rozpadzie ZSRR, kiedy pięć krajów Azji Centralnej uzyskało niepodległość.

Turcja jako pierwsza uznała niepodległość tych krajów i nawiązała z nimi współpracę. W związku z osłabieniem pozycji Moskwy tureckie elity polityczne dążyły do ożywienia idei „Wielkiego Turanu”, która istniała w ich historycznej pamięci już od XIX wieku. Ukraińska turkolożka I. Dryga podkreśla, że charakterystyczną cechą Turków w stosunku do innych narodów jest ich „motywacja historyczna”<sup>227</sup>. Azerski politolog Z. Memmedli wskazuje, że kluczem do regionu jest Azerbejdżan, właśnie to państwo Ankara postrzega jako niezbędny pomost do nawiązania dialogu i trwałego wejścia do regionu Azji Centralnej (AC). Z kolei za

<sup>225</sup> Ş. Mustafayev, *Türk Dünyası Coğrafisi. Ortaöğretim için*, Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti, Astana 2022, s. 113.

<sup>226</sup> C. Tüymebayev, Kazakistan Türkiye İşbirliğinin 20. Yılı, „EkoAvrasya Dergisi”, 2012, 5/18, s. 8.

<sup>227</sup> I. Дрига, *Pontika. Тюркологічні студії. Türkoloji yazıları*, Київ 2010, s. 492.

klucz do przeprowadzenia reform uważa się Kazachstan – kraj o największej powierzchni, który geopolitycznie oddziałuje na Uzbekistan, Kirgistan, Tadżykistan i Turkmenistan<sup>228</sup>.

Jednocześnie Kazachstan to państwo z rosyjską mniejszością etniczną, która w latach 90. XX wieku stanowiła 40% ludności i zamieszkiwała północno-wschodnią część kraju<sup>229</sup>. Początkiem nawiązania stosunków kazachsko-tureckich była wizyta prezydenta Nursułtana Nazarbajewa w Ankarze we wrześniu 1991 roku. Już w marcu 1992 roku oba kraje nawiązały stosunki dyplomatyczne. Warto dodać, że Turcja i Kazachstan leżą po przeciwnych geograficznych stronach świata tureckiego – dzięki Turcji graniczy on z Europą Zachodnią, a dzięki Kazachstanowi – z Chinami i Rosją.

Celem niniejszego badania jest: 1) analiza wpływu ideologii panturkizmu na kształtowanie tureckiej polityki wobec Kazachstanu po rozpadzie ZSRR; 2) zbadanie inicjatyw integracyjnych Ankary (ich strukturalnego ukształtowania) skierowanych do krajów świata tureckiego, w szczególności do Kazachstanu; 3) ustalenie chronologii, a tym samym ukazanie rozwoju stosunków turecko-kazachskich po ogłoszeniu niepodległości przez Kazachstan; 4) analiza bazy dokumentalnej tej współpracy dwustronnej oraz wielostronnej.

W artykule postawione zostały następujące pytania badawcze: dlaczego Kazachstan nie jest priorytetowym kierunkiem w polityce zagranicznej Republiki Tureckiej oraz jakie są przyczyny zmian w podejściach na turecką wizję polityki regionalnej. W odpowiedzi na wskazane pytania pomocna będzie weryfikacja następującej hipotezy badawczej: po upadku ZSRR polityczna elita Kazachstanu nie życzyła sobie narzucenia „tureckiej wizji” na odzyskanie własnej drogi rozwoju i prezentacji państwa w stosunkach międzynarodowych; z innej strony rozwój stosunków z Republiką Kazachstan nie był priorytetowym kierunkiem w polityce zagranicznej Turcji, która była orientowana na struktury europejskie. Ze względu na ograniczenia objętościowe artykułu i kwestie merytoryczne zastosowany został ogranicznik czasowy – rozpatrywany jest okres od upadku ZSRR, od grudnia 1991 roku, do teraz. Wynika to z faktu, iż wskazany okres jest kluczowy dla badania i zrozumienia tytułowej problematyki. Obszarem badawczym jest miejsce Kazachstanu w koncepcjach tureckiej wizji na rozwój stosunków międzynarodowych (globalnych i regionalnych) oraz realne propozycje i współpraca. W artykule zastosowano znalazło podejście realistyczne, wykorzystano metodę historyczną oraz porównawczą. Używając tureckich nazw własnych stosowałam pisownię

<sup>228</sup> "TURAN`ın anahtarı Güney Azerbaycan`da!", 03 Aralık 2019, za: <https://yenicag.info/turanin-anahtari-guney-azerbaycanda-azerbaycanli-uzman> (03.09.2025).

<sup>229</sup> P. Jaskóła, *W cieniu smoków. Azja Centralna w pogoni za gospodarką światową*. Poznań 2024, s. 89.

obowiązującą w Turcji, pisząc je kursywą. Wymowa niektórych tureckich głosek: [ü] czytamy jak niem. ü; [ğ] - w otoczeniu samogłosek a, ı, o u nie wymawia się.

Upadek ZSRR doprowadził do odrodzenia *ideologii pantureckiej*, która potem, zdaniem włoskiego badacza Roberto de Mattei, wtopiła się w neoosmanizm (*Yeni Osmanlılık*)<sup>230</sup>. U podstaw ideologii leży idea turanizmu, czyli zjednoczenia się wszystkich turańskich ludów. Koncepcja panturkizmu jest polityczną wersją turanizmu, za ojca którego uważa się Z. Gökalpa (1875 – 1924). Opowiadał się on za poszerzeniem politycznej władzy Turcji na tereny, gdzie dotarł język i kultura turecka, czyli uważał, że Turcja powinna zostać Turanem i powiększyć terytorium.

Proces rozwoju relacji Turcji z krajami AC nie był prosty. Ankara w latach 90. przeceniła swoje możliwości pełnienia roli pośrednika między kolektywnym Zachodem a państwami turkijskimi, które nie były gotowe do przyjęcia tureckiego doświadczenia w budowaniu modeli współpracy w polityce zagranicznej<sup>231</sup>. Ówczesny prezydent Turcji Turgut Özal (1989–1993) realizował politykę zgodnie z koncepcją rozszerzenia tureckiej strefy wpływów „od Adriatyku po Chiński Mur” (*Adriyatik'ten Çin Seddi'ne Türk Dünyası*). Podobną wizję świata turkijskiego podzielał także prezydent Süleyman Demirel (1993–2000), który starał się kształtować pozytywny klimat inwestycyjny w Kazachstanie<sup>232</sup>.

Obaj prezydenci pragnęli ukształtować wielowymiarowy świat w oparciu o religię<sup>233</sup>. W latach 1991-1992 Turcja udzielała państwom AC długoterminowych, niskooprocentowanych pożyczek na sumę 1,5 mld \$, pomocy humanitarnej, pomocy w organizowaniu telewizji satelitarnej (w celu zastąpienia rosyjskiego języka tureckim), usług lotniczych, programów stypendialnych; organizowano również szkolenia dla bankierów, dyplomatów, oficerów, a także wysyłano tureckich nauczycieli do państw AC<sup>234</sup>.

Rząd turecki zaproponował program zjednoczenia państw turkijskich w celu utworzenia wspólnej tureckiej przestrzeni politycznej, gospodarczej i kulturalnej. Na przykład w styczniu 1992 roku w strukturach rządu Turcji powołano Agencję Współpracy i Rozwoju (*Türk İşbirliği*

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<sup>230</sup> R. Mattei de, *Turecja w Europie. Dobrobieństwo czy katastrofa?* Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej im. Piotra Skargi, Kraków 2009, s. 87.

<sup>231</sup> И. Свистунова, *Турецко-казахские отношения на современном этапе*, „Россия и новые государства Евразии”, 2023, № 3, s. 45.

<sup>232</sup> *Kazakistan-Türkiye İlişkileri – ERI*, za: <https://www.eurasian-research.org/publication/kazakistan-turkiye-iliskileri/?lang=tr> (12.09.2025).

<sup>233</sup> H. Somun, *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Balkans and Neo Ottomanism: A Personal Account*, „Insight Turkey”, 2011, vol. 13, no 3, s. 32.

<sup>234</sup> S. Huntington, *Zderzenie cywilizacji i nowy kształt ładu światowego*. Przeł. H. Jankowska, MUZA SA, Warszawa 1997, s. 211.

ve Kalkınma Ajansı, TİKA). W celu zbliżenia narodów w kazachskim mieście Turkiestan w 1992 roku otwarto Turecko-Kazachski Uniwersytet im. Ahmeda Yeseviego (*Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Türk-Kazak Üniversitesi*), który był średniowiecznym poetą i mistykiem, założycielem pierwszego zakonu sufickiego. Uniwersytet posiada 10 wydziałów. Zajęcia prowadzone są w językach tureckim, kazachskim, rosyjskim i angielskim. Kadre akademicką stanowi 900 osób. Celem utworzenia uniwersytetu jest pielęgnowanie poczucia jedności narodów tureckich. W skład Rady Naukowej uniwersytetu wchodzi po pięciu naukowców z Turcji i Kazachstanu, a przewodniczącego Rady mianuje prezydent Turcji na mocy dekretu<sup>235</sup>.

Prezydent Turcji Turgut Özal pragnął, aby epoka radziecka w Azji Centralnej została zastąpiona „epoką turecką”, pragmatycznie wypełniając powstałą po upadku ZSRR pustkę po Rosji. Zdaniem prof. Dariusza Kołodziejczyka reformy i działalność T. Özala można porównywać z polską transformacją gospodarczą z lat 90.<sup>236</sup> Ten polityk rozpoczął swoją karierę jeszcze za rządów S. Demirela, miał silne kontakty z kręgami wielkiego biznesu, potrafił przekonywać ludzi, nie ukrywał swojej religijności i należał do bractwa nakszbandijja. W 1988 roku razem z żoną odbył pielgrzymkę do Mekki. Założona przez niego Partia Ojczyzniana (*Anavatan Partisi*) wygrała wybory parlamentarne w 1983 roku.

Jednak trzeba zaznaczyć, że tak ambitne plany prezydenta T. Özala nie zostały w pełni zrealizowane, głównie z następujących powodów:

- a) Odczuwalny był brak strategicznie opracowanego podejścia do państw regionu. Polski badacz K. Wasilewski podkreśla, że mimo ambicji uzyskania statusu lidera świata tureckojęzycznego, rząd turecki nie był dostatecznie przygotowany – zarówno pod względem instytucjonalnym, jak i psychologicznym<sup>237</sup>. Co ciekawe, pierwszą umowę „O partnerstwie strategicznym” podpisano dopiero w październiku 2009 roku;
- b) Na wczesnym etapie Ankara starała się zająć miejsce Moskwy, narzucając własny model wizji. To podejście wywołało, z jednej strony niezadowolenie Kremla, a z drugiej – dystansowanie się państw tureckojęzycznych, które po uwolnieniu się spod dominacji dawnego hegemonu (rosyjskiego „starszego brata”) dążyły do odnalezienia własnej tożsamości<sup>238</sup>;

<sup>235</sup> И. Свистунова, *op. cit.*, s. 50.

<sup>236</sup> D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, TRIO, Warszawa 2000, s. 240.

<sup>237</sup> K. Wasilewski, *Sen o potęgę. Neoosmanizm w polityce zagranicznej Republiki Turcji*, Warszawa 2023, s. 216.

<sup>238</sup> *Türk Dış Politikası II*, Ç. Erhan, K. Yakut (ed.), Eskişehir 2002, s. 162.

- c) Jak zauważa turecki badacz S. Yılmaz, w krajach AC nie nastąpiła zmiana klasy politycznej. U władzy pozostawała radziecka biurokracja, która wybrała autorytarną ścieżkę rozwoju<sup>239</sup>;
- d) Dalekosiężne plany polityczne T. Özala wymagały znacznych nakładów finansowych, podczas gdy w Turcji w tamtym okresie panowała niestabilność ekonomiczna. Rozpad ZSRR wywołał istotne zmiany w polityce regionalnej AC, gdzie Kazachstan uważany jest za najbogatszy pod względem zasobów ropy naftowej, a Turkmenistan – pod względem zasobów gazu ziemnego. Nowo powstałe państwa starały się jak najszybciej samodzielnie wejść na rynki światowe, co zbiegało się z planami Waszyngtonu<sup>240</sup>. Stany Zjednoczone dążyły do uzyskania dostępu do ropy z Morza Kaspijskiego oraz zapewnienia jej transportu na rynki zachodnie. W Kazachstanie w latach 90. zaczęły działać takie firmy jak „Amoco Corporation” i „British Petroleum” oraz amerykańska korporacja „Chevron” w Zachodnim Kazachstanie<sup>241</sup>;
- e) Turecka elita polityczna w latach 90. XX wieku była skoncentrowana na dążeniu do członkostwa w UE i nie chciała zmieniać kemalistycznej wizji polityki zagranicznej. Do zmiany podejścia doszło dopiero w 2002 roku, wraz z pojawieniem się w parlamencie Partii Rozwoju i Sprawiedliwości (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*)<sup>242</sup>.

### Od polityki jednobiegunowości do polityki wielostronności (multikulturowości)

W czasach zimnej wojny Turcja miała prozachodnią orientację, kierując się ideologią kemalizmu (*Atatürkçülük*), która powstała w wyniku narodowowyzwoleńczej wojny (*kurtuluş*) jako odpowiedź na okupację ziem Imperium Osmańskiego przez państwa zachodnie podczas rozwiązywania „kwestii wschodniej” (*Şark meselesi*). Pierwsze lata istnienia państwa były czasem poszukiwania miejsca na Zachodzie i zerwania z przeszłością Imperium Osmańskiego, postrzeganą jako źródło zacofania<sup>243</sup>.

U podstaw polityki zagranicznej Turcji Atatürk położył zasadę: „pokój w kraju – pokój na świecie” (*Yurtta Barış Dünyada Barış*), natomiast w polityce wewnętrznej kemalizm

<sup>239</sup> S. Yılmaz, *Kazakistan-Türkiye Ekonomik ve Kültürel İlişkileri: Vaatler ve Gerçekler*, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2017, Cilt 6, Sayı 2, s. 824.

<sup>240</sup> *Türk Dış Politikası II*, op.cit., s. 168.

<sup>241</sup> П. Швейцер, Victory (Победа): Роль тайной стратегии администрации США в распаде Советского Союза и социалистического лагеря. Пер. с пол. Л. Филомоновой, Минск 1995, с. 268.

<sup>242</sup> G. Tüysözoğlu, *Milenium Sonrası Türk Dış Politikası Yeni Osmancılık ve Türk Avrasyacılığı Ekseninde İnşa Edilen Pragmatizm*, „Alternatif Politika” 2013, Cilt 5, Sayı 3, s. 304.

<sup>243</sup> M. Herbut, *Turcja między Wschodem a Zachodem*, T. Łoś- Nowak (red.) *Polityka zagraniczna: aktorzy, potencjały, strategie*, Warszawa 2011, s. 314.



wyrażał się poprzez koncepcję „sześciu strzał” (*altı ok*)<sup>244</sup>. Zdaniem politologa A. Szymańskiego kemalizm nie jest ideologią w klasycznym tego słowa znaczeniu, lecz stanowi system i obraz świata<sup>245</sup>, w którym najważniejsze wartości to nacjonalizm, laicyzm oraz niepodzielność państwa i narodu. W latach 1923–2000 Turecka Republika (TR) prowadziła politykę zagraniczną opartą na dwóch głównych filarach: była flanką NATO na wschodniej granicy z ZSRR oraz dążyła do integracji ze strukturami europejskimi. Turecki badacz G. Tüysüzoğlu ocenił taką politykę jako pasywną, jednostronną postawę w stosunkach międzynarodowych<sup>246</sup>.

Zmiana podejść nastąpiła za prezydentów T. Özala (pierwsze próby), A. Güla, Recep T. Erdoğan. Architektem nowej koncepcji polityki zagranicznej pod tytułem „Strategicznej Głębi” (*Stratejik Derinlik*) jest prof. A. Davutoğlu (były minister spraw zagranicznych, premier). Politolog wskazywał na zakończenie priorytetowego traktowania kierunku zachodniego w polityce państwa, ponieważ globalizacja (*küreselleşme*) wymaga zmiany w podejściu, które będzie przewidywało otwarcie się na „wschodnich sąsiadów” oraz maksymalną aktywność na arenie międzynarodowej<sup>247</sup>. Jak wskazuje H. Morgenthau, polityka międzynarodowa – to walka o potęgę<sup>248</sup>. Koniecznym celem jest prowadzenie takiej polityki, żeby Turcja stała się globalną siłą<sup>249</sup>. W koncepcji neoosmanizmu A. Davutoğlu wskazał na potrzebę uczestnictwa w aktywnych działaniach dyplomatycznych w odniesieniu do państw należących niegdyś do Imperium Osmańskiego. Ukraiński badacz A. Moszczenko uważa, że koncepcja nie przewiduje ekspansji przy użyciu siły zbrojnej<sup>250</sup>.

Wskazywano, że jednym z elementów w takiej polityce będzie stopniowy powrót do islamu, żeby wzmocnić relacje Turcji z państwami muzułmańskimi<sup>251</sup>, odbędzie się

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<sup>244</sup> H. Öksüz, *Atatürkçülük ve küreselleşme sürecinde Türkiye*, Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, za: <https://sbd.aku.edu.tr/VIII3/oksuz.pdf> (2.09.2025).

<sup>245</sup> A. Szymański, *Między islamem a kemalizmem. Problem demokracji w Turcji*, Warszawa 2008, s. 57.

<sup>246</sup> G. Tüysüzoğlu, *op. cit.*, s. 306.

<sup>247</sup> *Dışişleri Bakanı Sayın Ahmet Davutoğlu'nun Stratejik Düşünce Araştırma Vakfı'nın "2012'de Türk Dış Politikası ve Gelecek Ufku" Konferansında Yaptığı Konuşma*, 27 Aralık 2012, Ankara, za: [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu\\_nun-stratejik-dusunce-arastirma-vakfi\\_nin-2012\\_de-turk-dis-politikasi-ve-gelecek-ufku\\_-k.tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu_nun-stratejik-dusunce-arastirma-vakfi_nin-2012_de-turk-dis-politikasi-ve-gelecek-ufku_-k.tr.mfa) (2.09.2025).

<sup>248</sup> H. J. Morgenthau, *Polityka między narodami. Walka o potęgę i pokój*, przeł. R. Włoch, Warszawa 2010, s. 48.

<sup>249</sup> *Dışişleri Bakanı Sayın Ahmet Davutoğlu'nun Beşinci Büyükelçiler Konferansı Kapsamında İzmir Üniversiteler Platformu Tarafından Düzenlenen Toplantıda Yaptıkları Konuşma*, 5 Ocak 2013, İzmir, za: [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu\\_nun-besinci-buyukelciler-konferansi-kapsaminda-izmir-universiteler-platformu-tarafindan-d.tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu_nun-besinci-buyukelciler-konferansi-kapsaminda-izmir-universiteler-platformu-tarafindan-d.tr.mfa) (20.09.2025).

<sup>250</sup> О. Мощенко, *Пріоритетні напрямки зовнішньої політики Туреччини у Близькосхідному регіоні*, „Стратегічні пріоритети”, 2013, № 4, с. 183, 186.

<sup>251</sup> J. Niemiec, *Koncepcja „Strategicznej Głębi” w tureckiej polityce zagranicznej*, „Teka of Political and International Relations – UMCS”, 2019, 14/ 2, s. 67.

„powrót” do religii, jako łączącego czynnika wśród państw tureckojęzycznych<sup>252</sup>. Właśnie w strefie religijnej Turcja i Kazachstan są bardzo powiązani, najpierw *kultem Tengri* (wszechmocne bóstwo Wielkiego Błękitnego Nieba), a potem – islamem. W X wieku stepy dzisiejszego Kazachstanu zamieszkiwały tureckie plemiona Oguzów (*Oğuzlar*). Jeden z przywódców, Seldżuk (*Selçuk*), pod koniec tego stulecia oderwał się z częścią ludzi i przeniósł koczowiska nad Syr-darię, gdzie w XI wieku Seldżucy przyjęli islam<sup>253</sup> i już jako muzułmanie wkroczyli z planami podboju do Anatolii. W Imperium Osmańskim ludzi jednoczyło poczucie przynależności do ummy. Bycie Turkiem wskazywało na przynależność do wspólnoty muzułmańskiej. Islam jest i będzie istotnym składnikiem tureckiej tożsamości. Ważne jest też to, że w islamie nie ma podziału na sacrum i profanum – sferę świętości i świeckości, w islamie wszystko jest sacrum. Jak uważa B. Lewis, pomiędzy różnymi ludami, które obejmował islam, żaden nie stopił tak swej własnej tożsamości ze wspólnotą muzułmańską<sup>254</sup>. Z innej strony, laicyzm to zasada porządku konstytucyjnego w Turcji. W czasach Turcji kemalistowskiej dominował prymat państwa nad religią, sekularyzacja była ważną cechą świeckości. Stworzono Prezydium ds. Religii (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, DİB*), które podlegało premierowi. Od lat 90. rola Diyanetu stała się autonomiczna i ma znaczny wpływ na politykę i kulturę. Stopniowo odbył się proces reislamizacji. Polski badacz J. Wódka uważa, że w polityce zagranicznej państwa tureckiego ma miejsce dyplomacja religijna<sup>255</sup>.

W okresie rządów Recepa T. Erdoğan'a charakterystyczne jest balansowanie między dwiema koncepcjami w polityce zagranicznej: ideą „Wielkiego Turanu” oraz neoosmanizmem. Pierwsza z tych idei dominowała w latach 2000-2010 i dotyczyła budowy „wspólnego domu ludów tureckich”. Od 2011 roku przewagę zyskuje koncepcja neoosmanizmu, co wiąże się zarówno z czynnikiem demograficznym, jak i wydarzeniami na Bliskim Wschodzie. Minister spraw zagranicznych, Hakan Fidan, kontynuując linię polityczną swojego poprzednika, podkreślił, że Turcja będzie nadal reagować na sytuacje kryzysowe, a tę zdolność można uznać za kluczową w polityce zagranicznej TR<sup>256</sup>.

<sup>252</sup> A. Szymański, *Główne przeszkody w procesie demokratyzacji Turcji*, J. Wódka (red.) „Nowa Turcja”: aspekty polityczne, gospodarcze i społeczne, Warszawa 2015, s. 28.

<sup>253</sup> S. Kałużyński, *Tradycje i legendy ludów tureckich*, Warszawa 1986, s. 63.

<sup>254</sup> B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej Turcji*, przeł. K. Dorosz, Warszawa 1972, s. 387.

<sup>255</sup> J. Wódka, *Polityka zagraniczna średniej potęgi. Turcja jako studium przypadku*, Warszawa 2019, s. 204.

<sup>256</sup> *Dişişleri Bakanı Sayın Hakan Fidan'ın 15. Büyükelçiler Konferansı Açılış Hitabı, 9 Aralık 2024, Ankara*, za: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-hakan-fidan-in-15-buyukelciler-konferansi-acilis-hitabi--9-aralik-2024--ankara.tr.mfa> (04.09.2025).

### Strukturalne ukształtowanie idei współpracy

Z inicjatywy prezydenta A. Güla (2007–2014), podczas spotkania liderów państw tureckich 3 października 2009 roku w Nachiczewaniu, na mocy porozumienia została powołana do życia Rada Turkijska (*Türk Konseyi*) w formule „1+3” (Turcja, Azerbejdżan, Kazachstan, Kirgistan) z siedzibą w Stambule. Celem współpracy było wzmocnienie atmosfery zaufania wśród państw tureckich oraz rozwój współpracy kulturalnej i edukacyjnej. Turcja stała się jednym z największych donorów programów kulturalnych w Kazachstanie i Azerbejdżanie<sup>257</sup>, co doprowadziło do konkurencji idei „świata rosyjskiego” i „świata tureckiego” na obszarze Azji Centralnej<sup>258</sup>. W 2007 roku (okres prezydenta A. Güla) powołano do życia Fundację Yunusa Emre (*Yunus Emre Vakfi*) w celu koordynacji projektów promujących naukę języka tureckiego, a także tureckiej historii i kultury<sup>259</sup>. W ramach działalności Fundacji w 2009 r. utworzono Instytut Yunusa Emre (*Yunus Emre Enstitüsü*), który w Kazachstanie rozpoczął działalność w 2010 r. Teraz Instytut posiada już 63 ośrodki kultury za granicą. Zarówno Fundację, jak i Instytut można uznać za element realizacji polityki *soft power*, która okazała się dość skuteczna w promowaniu tureckiej kultury, wizerunku TR i wpływów za granicą.

W 2012 roku pojawiła się nowa inicjatywa ze strony rządu tureckiego – Rada Współpracy Wysokiego Szczebla (*Yüksek Düzeyli Stratejik İşbirliği Konseyi*). Ten format zakładał wspólne posiedzenia rządów i liderów państw partnerskich. Pierwsze posiedzenie odbyło się w 2012 roku. Drugie miało miejsce w 2015 roku w Astanie z udziałem premiera R. T. Erdoğan. Podczas tej wizyty uroczyście otwarto meczet Ahmeda Yasawiego, którego budowę sfinansowano z budżetu Urzędu ds. Religii Republiki Tureckiej (*Diyanet*).

W tym samym roku Kazachstan przystąpił do Światowej Organizacji Handlu (WTO), co było możliwe m.in. dzięki bezpośredniemu wsparciu ze strony Turcji. O szczególnych relacjach między obydwojma krajami świadczy również fakt, że Kazachstan odegrał rolę mediatora w normalizacji stosunków rosyjsko-tureckich po incydencie z listopada 2015 r., gdy turecki myśliwiec F-16 zestrzelił rosyjski bombowiec Su-24. W 2018 roku odbyło się trzecie posiedzenie Rady, podczas którego Turcja i Kazachstan podpisały pięć dwustronnych porozumień.

<sup>257</sup> Ю. Довбня, *Співпраця між Казахстаном, Туреччиною та Азербайджаном: сучасний стан та перспективи*, „Universum”, 2024, № 5, с. 45.

<sup>258</sup> О. Волович, *Суперництво Туреччини та Росії в Центральній Азії на тлі заворушень у Казахстані* - Борисфен Інтел, 23.01.2002, за: <https://bintel.org.ua/analytics/supernictvo-turechchini-i-rosii-v-centralnij-azii-na-tli-vistupiv-u-kazaxstani/> (02.08.2025).

<sup>259</sup> *Türk Dış Politikası II*, Ç. Erhan, K. Yakut (ed.), Eskişehir 2002, s. 164.

Ósmy Stambulski szczyt Rady Turkijskiej odbył się 12 listopada 2021 roku. Głównym wydarzeniem była zmiana nazwy z Rady Turkijskiej na Organizację Państw Turkijskich (*Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, TDT*).

**Rys. 1. Flaga Organizacji Państw Turkijskich (OPT)<sup>260</sup>**



Źródło: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/turkiye-yuzyilinda-turk-devri-basliyor-809286.html>

Nastąpiło geograficzne rozszerzenie międzynarodowej organizacji w formule „4+1”, ponieważ do czterech państw członkowskich dołączył również Uzbekistan. Status obserwatora (*gözlemci üye*) uzyskały Węgry, Turkmenistan, Turecka Republika Północnego Cypru, a Ukraina i Afganistan złożyły wnioski o uzyskanie statusu państw-obszarników. Podczas jednego ze spotkań minister spraw zagranicznych Turcji Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu porównał organizację do „rodzinnego parlamentu” (*aille meclisi*)<sup>261</sup>. Organizacja, obejmująca terytorium o powierzchni 4,7 mln km<sup>2</sup> i licząca około 170 milionów ludności, ma strategiczne znaczenie, ponieważ położona jest na historycznym Jedwabnym Szlaku (*İpek Yolu*)<sup>262</sup> i łączy państwa turkijskie AC. Prezydent Recep T. Erdoğan podczas inauguracji przedstawił ambitną wizję, według której XXI wiek ma stać się „wiekiem tureckim”, a Turcja ma przekształcić się w silne regionalne państwo<sup>263</sup>.

Struktura OPT wygląda następująco: Zgromadzenie Parlamentarne, Międzynarodowa Akademia Turecka w Astanie, Międzynarodowa Organizacja Kultury Tureckiej, Fundusz

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<sup>260</sup> Składa się z poszczególnych elementów flag państw założycielskich: gwiazdy, która jest symbolem flagi Azerbejdżanu; niebieskiego koloru flagi Kazachstanu; słońca, będącego elementem flagi Kirgistanu; półksiężyca, charakterystycznego dla flagi Turcji.

<sup>261</sup> *Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı üyeleri kimler? Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı ülkeleri hangileri?*, Yurt Gazetesi, za: <https://www.yurtgazetesi.com.tr/guncel/turk-devletleri-teskilati-uyeleri-kimler-turk-devletleri-teskilati-ulkeleri-h191288.html> (12. 08. 2025).

<sup>262</sup> Z. Altymyshova, Y. Omurova, *Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'nın Tarihi Gelişimi Ve Gelecek Vizyonu*, za: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/4540680> (13.08.2025).

<sup>263</sup> *Türkiye Yüzyılı'nda 'Türk Devri' başlıyor*, za: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/turkiye-yuzyilinda-turk-devri-basliyor-809286.html> (23.08.2025).

Inwestycyjny, Fundusz Kultury i Dziedzictwa. Wraz ze zmianą nazwy organizacji zmieniły się także podejścia z dotychczasowych inicjatyw kulturowo-edukacyjnych na inicjatywy gospodarcze i polityczne. Jest to wyraźnie widoczne w dokumencie „Wizja Świata Tureckiego 2024” (*Türk Dünyası 2024 Vizyonu Belgesiyle*), gdzie podkreśla się językowe, kulturowe, religijne, historyczne czynniki łączące państwa tureckie<sup>264</sup>.

Na inauguracyjnym szczycie OPT podjęto decyzję o utworzeniu do 2040 roku wspólnego rynku towarów, inwestycji i usług oraz o stworzeniu wolnej strefy ekonomicznej na terytorium Kazachstanu. Warto zaznaczyć, że Kazachstan w swojej polityce międzynarodowej preferuje zasadę równowagi sił, politykę wielowektorowości, w której głównymi partnerami są FR, USA, Chiny<sup>265</sup>. Ponieważ obecnie Rosja jest objęta sankcjami, co utrudnia wykorzystanie jej terytorium do eksportu chińskich towarów do Europy, Pekin szuka alternatywnych tras transportowych. Najlepszą opcją jest Transkaspijski Szlak Międzynarodowy (*Korytarz Środkowy*) z udziałem Kazachstanu<sup>266</sup>.

Chińskie potrzeby gospodarcze oraz chęć USA, UE do uzyskania dostępu do surowców naturalnych krajów AC są główną przyczyną odrodzenia idei „Wielkiego Jedwabnego Szlaku” bez Rosji<sup>267</sup>. Historycznie od XIX wieku dominującymi graczami w regionie Morza Kaspijskiego byli Iran i Rosja. Obecnie swoje pozycje umocniła tam Turcja, wspierana przez USA. W związku z tym nastąpiła intensyfikacja relacji turecko-kazachskich w różnych dziedzinach. Taki „manewr” pozwala Ankarze unikać zarzutów o dążenie do dominacji w regionie<sup>268</sup>.

Na szczycie w Stambule w 2021 roku podjęto również decyzję o współpracy w dziedzinie edukacji: a) dopracować projekty podręczników: „Ogólnotureckiej literatury”, „Geografii świata tureckiego”, „Ogólnotureckiej historii”; b) „zharmonizować” alfabet państw tureckich, co oznacza rezygnację z cyrylicy i przejście na latynizowany alfabet dostosowany do języka tureckiego, co wywołało negatywną reakcję Moskwy. Aby

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<sup>264</sup> *Türk Dünyası 2040 Vizyonu*, za: <https://turkicstates.org/u/d/news/5-ek--turk-dunyasi-2040-vizyonu.pdf> (02.09.2025).

<sup>265</sup> 21. *Yüzyıl Başında Türkiye kazakistan İlişkileri*, Tarih Okulu Dergisi, za: [https://johschool.com/?mod=makale\\_tr\\_ozet&makale\\_id=24651](https://johschool.com/?mod=makale_tr_ozet&makale_id=24651) (12.08.2025).

<sup>266</sup> *Нова геополітична реальність. Чому це важливо для України*, „Civil Diplomacy Foundatoin”, za: <https://civildiplomat.com/analytic/nova-geopolitichna-realist-kazakhstanu-chomu-ce-vazhливо-dlya-ukraini> (04.09.2025).

<sup>267</sup> I. Стародуб, I. Сапицька, *Нові підходи формування системи регіональної безпеки у Чорноморсько-Каспійському регіоні*, „Стратегічна панорама”, 2009, № 2. с. 86.

<sup>268</sup> Ю. Матей, *Ідеологічна доктрина пантюркізму в казахстанській геополітичній стратегії Туреччини*, Priority Directions of science and technology development. Proceedings of VIII International Scientific and Practical Conference Kyiv, Ukraine 18-20 April 2021, p. 832,

zrealizować ten pomysł, powołano specjalną Komisję<sup>269</sup>. We wrześniu 2024 roku prace Komisji zakończyły się sukcesem, zaprezentowano alfabet (*ortak türk alfabesi*) składający się z 34 liter, który pozwoli zachować dziedzictwo językowe<sup>270</sup>.

### Współpraca w zakresie bezpieczeństwa

W programie „Wizja Świata Tureckiego 2024” znaczącą rolę przydzielono współpracy wojskowej i bezpieczeństwu, której kulminacją jest idea i pierwsze realne kroki na rzecz utworzenia wspólnych sił zbrojnych - „Armii Turanu” (*Turan Ordusu*). Pierwszym etapem było powołanie w 2011 r. Eurazjatyckich sił policyjno-wojskowych (*Avrasya askeri statülü kolluk kuvvetleri*) z siedzibą w Ankarze, składających się z formacji tureckich, azerskich, kirgiskich, mongolskich. Głównymi celami policyjno-wojskowych sił są: eliminacja i walka z zagrożeniami zewnętrznymi, zwalczanie przestępczości w mediach społecznościowych, ochrona muzułmanów, produkcja broni, w szczególności rakiet dalekiego zasięgu, okrętów wojennych, śmigłowców i bezzałogowych statków powietrznych (dronów - *insansız hava aracı, tha*).

Turcja ma ambitne plany, które zakładają ostateczne stworzenie „tureckiego NATO<sup>271</sup>”. Warto podkreślić, że Turcja, według danych na rok 2024, eksportuje broń do 185 krajów<sup>272</sup>, co stawia ją w roli potencjalnego lidera wojskowego w regionie. Cztery państwa uczestniczące w rozwoju sił zbrojnych Turanu dysponują wojskiem liczącym ok. 2,8 mln osób. Kazachstan obecnie posiada status obserwatora. Turcja w ramach współpracy wojskowej zawsze wspiera Kazachstan. Przykładem jest sytuacja z 2001 roku, gdy Rosja zwiększyła aktywność swojej floty w regionie Morza Kaspijskiego. Kazachstan, który nie posiadał własnej floty, zwrócił się o pomoc do RT. W 2003 roku ogłoszono plan utworzenia marynarki wojennej przy wsparciu Ankary. Pomogła temu dwustronna umowa wojskowa z 1998 roku<sup>273</sup>.

Od 2019 roku współpraca turecko-kazachska została uwarunkowana przez dwa główne czynniki: wewnętrzne problemy Kazachstanu oraz wojnę rosyjsko-ukraińską. Omawiając czynniki wewnętrzne, warto wspomnieć o tym, że w 2019 roku prezydent N. Nazarbajew

<sup>269</sup> *Türk Devletleri Teikilatı Ortak Türk Alfabesi Üzerinde Ulaştı*, Türkiye Dil Ve Edebiyat Derneyi, 12.09.2024, za: <https://www.tded.org.tr/tr/turk-devletleri-teskilati-ortak-turk-alfabesi-uzerinde-uzlasti> (03.09.2025).

<sup>270</sup> *Türk Dünyası Ortak Türk Alfabesinde Ulaştı*, Türk Dil Kurumu, 16.09.2024, za: <https://tdk.gov.tr/icerik/basindan/turk-dunyasi-ortak-turk-alfabesinde-uzlasti/> (04.09.2025).

<sup>271</sup> *Turan Ordusu Kuruldu, Türk'ün Gücü Korkuttu..!* Yerel Haberim, 22.07.2017, za: <https://www.yerelhaberim.net/haber/arsiv-41751.html> (04.09.2025).

<sup>272</sup> *Turan Ordusu kuruluyor!* 14. 09.2024, „Analiz Gazetesi”, za: <https://analizgazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/turan-ordusu-kuruluyor/> (04.09.2025).

<sup>273</sup> О. Деменко, *Республіка Казахстан у нових геополітичних реаліях*, „Україна дипломатична”, 2022, Вип. XXIII, с. 334.



ustąpił ze stanowiska i przekazał władzę K. Ż. Tokajewowi, również należącemu do partii „Nur-Otan”. W styczniu 2022 roku w stolicy Astanie wybuchły masowe zamieszki, których głównymi przyczynami były: a) walka o władzę między dwoma klanami finansowo-przemysłowymi powiązanymi z córkami Nazarbayewa, b) kult osoby N. Nazarbayewa. Rosja w ramach ODKB udzieliła Tokajewowi wojskowej pomocy, aby opanować sytuację w kraju. W wyniku tych wydarzeń w październiku 2022 roku zaktualizowano doktrynę wojskową Kazachstanu, w której: a) rozszerzono uprawnienia sił zbrojnych, dopuszczono możliwość ich użycia do zwalczania zagrożeń wewnętrznych, b) w polityce zagranicznej podkreślono zasadę wielowektorowości i pragmatyzmu<sup>274</sup>. Ważne jest to, że po stłumieniu protestów, pierwszą zagraniczną wizytę Tokajew odbył w maju 2022 roku do Turcji, co miało ważny wymiar symboliczny i polityczny. Podczas wizyty podpisano „Wspólną Deklarację o Pogłębionym Partnerstwie Strategicznym”, która m.in. przewidywała projekty w zakresie produkcji bojowych dronów.

Omawiając czynniki wewnętrzne, warto wspomnieć o wojnie rosyjsko-ukraińskiej, która wywołała zaniepokojenie w Astanie, ponieważ państwo posiada 6000 km wspólnej granicy z Rosją i ma znaczną mniejszość rosyjską, do tego dochodzi niepokojącą szowinistyczna rosyjska retoryka. Kazachstan, jak i Ukraina, dobrowolnie zrzekł się broni nuklearnej (Protokół Lizboński z 1992 roku). Oba państwa otrzymały wtedy gwarancje bezpieczeństwa, które obecnie zostały podważone. Rosja toczy wojnę przeciwko Ukrainie od lutego 2022 roku. Zdaniem polskiego dyplomaty i polityka Adama Daniela Rotfelda, Rosja dziś dąży do powrotu do zasad polityki imperialnej z czasów Piotra I oraz Katarzyny II, co stanowi poważne zagrożenie dla pokoju w regionie<sup>275</sup>.

### Zakończenie

Po ogłoszeniu niepodległości w 1991 roku Kazachstan konsekwentnie realizuje politykę równowagi wpływów, co pozwala mu jednocześnie współpracować równolegle z USA, Chinami oraz Rosją. Największe inwestycje w kazachską gospodarkę pochodzą właśnie z USA i Chin. Z innej strony turecko-kazachska współpraca nie jest priorytetowa w podejściu Ankary z wielu przyczyn. Mimo tego, oba kraje łączy przynależność do świata turkijskiego, co jest

<sup>274</sup> О. Деменко, *Проблеми та перспективи розвитку Республіки Казахстан у сучасних умовах*, „Проблеми всесвітньої історії”, 2022, № 4, с. 123.

<sup>275</sup> *Türkiye-Kazakistan ilişkileri: Son ziyaretin düşündürdükleri*, 17.10.2022, za: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/turkiye-kazakistan-iliskileri-son-ziyaretin-dusundurdukleri/2713399> (10.09.2025).

solidnym fundamentem do pogłębiania dialogu. Kazachstan i Turcja stały się państwami założycielskimi Rady Tureckiej, a następnie Organizacji Państw Tureckich.

Turcja jest państwem wyjątkowym, które sukcesyjnie prowadzi politykę zagraniczną, będąc jednocześnie partnerem USA, UE oraz dąży do osiągnięcia politycznego przywództwa w świecie muzułmańskim. Możemy zaobserwować przesunięcie akcentów w kierunku tzw. „bliskiego sąsiedztwa”. W tym celu Ankara od 2002 roku stosuje politykę „miękkiej siły”, wielowektorowości i multikulturalizmu, a to oznacza pragmatyczną, aktywną dyplomację oraz zaangażowanie w problemy regionu Bliskiego Wschodu. W odniesieniu do państw Azji Centralnej Turcja prowadzi politykę opartą na jednoczeniu świata turkijskiego poprzez religię, kulturę, historię i język. W tym regionie idea „rosyjskiego świata” przeciwstawia się idei „świata turkijskiego”.

#### **Streszczenie:**

Artykuł dotyczy relacji turecko-kazachskich oraz miejsca Kazachstanu w polityce zagranicznej Republiki Tureckiej. Autorka próbuje odpowiedzieć na pytanie, dlaczego pomiędzy państwami nie doszło do priorytetowej współpracy, skoro mają wiele stron wspólnej przeszłości i przynależą do świata turkijskiego. Tekst składa się z czterech części. W pierwszej w skróty sposób przedstawiono pierwszy okres nawiązania współpracy, kolejna poświęcona jest koncepcyjnej wizji ideologów polityki zagranicznej Turcji. W trzeciej Autorka koncentruje się na organizacjach, które powstały z inicjatywy Ankary i są adresowane „światu turkijskiemu”, omówiono też bazę dokumentalną. W ostatniej części poświęcono uwagę kwestii bezpieczeństwa. Takie ujęcie badanej problematyki pozwoliło odpowiedzieć na wskazane powyżej pytanie i zweryfikować związaną z nim hipotezę badawczą.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Panturkizm, neoosmanizm, świat turkijski, Rada Turkijska, Organizacja Państw Turkijskich, Kazachstan, Turcja.

#### **Key words:**

Panturkizm, Neoosmanizm, Turkic Council, Organization of Turkic States, Kazakhstan, Turkey



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## **Azerbaijan between Turkey and Russia after 2014: the Karabakh factor**

Russian aggression against Ukraine affects the security policy of the entire region, including states not directly involved in the conflict, such as Azerbaijan. In the first few years following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Baku pursued a cooperative foreign and security policy toward Moscow, hoping for Kremlin support in reclaiming Karabakh. The signing of new cooperation declarations and the implementation of arms contracts could have indicated the formation of a lasting alliance between Baku and Moscow. However, Azerbaijan's full restoration of control over the provinces lost in the early 1990s, with Turkish support, followed by the withdrawal of the Russian peacekeeping contingent from Karabakh, has weakened the Kremlin's position in the Caucasus region.

This paper examines Azerbaijan's security policy in the context of resolving the Karabakh conflict as an absolute priority of Baku's domestic and foreign policy. The aim of the study is to assess the strategic significance of cooperation agreements and arms contracts concluded between Azerbaijan and Russia, as well as Azerbaijan and Turkey, in strengthening Azerbaijan's geopolitical position. The research questions are: What geopolitical and military factors have influenced the change in Azerbaijan's security policy in the context of the Karabakh conflict? What could be its long-term consequences for regional stability?

To answer these questions, I assume that Azerbaijan's security policy is primarily based on close cooperation with Turkey and Israel. Maintaining proper relations with Russia, which remains one of the key geopolitical players in the Caucasus and Central Asia, serves a tactical and propaganda purpose rather than leading to the actual implementation of alliance declarations between the parties.

The paper was prepared based on field research conducted in Azerbaijan between 2021 and 2024. The results include 26 in-depth interviews with experts on the causes, course, and consequences of the Karabakh war, as well as Azerbaijan's security cooperation with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Furthermore, the conclusions rely on a content analysis of

security cooperation declarations and agreements signed by Baku with its partners, as well as statistical data on Azerbaijan's arms imports.

### Karabakh in Azerbaijan's Security Policy

For the first three decades after the collapse of the USSR, the Kremlin's most effective method of maintaining control over former Soviet republics was through armed conflicts<sup>276</sup>. These conflicts sometimes resulted in the creation of so-called quasi-states—countries unrecognized by other governments but possessing their own territories, administrations, and populations<sup>277</sup>. The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh was one such quasi-state, established by the Kremlin through the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>278</sup>. Throughout Nagorno-Karabakh's existence (1991–2023), Russia manipulated the parties involved in the conflict by overseeing the peace process. Although the process was formally led by the OSCE Minsk Group, Russia held the most influential role<sup>279</sup>.

The Karabakh conflict originated as a territorial and ethnic dispute but quickly evolved into a foundation for the nation-building processes in both Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>280</sup>. Years of historical and nationalistic narratives led Azerbaijanis to view Karabakh as a lost paradise: saw Shusha, the province's capital, as the cradle of their national culture, referred to the conflict as a patriotic war, and hailed fallen soldiers as "shahids" (martyrs who died for a just cause). Regaining Karabakh became a central element of Azerbaijani nationalism and directly

<sup>276</sup> M. Rywkin. *The Phenomenon of Quasi-states*, "Diogenes" 2006, No 53(2), pp. 23-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192106065969>; S. Radnitz. *Reinterpreting the enemy: Geopolitical beliefs and the attribution of blame in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*, "Political Geography" 2019, No 70, pp. 64-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.01.009>; L. Sayfutdinova. *Ethnic Boundaries and Territorial Borders: On the Place of Lezgin Irredentism in the Construction of National Identity in Azerbaijan*, "Nationalities Papers" 2022, No 50(4), pp. 794-812. doi:10.1017/nps.2021.3.

<sup>277</sup> T. De Waal. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. NYU Press, 2003. P. 246.

<sup>278</sup> P. Kolstø. *The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States*, "Journal of Peace Research" 2006, No 43(6), pp. 723-740. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343306068102>.

<sup>279</sup> The Minsk Group was established in 1992 as a specialized body within the OSCE tasked with the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The leading countries of the OSCE Minsk Group are Russia, France, and the United States. Other member states include Belarus, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan.

<sup>280</sup> P. Kolstø, H. Blakkisrud. *Living with Non-recognition: State- and Nation-building in South Caucasian Quasi-states*, "Europe-Asia Studies" 2008, No 60(3), pp. 483–509. doi: 10.1080/09668130801948158; P. Gamaghelyan, S. Rumyantsev. *The road to the Second Karabakh War: the role of ethno-centric narratives in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*. "Caucasus Survey" 2021, No 9(3), pp. 320-336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23761199.2021.1932068>.

influenced the country's military security<sup>281</sup>. Security, in this context, is understood as the political relations between the highest levels of government and the international community, with military considerations playing a significant role.

### Cooperation with Russia

Due to the Kremlin's critical role in the Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan relied on tactically close political relations with Russia for its military security during the first 25 years of its independence, even though it was not a formal ally. Cooperation was based on the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Security signed on July 3, 1997, which came into force on July 29, 1998. According to the document, in situations threatening the security of either party, Moscow and Baku can promptly conduct consultations and commit to refraining from participating in "any military, economic, or financial actions or events, including through 'third states,' directed against one another"<sup>282</sup>.

In subsequent years, this treaty was repeatedly ratified and expanded, resulting in over 40 agreements in the military and military-technical spheres between Russia and Azerbaijan during the period of 1997–2018. This cooperation included arms deliveries (discussed in more detail in the following section), as well as other key aspects such as joint educational programs and military exercises. Since 2015, Azerbaijani soldiers have regularly participated in the International Army Games, organized by the Russian Ministry of Defense. These games provide a platform for combat training for soldiers from Russia and other countries, enabling the exchange of experiences, improvement of skills, and the building of relationships between the armies involved.

Until the outbreak of the Second Karabakh War in September 2020, political relations between Azerbaijan and Russia in the security sphere appeared stable. However, my interlocutors emphasized that these relations were not built on trust but rather on pragmatism, driven by the belief that without the Kremlin's consent, Baku would never regain control of Karabakh<sup>283</sup>. The hopes for reaching an agreement with Armenia seemed greater with the commencement of secret negotiations between Baku and Yerevan under the Kremlin's

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<sup>281</sup> R. R. Garagozov. *Azerbaijani history and nationalism in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods: challenges and dilemmas*. "Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict" 2021, No 5(2), pp. 136–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2012.743030>.

<sup>282</sup> The full text of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Security between Russia and Azerbaijan. Retrieved December 20, 2024, from <https://vestikavkaza.ru/articles/tekst-dogovora-o-druzbe-sotrudnicestve-i-vzaimnoj-bezopasnosti-mezdu-rf-i-azerbajdzanom.html>.

<sup>283</sup> Interview with a think tank employee, Baku 2022.

leadership from 2014 to 2019, known as the Lavrov Plan. Although the Lavrov Plan was never made public, media reports citing comments from participants revealed that it proposed returning a so-called buffer zone around Karabakh to Azerbaijan (with varying estimates ranging from three to six of the seven districts), deploying Russian troops to Karabakh, and deferring the resolution of Karabakh's status indefinitely.

A Baku-based expert, who served as an advisor to the presidential administration in 2020, remarked:

*The Lavrov Plan was still on the table in 2019. We were ready to sign it, but Armenia broke off the negotiations. At the time, I criticized Pashinyan's decision and still believe the war could have been avoided. However, it must be admitted that implementing the Lavrov Plan would have weakened us. At most, we would have regained five districts, and Russia would have had us in its grip. Now, the most important thing is to remove foreign troops from our territory*<sup>284</sup>.

This statement reflects the attitude of Azerbaijan's political elite toward their northern neighbour. My interviewees considered Russia the greatest threat to Azerbaijan's security, as the most militarily, economically, and politically influential power in the post-Soviet region. Russia's security policy was seen as incompatible with Baku's security doctrine. An Azerbaijani military colonel, summarizing the outcome of the so-called "April War" in 2016, during which Azerbaijan conducted its first meticulously planned military operation since the 1994 ceasefire, stated:

*"Back then (in April 2016), Russia stopped us. They won't do it a second time. We will achieve our goals, peacefully or by force—we are prepared for any scenario"*<sup>285</sup>.

Azerbaijan rarely openly criticizes Russia, pursuing a policy aimed at avoiding overt conflicts. An example of this cautious approach was the signing of the Declaration on "Allied Interaction between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation" just before the Kremlin's attack on Ukraine and one day after Moscow recognized the "independence" of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic in Ukraine's Donbas in February 2022<sup>286</sup>. Azerbaijani expert explained the signing of the document as stemming from the fear among Azerbaijan's elites of destabilizing the situation within their own republic<sup>287</sup>. Just a few weeks earlier, on January 15, 2022, President Ilham Aliyev and Ukrainian President

<sup>284</sup> Interview with an employee of a government analytical agency, Baku 2023.

<sup>285</sup> Interview with a war expert, Baku 2021.

<sup>286</sup> Declaration on allied interaction between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. Retrieved Decembre 20, 2024, from <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55498>.

<sup>287</sup> Interview with a member of the Azerbaijani parliament, Baku 2022.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy had signed a joint declaration in Kyiv on deepening their strategic partnership. At the time, Ukraine's leader stated that the declaration included a commitment to mutual support for sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders<sup>288</sup>.

From the onset of Russia's attack on Ukraine, Baku has consistently supported Ukraine's territorial integrity, equating Kyiv's loss of control over Donbas with Azerbaijan's loss of Karabakh. This stance is evidenced by Azerbaijan's support for the United Nations General Assembly resolution, which declared the Crimean referendum on joining Russia to be illegal<sup>289</sup>. Consequently, since the start of Russia's full-scale war, Azerbaijan has provided Ukraine with millions in humanitarian, military, and political support<sup>290</sup>.

Given the Kremlin's reluctance to engage constructively in restoring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, Azerbaijan has increasingly sought to strengthen its alliances with other nations since Russia's aggression against post-Soviet states in 2014<sup>291</sup>. A significant role in this effort has been played by Turkey, which views the South Caucasus as historically within its sphere of influence<sup>292</sup>.

### Cooperation with Turkey and Izrael

Despite the political and economic alignment between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, their collaboration lacked a cohesive and long-term strategy<sup>293</sup>. This changed following the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, which acted as a catalyst for deeper cooperation. In 2010, Baku and Ankara signed the Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support, a comprehensive framework covering all aspects of national

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<sup>288</sup> Joint press statements of Presidents of Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Retrieved Decembre 20, 2024, from <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56005>.

<sup>289</sup> Territorial integrity of Ukraine : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved Decembre 20, 2024, from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/767565>.

<sup>290</sup> G. Mammadova. *Azerbaijan's support for Ukraine since the Russian invasion*. "The Topchubashov Center", 6.10.2023. Retrieved Decembre 20, 2024, from <https://top-center.org/en/analytics/3568/azerbaijans-support-for-ukraine-since-the-russian-invasion>.

<sup>291</sup> N. J. Melvin. *The Risks of Military Confrontation in the Black Sea Region*, "SIPRI Policy Paper", 2018, No 50, pp. 59–67.

<sup>292</sup> In March 1921, Turkey signed a treaty with the USSR, later known as the Moscow Treaty, which regulated the issues of Turkey's Caucasian border. As a result of the treaty, among other things, Nakhchivan became an autonomous territory under the protectorate of Azerbaijan, and Türkiye transferred Batumi to the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. On October 13, 1921, the Treaty of Kars was signed, which confirmed the assumptions of the Treaty of Moscow. See: Московский договор между Россией и Турцией 16 Марта 1921 года. Retrieved Decembre 20, 2024, from <https://www.amsi.ge/istoria/sab/moskovi.html>.

<sup>293</sup> K. Zasztowt, *Relacje Turcji z Kaukazem Południowym i ich znaczenie dla Unii Europejskiej*, [in] *Turcja i Europa. Wyzwania i szanse*, A. Szymański (ed), Warszawa 2011, pp. 175-177.



security for the parties involved, including military-political and military-technical cooperation, humanitarian issues, and economic collaboration<sup>294</sup>. A pivotal clause in this agreement is Article 2, which stipulates that if either party becomes the victim of an armed attack or aggression by a third state or group of states, the parties are obligated to provide mutual assistance using all available means<sup>295</sup>.

Under the aforementioned agreement, Turkey became the guarantor of Azerbaijan's security. In line with this commitment, Ankara supported Baku during clashes with Armenian forces in 2016, which can be regarded as preparatory exercises for the full-scale offensive launched in 2020. The military operation, supported militarily, technically, and politically by Turkey, resulted in Azerbaijan regaining full control over the entire Karabakh region, the dissolution of para-state structures as of January 1, 2024, and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Azerbaijani territory, initially deployed in Karabakh under the agreement ending the 2020 military actions. Furthermore, in June 2021, the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey signed another declaration to deepen cooperation across various dimensions, including security, economic, humanitarian, and cultural sectors<sup>296</sup>. Known as the Shusha Declaration after the location of its signing, the document outlines continued modernization of the armed forces of both nations in line with contemporary requirements<sup>297</sup>.

The Baku-Ankara alliance successfully overturned the geopolitical status quo, countering the will of a key regional actor—Russia—which not only viewed itself as the dominant force in the region but was also perceived as such by other stakeholders, including Western partners. Azerbaijan and Turkey's effective challenge to Russia's monopoly in the security sphere marked the emergence of a rival power centre in the region. This new dynamic is complemented by Baku's close ties with Tel Aviv.

Azerbaijan's strategic partnership with Israel stands apart from its Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance due to its discreet and less public nature. While Azerbaijan established its embassy in Tel Aviv only in March 2023, security cooperation between the two nations began soon after

<sup>294</sup> Declaration on the establishment of the Council on strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey has been signed, 15 September 2010. Retrieved December 20, 2024, from <https://president.az/en/articles/view/721>.

<sup>295</sup> Azərbaycan Respublikası və Türkiyə Respublikası Arasında Strateji Tərəfdaşlıq və Qarşılıqlı Yardım Haqqında' Müqavilənin Təsdiq Edilməsi Barədə Azərbaycan Respublikasının Qanunu, December 21, 2010. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://e-qanun.az/framework/21158>.

<sup>296</sup> Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti Arasında Müttəfiklik İlişkileri Hakkında - Şuşa Beyannamesi. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/2021-06-15-Azərbaycan-SusaBeyannamesi.pdf>.

<sup>297</sup> Erdoğan ve Aliyev 'Şuşa Beyannamesi'ne imza attı, "The Haber" 15.06.2021. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/erdogan-ve-aliev-susa-beyannamesine-imza-atti-588635.html>.

the dissolution of the USSR. In April 1993, Israel extended military support to Azerbaijan for the first time by providing Stinger missiles<sup>298</sup>.

Over the years, this partnership has deepened, focusing on shared concerns about Iran, economic collaboration, and especially security, with strategic cooperation in energy and military technology. In the following section, I will examine Azerbaijan's procurement of Israeli weaponry within the broader context of its defence expenditures<sup>299</sup>.

### Military Expenditure of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan owes its established political situation in the region to a large extent to its growing military potential. This is illustrated in the chart below<sup>300</sup>.

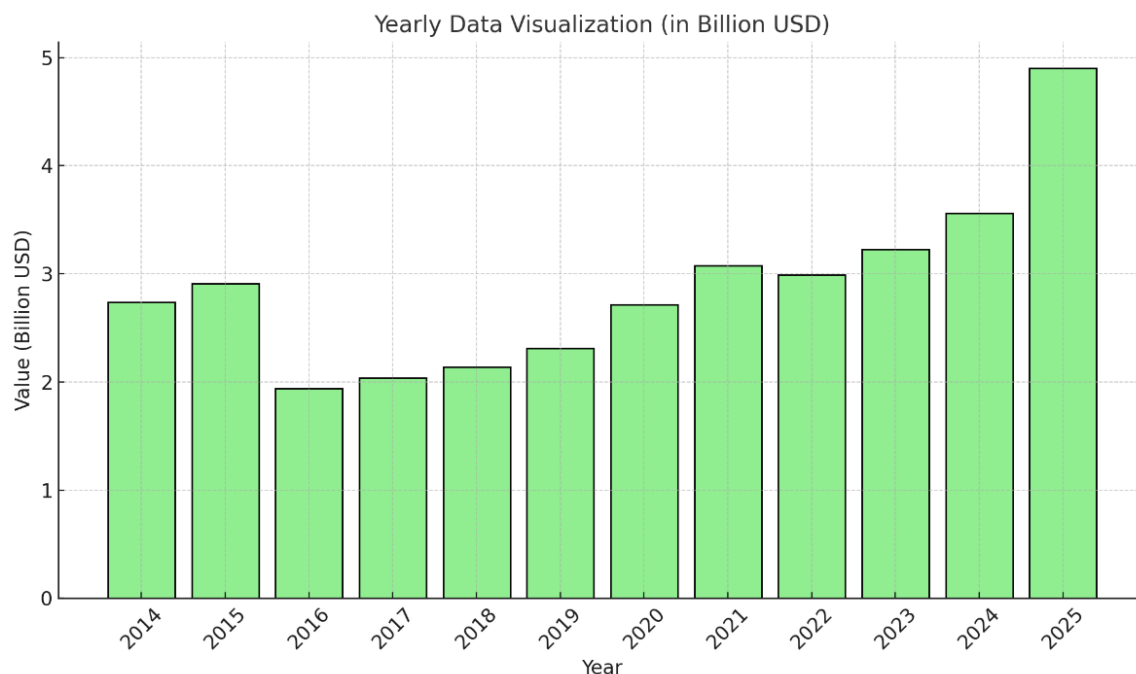


Figure 1. Yearly Military Expenditure of Azerbaijan

<sup>298</sup>A. Murinson. *The Ties between Israel and Azerbaijan*. "Mideast Security and Policy Studies" 2014, No 110, pp. 9–39. P. 10.

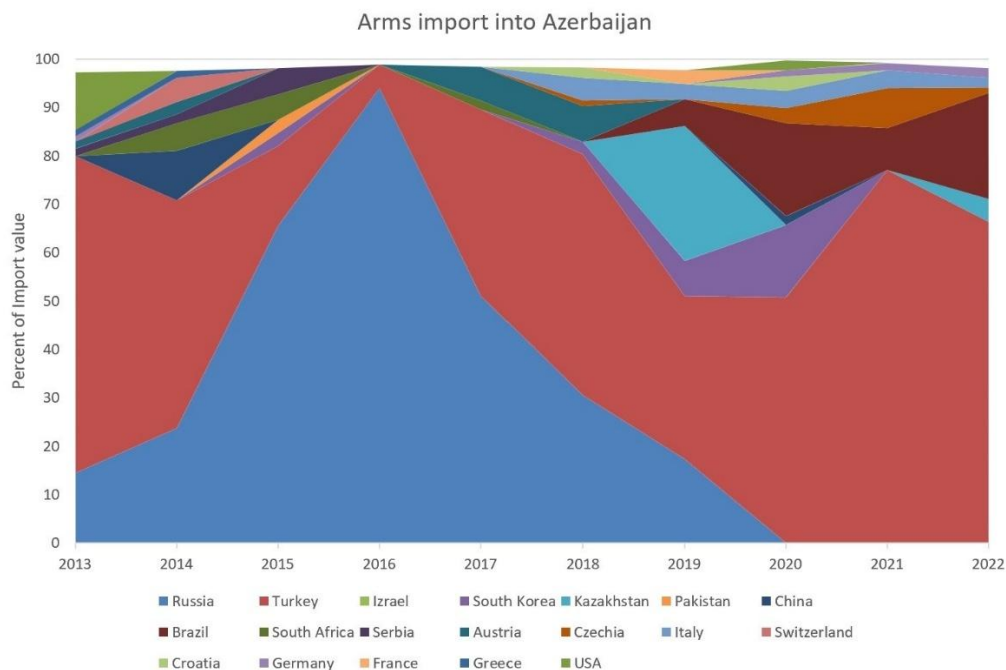
<sup>299</sup> It is worth remembering that the cultivation of the traditions of the Mountain Jews (Tats), who have lived in Azerbaijan for many centuries, has a certain significance for these relations. See: S.L. Goluboff. *Are They Jews or Asians? A Cautionary Tale about Mountain Jewish Ethnography*, "Slavic Review" 2004, No 63(1), pp.113-140. doi:10.2307/1520272.

<sup>300</sup> The data used to prepare this chart comes from the following source: Azerbaijan Military Expenditure, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.55163/CQGC9685>. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

Source: Azerbaijan Military Expenditure, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Retrieved January 20, 2025, from <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

Since gaining independence, Azerbaijan's military expenditures have surged dramatically, increasing from \$11.1 million in 1992 to nearly \$5 billion in 2025. Significant rises in the defence budget have correlated with military operations in region. For example, military spending peaked at nearly \$3 billion in 2015 but dropped by one-third following the April War in 2016. A similar pattern was observed before the Second Karabakh War, with defence spending rising by 19 percent between 2022 and 2023. This indicates that Baku is putting a lot of effort into the military and military-technical security of its territory.

The upward trajectory in defence spending persists, with a 35 percent increase in 2025 compared to 2024. This trend suggests a high likelihood of further military operations. The absence of a peace agreement with Armenia and Russia's reduced role as the 2020 ceasefire guarantor further contribute to this outlook. Moreover, Azerbaijan, supported by strategic partners, has secured contracts for arms and military equipment. Considering the probability of armed conflicts in the Caucasus region, I will discuss arms import in greater detail below.



*Figure 1. Arms Import into Azerbaijan*

Source: Where does Azerbaijan import Weapons from?. The Observatory of Economic Complexity. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from [https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/import/aze/all/19/2009.2010.2011](https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/import/aze/all/19/2009.2010.2011)

In the chart above, I have compiled Azerbaijan's arms procurement expenditures from its largest suppliers, exceeding one percent of total purchases between 2013 and 2022; data from the past two years have not been made public. These expenditures reveal that Turkey has been the most stable arms supplier. Contracts with Ankara accounted for nearly half of Azerbaijan's total military purchases on average during the period analysed.

Arms trade agreements with Russia, on the other hand, exhibited a more complex dynamic. Following the 2008 Georgia War, arms imports from Russia were largely replaced by Israeli suppliers, which accounted for almost 100 percent of Azerbaijan's arms import budget between 2009 and 2011<sup>301</sup>. Starting in 2012, trade value with Russia gradually increased, peaking in 2016 at 94 percent. Azerbaijani experts acknowledge that this spike was linked to the April War, as arms contracts served as compensation for the Kremlin's tacit approval of testing military equipment in Karabakh<sup>302</sup>. By that time, Azerbaijan had already transitioned to a unified security system with Turkey, making the weapons purchased from Russia of questionable combat value.

"Adjusting the equipment required additional financial investment, but it had diplomatic significance as it was part of the larger game surrounding Karabakh," said the leader of an opposition political party<sup>303</sup>.

The gradual reduction of arms imports from Russia, culminating in their complete cessation in 2020, coincided with preparations for the Second Karabakh War<sup>304</sup>. Military expenditure trends during this period highlight Azerbaijan's pivot toward new suppliers: Kazakhstan, Brazil, South Korea, and the diversification of imports, including renewed cooperation with several European countries. Between 2018 and 2021, arms purchases from Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, and even France accounted for an average of nearly 12 percent of total defence spending. However, after the dissolution of Karabakh, this cooperation was significantly reduced.

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<sup>301</sup> Where does Azerbaijan import Weapons from? (2009, 2010, 2011). The Observatory of Economic Complexity. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from [https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/import/aze/all/19/2009.2010.2011](https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/import/aze/all/19/2009.2010.2011).

<sup>302</sup> Interview with an economic expert, Baku 2021.

<sup>303</sup> Interview with a member of parliament, Baku 2023.

<sup>304</sup> Data published by The Observatory of Economic Complexity speaks of a complete suspension of arms imports from Russia. However, there are other voices on this matter. See: Wezeman P.D. et al., Arms transfers to ..., op. cit.

An important conclusion from analysing official data on arms sales to Azerbaijan is the noticeable lack of transparency. For instance, no information is available regarding contracts with Belarus and Israel. However, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports that Belarusian arms deliveries accounted for 7.1 percent of Azerbaijan's military imports between 2011 and 2020, while Israel supplied 27 percent during the same period<sup>305</sup>. SIPRI further estimates that the majority of these imports occurred between 2016 and 2020, constituting 69 percent of Azerbaijan's total military trade value and cost at least 5 billion USD<sup>306</sup>. Although the actual volume of arms traded remains unclear, experts agree that advanced Israeli military technology played a critical role in enabling Azerbaijan to regain control of Karabakh<sup>307</sup>.

### Conclusion

Azerbaijan's security policy regarding Karabakh has undergone a significant transformation over the past three decades, shaped by geopolitical manoeuvres, military alliances, and strategic partnerships. Initially constrained by Russian influence, Azerbaijan pursued a pragmatic yet cautious approach to its relations with the Kremlin, leveraging diplomatic ties while simultaneously strengthening its military capabilities. However, as Russia's influence waned—especially following its aggression against Ukraine—Azerbaijan successfully realigned its security policy to decrease reliance on Moscow and bolster cooperation with other regional powers, primarily Turkey and Israel.

The military victories in the Second Karabakh War and the dissolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh para-state in 2024 marked a turning point in Azerbaijan's security landscape. The nation's growing defense budget underscores its commitment to maintaining military superiority, ensuring territorial integrity, and mitigating future security threats. Strategic partnerships with Turkey and Israel have played a pivotal role in modernizing Azerbaijan's armed forces, facilitating advanced military procurement, and providing tactical advantages in conflict scenarios.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan's ability to counterbalance Russian dominance in the South Caucasus, alongside Turkey's increasing regional influence, signals the emergence of a new

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<sup>305</sup> P. D. Wezeman, A. Kuimova, and J. Smith, *Arms transfers to conflict zones: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 30.04.2021. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2021/arms-transfers-conflict-zones-case-nagorno-karabakh>.

<sup>306</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>307</sup> Interview with an expert, Baku 2023.

power dynamic. By diversifying its arms suppliers, fostering diplomatic relations with Western nations, and reinforcing military cooperation with key allies, Azerbaijan has positioned itself as a formidable force in regional security affairs.

Despite these achievements, unresolved tensions with Armenia and the absence of a formal peace agreement pose ongoing challenges. The risk of renewed hostilities remains, necessitating continued military investments and diplomatic efforts to stabilize the region. Azerbaijan's future security trajectory will depend on its ability to navigate these complexities while maintaining strategic partnerships and safeguarding its territorial sovereignty.

### **Streszczenie:**

W niniejszym opracowaniu przeanalizowano ewoluującą politykę bezpieczeństwa Azerbejdżanu po aneksji Krymu przez Rosję w 2014 r., ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem konfliktu w Karabachu jako centralnego filaru krajowej i zagranicznej strategii Baku. Początkowo Azerbejdżan nawiązał współpracę z Rosją, wykorzystując porozumienia dyplomatyczne i wojskowe, aby zapewnić sobie wsparcie Moskwy w odzyskaniu Karabachu. Jednak pełne przywrócenie kontroli nad regionem przez Azerbejdżan — osiągnięte przy pomocy Turcji i zakończone wycofaniem rosyjskich sił pokojowych — znacznie osłabiło wpływy Kremla na Kaukazie Południowym. W artykule oceniono zmieniające się układy geopolityczne Azerbejdżanu, w szczególności pogłębiające się partnerstwa w zakresie bezpieczeństwa z Turcją i Izraelem, przy jednoczesnym utrzymaniu pragmatycznych więzi z Rosją. Dzięki badaniom terenowym przeprowadzonym w latach 2021–2024, w tym wywiadam z ekspertami i analizie treści porozumień o bezpieczeństwie, zidentyfikowano kluczowe czynniki geopolityczne i wojskowe wpływające na zmiany polityki Azerbejdżanu. Wyniki sugerują, że rosnące wydatki Azerbejdżanu na obronę odzwierciedlają strategiczny zwrot w stronę większej autonomii w zakresie bezpieczeństwa regionalnego. W artykule stwierdzono, że podczas gdy Azerbejdżanowi udało się zredefiniować dynamikę władzy na Kaukazie Południowym, nierozwiązane napięcia z Armenią i brak formalnego porozumienia pokojowego stanowią ciągle wyzwania dla stabilności regionalnej.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Bezpieczeństwo Azerbejdżanu, Karabach, Rosja, Turcja, Izrael, handel bronią

### **Key words:**

Azerbaijan's Security, Karabakh, Russia, Turkey, Israel, Arms Trade

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## **The inception of the century-old strategic partnership between Georgia and Poland: a prism analysis of the "Republic of Georgia" newspaper**

### **Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

The main theoretical basis of the present study is the examination of the political history, structure, and culture of the media space from 1918 to 1921 through the lens of Georgian political and public reality.

Historical research categories were unified by researchers **Joseph Hill** and **August Kerber** based on a principle that is directly applicable to our work. According to their assessment, studies containing historical content provide an opportunity to find solutions to modern problems in the past. The authors also point out that historical research allows for the re-evaluation of past data in the present, outlines the possibilities of the present, and identifies future trends. Based on the theories of Hill and Kerber, we formulated the problem definition in concrete terms, determined matching sources of data, and undertook their collection, classification, and processing. Ultimately, we achieved a balanced synthesis of the research object (media texts).<sup>308</sup>

Theorist **Walter Borg** believes that the research of documentary publications involves obtaining evidence, specifically empirical documents, which are then evaluated and synthesized to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. This process, known as reconstruction, is conducted through critical research with the aim of providing an objective and honest representation of the past era.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> J. Hill, & A. Kerber, *Models, Methods, and Analytical Procedures in Education Research.*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan 1967.

<sup>309</sup> W. Borg, *Educational Research: An Introduction*. D. Mckay Company, Michigan, 1963.

Scientist **Homer Hockett** provides an intriguing discussion on the research of the historical past. In our case, we could not use direct observation; instead, we could only interpret past events based on the "traces left behind." We adopted Hockett's theory and reasoning, which primarily rely on primary sources such as newspaper publications.<sup>310</sup>

The research methodology involves searching for published materials related to the research topic, studying sources, and analyzing and processing them. Social sciences are characterized by a close connection between theory and empirical research. This work employs a **pragmatic methodology that emphasizes the interdependence and interrelationship** of events within a specific historical period.

The research undertaken is characterized by a distinctly theoretical orientation, considering the temporal gap of a century from the period under investigation. In light of the content factor and historical specificity of the article, we relied on secondary data collection and employed a qualitative research method, specifically employing content analysis of textual materials, complemented by thematic analysis. This approach facilitated the interpretation of patterns and meanings inherent in the research components. "The study of texts holds a prominent place in media studies, as the media text itself, as a paradigm, represents a set of classes of texts".<sup>311</sup> The method was systematically applied for the registration, verification, and evaluation of theories relevant to our research interests.

### **Georgia and Poland: an attempt at an alliance of democratic countries**

In May 1918, coinciding with the declaration of independence, the Georgian intelligentsia and all public-political associations demonstrated a pro-German orientation. Germany distinguished itself as one of the initial nations to acknowledge Georgia's independence. Throughout the First World War, Germany succeeded in cultivating amicable relations with countries liberated from Russian influence, exhibiting a benevolent disposition towards them. Georgia, in particular, captivated Germany due to its inherently favorable geopolitical position. The defeat of Germany in the First World War precipitated a profound shift in Georgia's circumstances, thrusting the country into a state of pronounced instability. Russia and the Ottoman Empire interpreted Germany's defeat as synonymous with Georgia's own defeat,

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<sup>310</sup> H. Hockett, *The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1955.

<sup>311</sup> Kh. Maisashvili, & M. Toradze, *Media and Communication Research Methods*. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, 2019, p.26.

thereby instigating a hostile atmosphere. To prevent the precarious situation from regressing into a renewed state of subjugation, resolute and judicious measures, alongside astute policies and decisions, were imperative in ensuring that the brief period of freedom did not devolve into captivity once more.

Unfortunately, Georgia had no reason to be calm and hopeful, as real allies capable of protecting its territorial integrity and willing to provide effective assistance were virtually nonexistent. "But there was one potential partner who was quite ready to become a more or less reliable military and political ally of the restored Georgian state".<sup>312</sup>

As aforementioned, Poland, situated in Eastern Europe, exhibited notable sympathy toward Georgia and manifested a readiness to extend assistance to a nation left in isolation amidst adversarial surroundings.

It should be noted that Poland restored its state sovereignty a few months before us, following the February Revolution of 1917. While coexisting with Georgia in the Russian Empire, Poland had no diplomatic representation in our country. The desire for bilateral cooperation between these two nations first emerged on economic grounds, with the Polish side acting as the initiator.

In February 1918, when Georgia faced the threat of invasion by the Turkish army, a volunteer unit composed of Polish officers and soldiers was formed under the command of Colonel Stanislaw Rosnowski. Known as the Polish Brigade in the Caucasus, its task was to maintain law and order in Tbilisi.

The available sources yield intriguing information. Documentary evidence reveals that in the summer of 1918, a Polish delegation, led by Vaclav Ostrovsky, arrived in Tbilisi. Ostrovsky assumed the role of the Polish consul in the Caucasus. The governmental publication "Republic of Georgia," spanning the years 1918-1921, furnishes insights into the aforementioned figure. According to the periodical, Vaclav Ostrovsky's primary responsibilities included the repatriation of Poles residing in Georgia and the recruitment of volunteers for the Polish army. It is noteworthy to acknowledge, based on historical documentation, the involvement of individuals of Polish origin in combat operations within the Georgian army, as well as the reciprocal participation of Georgians in the Polish military.

In the second half of 1918, Polish-Georgian relations assumed a more pronounced official character. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland extended Ostrowski's powers, officially

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<sup>312</sup> E. Andersen, *Georgia and International Agreements in 1918-1921*. Mtsignobari, Tbilis, 2020, p.375.

initiating his negotiations with the Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Evgeny Gegechkori. Both countries planned for close political cooperation.

According to our research, the periodical "Republic of Georgia" functioned as the official government publication, consistently reporting on not only domestic and international news but also systematically publishing government decisions, legislative enactments, and minor announcements, such as appointments or dismissals of individuals. These matters were regularly featured in the newspaper's official section. It is worth noting that, as revealed by the newspaper, in 1918, Vaclav Ostrovsky was vested with extensive authority by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, signaling the potential for close collaboration between the two nations in the future.

Let us examine the perspectives of Georgian politicians concerning the Georgian-Polish alliance. It is evident from the available sources that the governing circles of the Democratic Republic had substantial grounds to view the partnership with Poland in a positive light. The rationale behind this lies in the shared circumstance of both nations recently liberating themselves from Russian dominance. Notably, Poland, akin to Georgia, did not possess the formidable stature of victorious powers such as England, France, and the United States of America following the conclusion of the First World War. While Georgia looked toward these major nations with hopeful anticipation, the self-respecting Georgian ethos found itself incongruent with seeking "mercy" from them, as it often entailed compromising positions. In contrast, Poland distinguished itself as the proactive initiator of goodwill and mutual cooperation with Georgia.

The perception of "powerful" Europe underwent a transformation as it gradually became aware of the increasing influence of Bolshevism in Russia. As highlighted by Otar Janelidze, European nations swiftly pivoted towards establishing primarily economic relations with the recently liberated countries, a dynamic that fell considerably short of fostering equitable partnerships<sup>313</sup>.

In the edition of the "Republic of Georgia" dated November 17, 1919, the Republic of Poland's stance on the nationality of our country was emphasized. This elucidation finds its rationale in our examination of the strategic blueprint devised by the head of the Polish state, concurrently serving as the commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces, Marshal Józef

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<sup>313</sup> O. Janelidze, *Essays of the Democratic Republic of Georgia*, Publishing House of the Library of the National Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2018.

Pilsudski. According to this plan, countries historically affiliated with the Polish-Lithuanian state, namely Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, and Latvia, were envisaged to form a military-political coalition against Russia and Germany as a preemptive measure to counter potential aggression.

Given the persistent threats to Georgia posed by Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Poland was of the opinion that Georgia's inclusion in the aforementioned military-political coalition would not be advisable. Consequently, in 1920, a Polish diplomatic mission, led by the experienced diplomat Titus Filipovich, was dispatched to Georgia.

The Polish mission arrived in Tbilisi and attended the inaugural assembly, where Georgian diplomats extended customary Georgian hospitality to their diplomatic counterparts. The names of Minister of Foreign Affairs Yevheni Gegechkor and Council Chairman Ekvtime Takaishvili were prominently mentioned. The "Republic of Georgia" solemnly conveyed this information to the Georgian public, stating, "The Polish government firmly believes that the shared interests of these two nations will foster amicable relations between Georgia and Poland in the imminent future." The Polish government recently appointed Minister T. Filippovich, and under the his leadership, a special mission was designated to visit Tiflis promptly with the aim of establishing friendly relations and acknowledging the independence of Georgia.<sup>314</sup>

In the April 4, 1920 edition of the newspaper, the address delivered by Ekvtime Takaishvili to the members of the Polish delegation during the inaugural meeting was published. Takaishvili delved into the shared historical destinies of Georgia and Poland, underscoring instances of both nations experiencing the curtailment of freedom by Soviet Russia and subsequently regaining independence. The discourse also acknowledged Poland's distinct advantage, given its unimpaired territorial integrity, juxtaposed with the ongoing territorial disputes afflicting Georgia. Takaishvili's oratory, characterized by patriotism and an optimistic outlook, encapsulates the sentiment, "When Georgia and Poland faced the same adversity, we naturally became allies. Friendship was established between us and Poland during the autocratic period, and in the era of freedom, this camaraderie will assuredly be fortified!" As customary, the entire assembly erupted in applause at the conclusion of his speech.<sup>315</sup>

The complete speech of the Plenipotentiary Minister of Poland to Ekvtime and the entire Government of Georgia reads as follows: "The joy experienced in Poland would be incomplete

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<sup>314</sup> Republic of Georgia, 1920, March 25, p. 2.

<sup>315</sup> Republic of Georgia, 1920, April 4, p. 2.

without extending a warm welcome to free Georgia. To the mutual advantage of both nations, I am committed to exerting every effort to conscientiously carry out my mission, confident in the support that I am certain the government of Georgia will provide." <sup>316</sup>

Upon scrutinizing documents preserved in both Polish and Georgian archives, diverse facets of the mutual partnership between Georgia and Poland come to light. The involved parties collaborated on formulating a military union project between the two nations. Additionally, the mission was tasked with expediting the de facto recognition of Georgia's independence. Indeed, following the decision of the Supreme Allied Council on January 27, 1921, to acknowledge Georgia as a democratic republic, Poland promptly aligned itself with this recognition the very next day.

In reciprocation to Poland, the Georgian delegation similarly journeyed to Warsaw and took residence there. In the summer of 1920, the head of the Georgian mission was appointed. Giorgi Sidamon-Eristavi was chosen, with Vladimer Bakradze accompanying as an adviser. This was announced by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. The mission had the following objectives: to enhance friendship and goodwill, strengthen political and economic ties, and work towards Poland's recognition of Georgia as a de jure state. During the mentioned period, it was imperative for Georgia to cultivate as many supporters and allies as possible. However, the authenticity of this alliance warrants examination from an alternative perspective. In terms of de jure recognition of Georgia, the Georgian delegation successfully achieved its mission. On January 28, 1921, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, E. Sapieha, officially wrote to Giorgi Sidamon-Eristavi: "I have the honor to inform you that the head of state of Poland has decided to formally recognize the Republic of Georgia as an independent and sovereign state".<sup>317</sup> Giorgi Sidamon-Eristavi's response to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs is also documented: "I am privileged to convey my deepest gratitude on behalf of my government and the Georgian nation for the genuine support and moral solidarity extended to my homeland".<sup>318</sup>

The Georgian authorities firmly believed that these legitimate ties would strengthen further after this act.

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<sup>316</sup> Republic of Georgia, 1920, April 4, p. 3.

<sup>317</sup> O. Janelidze, *Essays of the Democratic Republic of Georgia*, Publishing House of the Library of the National Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2018, p. 285.

<sup>318</sup> O. Janelidze, *Essays of the Democratic Republic of Georgia*, Publishing House of the Library of the National Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2018.

The tenure of the Georgian delegation's mission in Poland was not protracted. However, the realization of enduring independence was elusive for both nations—neither for Georgia nor for Poland. This circumstance also applies to the diplomatic representation of Georgia in Poland. On January 11, 1921, merely one month prior to the pivotal date, Evgeny Gegechkor issued an official announcement regarding the closure of Georgian missions in Bern, London, Rome, and Warsaw. The rationale behind this decision, as gleaned from official documents and historical analysis, can be attributed to two primary factors: 1. Economic considerations, and 2. Following the *de facto* recognition at the international level, a shift in focus toward a different form of promotional activities abroad was envisaged, necessitating a reduction in the number of representative states.

### **Conclusion**

The Georgian-Polish alliance, albeit brief, yielded substantive outcomes, as evidenced by the impactful initiatives undertaken by the respective missions. Through our research, it is discernible that for Georgia, as a fledgling republic, such a diplomatic partnership served as a valuable experiential venture. We maintain the conviction that the Georgian delegation adeptly discharged its responsibilities in this context, demonstrating a high degree of responsibility and utilizing the available knowledge effectively.

The friendship and cooperation forged a century ago between Georgia and Poland were rekindled during Georgia's second declaration of independence in 1992.

Presently, our nations stand as steadfast partners and friends within the realm of international organizations.

### **Streszczenie**

Lata 1918–1921, pomimo trzyletniej przerwy, pod względem zakresu, treści i znaczenia odpowiadają dekadom, stanowiąc całą erę rozwiązywania problemów państwowocentrycznych, utrwalania wartości demokratycznych w myśleniu społecznym i zapoczątkowywania niepodległego i całkowicie nowego życia Gruzji.

Podstawową dokumentacją pozwalającą nam uchwycić puls tej epoki jest prasa rządowa i partyjna. Pomimo swojego historycznego i politycznego znaczenia, prasa Republiki Demokratycznej nie została dogłębnie zbadana. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu rzucenie światła na mniej znane niuanse sojuszu między Gruzją a Polską, zgłębiając podstawy bliskich relacji między tymi dwoma krajami, które przetrwały i umocniły się 70 lat później, po drugim wyzwoleniu Gruzji.

W niniejszej pracy omawiamy partnerstwo polityczne między Gruzją a Polską na początku XX wieku, wykorzystując artykuły prasowe do ujawnienia potencjalnych przyczyn zainteresowania Polski Gruzją, skuteczności proponowanego partnerstwa oraz roli kraju w obliczu wyzwań geopolitycznych, przed którymi stanął.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Polska, Republika Demokratyczna, stosunki zagraniczne, dyplomacja, Wspólnota Narodów, partnerstwo strategiczne.

### **Key words:**

Poland, Democratic Republic, foreign relations, diplomacy, commonwealth, strategic partnership.

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**Diplomatic challenges of Tajikistan's sovereignty: a comparison  
of energy cooperation between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan  
in the early 2000s versus today (2019 - 2023)**

**Intorduction**

Tajikistan gained independence in September 1991, but since then has continued to face many difficulties, politically, economically and also socially. The country is still considered to be the poorest of the former USSR states, with additional problems caused by authoritarian rule, ineffective state institutions, and the country falling into civilisational regression<sup>319</sup>. Tajikistan's weakness is linked to the years spent under the tutelage of Moscow, which kept the country dependent on Russia's political will while not providing sufficient modernisation impulses to lift Tajikistan from poverty and stagnation. The changes that were introduced under Soviet rule often did more harm, such as the construction of industrial plants and power stations that devastated the environment<sup>320</sup>, or the expansion of areas under cotton cultivation<sup>321</sup>. Another element working against Tajikistan is the lack of energy resources. Other Central Asian countries, although equally unprepared to function on their own after the collapse of the USSR and independence, were able to send their energy resources for export, which translated into an increase in their wealth. Tajikistan therefore remains economically dependent and still needs external support<sup>322</sup>. The fall of the Soviet Union marked a change in international reality, but in itself did not solve the problems already existing in Tajikistan. The new republics,

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<sup>319</sup> J. Lang, za: *Tadżykistan: chroniczna stagnacja*, [https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze\\_200.pdf](https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze_200.pdf), s.1, (25.06.2024).

<sup>320</sup> M. Klimecki, *Tadżykistan 1992 – 1997 r. Rozpad i odbudowa państwa*, [w:] *Zbliżenia cywilizacyjne*, E. Kuczyński (red.), Włocławek 2010, s. 9.

<sup>321</sup> A. Cieślowska, A. Makowska, *Gdzie jest ta woda? Dostęp do wody w kontekście problematyki rozwojowej regionu Azji Centralnej*, Warszawa 2012, s.59.

<sup>322</sup> J. Lang, *Tadżykistan ...*, *op.cit.* [https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze\\_200.pdf](https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze_200.pdf), (25.06.2024).

inexperienced in multi-vectoral politics, had to face all of the sudden not only internal problems but also new international politics challenges<sup>323</sup>. It was natural for Tajikistan as well as the other new republics to remain dependent on Russia, and the territory of post-Soviet Asia became a new arena for Russia, the United States and China to display their superpower aspirations<sup>324</sup>. After the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan fared best in terms of conducting its international affairs, but Tajikistan also tried to make the most of the situation when the Western military presence in Afghanistan began - Tajikistan was one of the countries that decided to make its territories available for military reloading bases to counterbalance Russian forces<sup>325</sup>. However, regardless of the superpower that has pursued or is pursuing its interests in Central Asia at any given time, everyone is keen for Tajikistan's status to remain unchanged. This concerns maintaining the functioning of the state, but not modernising it. The case of the Russian Federation is peculiar here, because Russia wants to maintain its influence in Central Asia, so it is in Moscow's interest that Tajikistan is on the one hand strong enough not to collapse under its own structural problems, but on the other hand weak enough not to seek other alternatives in international relations than Russia<sup>326</sup>.

The aim of the following article is to show that Tajikistan's position involving energy issues has changed somewhat, with new players entering the arena and expressing interest in the country. However, it is the Russian Federation that still seeks to keep the country in its sphere of influence.

### **Energy cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia in the early 2000s**

As mentioned earlier, Tajikistan's lack of strategic resources contributes to its recognition as the economically weakest of the post-Soviet Central Asian republics. The economic recovery of the 1980s no longer took place in the last decade of the 20th century<sup>327</sup>. Instead, the period of newly gained independence widened the economic gap between Tajikistan and the other states of the former USSR. Tajikistan, like the other republics, faced the challenge of modernising its energy sector.

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<sup>323</sup> K. Kozłowski, *Stabilność i zmiana w polityce państw poradzieckiej Azji Centralnej*, [http://wrh.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/07\\_Kozlowski\\_Stabilnosc-i-zmiana-w-polityce-panstw\\_WRH\\_14\\_2017\\_3.pdf](http://wrh.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/07_Kozlowski_Stabilnosc-i-zmiana-w-polityce-panstw_WRH_14_2017_3.pdf), (25.06.2024).

<sup>324</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>325</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>326</sup> J. Lang, *Tadżykistan ...*, *op.cit.* [https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze\\_200.pdf](https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/komentarze_200.pdf), (25.06.2024).

<sup>327</sup> R. Kłaczyński, E. Sadowska, *Postradzieckie państwa Azji Centralnej. Historia, polityka, gospodarka, społeczeństwo*, Kraków 2013, s.232.

During the Soviet era of Tajikistan, some parts of the country received support like substantial subsidies for energy, food and infrastructure from Moscow. As with many other areas, as soon as the country declared independence, the subsidies were no longer available and the infrastructure began to deteriorate and eventually collapse. "Disconnection" of the source of support from the Soviet Union was particularly evident in Tajikistan's energy in remote areas. Energy was provided by the Soviet Union and adequate supply was provided by decentralised diesel and hydroelectric power plants<sup>328</sup>.

Tajikistan inherited much of its energy infrastructure from the USSR in the form of hydroelectric power plants. During the Soviet era, the country used to be a part of an integrated energy system in which its hydroelectric plants played a key role. Irrigation canals, artificial reservoirs and other facilities were intended to serve all republics according to need. At that time, specific limits were also adopted for the republics to receive water according to their needs. Thus, the Turkmen SSR and the Uzbek SSR, which produced the largest quantities of cotton, received the most water, as did the Kazakh SSR, even though cotton was only grown there in the south. Gathering water reserves was the task of the Kyrgyz and Tajik SSRs, located in the upper reaches of the rivers. The water collected in winter was released in summer to irrigate the fields of the lower stream republics. In return, the Uzbek SSR, the Kazakh SSR and the Turkmen SSR, with rich natural resource deposits, supplied electricity, oil and gas to the upstream republics. This system worked well until the collapse of the USSR and the independence of the Central Asian countries. System's reorganisation in the current era has proved to be very difficult to carry out in the new conditions and became a source of many political, economic and social challenges for the young countries of the region<sup>329</sup>. However, the infrastructure was in need of modernisation, and the desire to diversify energy sources put further strain on the already strained state budget. Tajikistan has natural sources of electricity - the potential of Tajik rivers ranks the country 8th in the world. However, the above mentioned sources have not been adequately exploited and energy trade between countries has often fallen victim to disagreements<sup>330</sup> so the state budget could not benefit. The issue of electricity, so important to the functioning of the country, also left much to be desired. According to a 1998

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<sup>328</sup> N. F. Mirzoshoevich, *The Current State of the Energy Sector of the Republic of Tajikistan and its Role in the Functioning of the National Economy*, file:///C:/Users/CP24/Downloads/The\_Current\_State\_of\_the\_Energy\_Sec.pdf, (25.06.2024)

<sup>329</sup> A. Cieřlewska, A. Makowska, *Gdzie jest ta woda? ...*, op.cit. s. 60.

<sup>330</sup> T. Saavalainen et al. *Republic of Tajikistan: Recent Economic Developments*, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/1998/cr9816.pdf>, (25.06.2024).

International Monetary Fund report, the energy infrastructure was in a terrible state and no investment to improve the situation had been made since independence<sup>331</sup>.

Another problem that significantly aggravated the situation was the civil war that swept through Tajikistan between 1992 and 1997. Between 60,000 and 100,000 Tajik citizens died during the hostilities, and the country's material losses are estimated at 7 billion dollars<sup>332</sup>. The Russian Federation was also involved in resolving the conflict, though it was quite reluctant participation. In June 1997, peace agreements were signed in Moscow, bringing an end to the armed conflict. Years of civil war destroyed much of the country's infrastructure. Approximately 90 per cent of the rural irrigation infrastructure, which had been built back in Soviet times, was destroyed during the war<sup>333</sup>. The economic crisis in Russia in 1998 and four years of severe drought caused further economic damage.

Tajikistan has some natural gas reserves however they are quite small and are estimated to be 863 mld m3. Despite such modest gas reserves, Tajikistan would be able to meet the needs of its own economy, but because of its outdated, unmodernised and dilapidated infrastructure (whether through warfare or neglect), the country is unable to use these deposits effectively<sup>334</sup>. The country also has access to oil fields that are small but exploitable, but due to mismanagement of the extractive industry, lack of reform in the sector and failure to modernise infrastructure, oil production has fallen by 70% since Tajikistan's independence<sup>335</sup>.

Following the end of the civil war, Tajikistan found itself in a situation where the reconstruction of the country, including the energy sector, was essential for stability and further development. In this context, Russia's support played a key role. Although Tajikistan did not have a separate policy framework for the Russian Federation, Russia was still seen as a strategic partner. Although Russia at the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan did not want to meddle too much in the situation, after persuasion from the Tajik government, Moscow decided to mobilise some of its forces and energy. In 1993, the two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, although the agreement was mainly needed by the Tajik government, not Russia. All in all, this shows that bilateral cooperation with Russia

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<sup>331</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>332</sup> *Tajikistan: An Uncertain Peace*, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/central-asia/tajikistan/tajikistan-uncertain-peace>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>333</sup> L. Manger *et al.*, *Assessment of Development results: Republic of Tajikistan*, <https://www.oecd.org/countries/tajikistan/46820426.pdf>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>334</sup> R. Kłaczyński, E. Sadowska, *Postradzieckie państwa ...*, op.cit., s. 232.

<sup>335</sup> Ibidem, s. 233.

was crucial for the Tajik government in the first place. However, it clearly did not have the same importance for Russia, for whom the stakes were not so great<sup>336</sup>.

Thus, in 2005, thanks to a series of intergovernmental agreements between Tajikistan and Russia, resulting in RAO JES becoming a partner on the Russian side, the construction of the Sangtuda HPP-1 hydroelectric complex began. The total cost of Sangtuda HPP-1, whose installed capacity according to the project is 670 MW, was 720 million US dollars. By mutual agreement, the shares in the share capital are distributed as follows: the Russian side - 75%, the Tajik side - 25%<sup>337</sup>. In 2006, a memorandum of intent was signed between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and Gazprom and a representative office of Zarubezhneftegaz was registered in Tajikistan. The latter was granted two licences for geological exploration (in the first stage - exploration) in two prospective areas - Rengan and Sargazon. Both areas, on the basis of the complex of geological surveys, geophysical and geological-construction works previously carried out, are considered territories where oil and gas deposits of up to 40 million tonnes of fuel equivalent may be discovered<sup>338</sup>. In modern realities, Tajikistan and Russia are developing cooperation in the field of energy. Thus, in 2019, at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation, Russia and Tajikistan agreed on cooperation between Gazprom EP International and the state-owned companies OJSC Naftu Gas and OJSC Sugdnaftugaz (Tajikistan) to accelerate the approval process of the investment project for geological exploration of the subsoil in areas promising for oil and gas Tajikistan<sup>339</sup>. However, it should be remembered that Russian investments in the region operate on a positive and negative reinforcement basis. It was no different with Tajikistan's hydropower investments either. The final agreement on the construction of the Sangtuda power plant was reached in October 2004, which acted as a positive reinforcement on Tajikistan, but was also intended to put pressure on Uzbekistan, which was opposed to large hydroelectric power plants on Tajikistan's territory and was working intensively with the United States<sup>340</sup>. The government of the Russian Federation and the Russian companies Rosatom and Inter RAO UES own 75 per cent of Sangtuda 1 and have invested around \$680 million in its construction, while the

<sup>336</sup> K. Kluczeńska, *Transformation of Tajikistan's Foreign Policy Towards Russia*, <https://crossroads-ca.org/wp-content/uploads/Kluczeńska-TJ-RU.pdf>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>337</sup> Б. Х. Алимов, К. Х. Рахимов, К. И. Скулков, *Энергетическое сотрудничество России со странами Центральной Азии (на примере Таджикистана и Узбекистана)*, <https://e-cis.info/upload/iblock/f1a/vgndx5sljd682nhpuj7erghzn12udn.pdf?ysclid=ly1dy5xayx484037255>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>338</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>339</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>340</sup> W. Górecki, *Coraz dalej od Moskwy. Rosja wobec Azji Centralnej*, Warszawa 2014, s. 46 – 47.

government of Tajikistan has invested around \$120 million<sup>341</sup>. However, while proceeding with the Sangtuda power plant project, Moscow broke an agreement in 2007 to build the Rogun hydroelectric plant<sup>342</sup> which was an example of negative, "punishing" reinforcement.

### Energy cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia between 2019-2023

Tajikistan, a country located in the heart of Central Asia, has vast water resources that could, in theory, make it the region's energy leader. However, the reality of the modern energy sector in Tajikistan is much more complicated and problematic. Tajikistan faces a number of challenges in 2019-2023, stemming both from its internal political and economic situation and its dependence on international cooperation, including the one with Russia. Vyacheslav Kulagin, head of the Department of Research of the World and Russian Energy Complex, Institute of Energy Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, in 2019 stated the following "[...] Only Russia can help Tajikistan to use its hydropower potential, and this is strategically important for the Russian Federation. One of the main threats today is the threat from Afghanistan; instability could spread to neighbouring Tajikistan [...]"<sup>343</sup>.

During the 10th anniversary of operation of the Sungtuda hydropower plant in 2019, when asked about new investments in the country, Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan Igor Lyakin-Frolov replied: "[...] Speaking about new investment projects in this area, we can confidently say: Russia does not exclude this possibility, although of course the experience of the Russian-Tajik joint venture - Sangtuda HPP-1[...] will be taken into account."<sup>344</sup>. The experience mentioned by the ambassador is that for 2019 Barki Tojik (Tajikistan's state-owned energy holding company) owed Sangtuda HPP-1 almost \$137 million<sup>345</sup>. The plant's share capital is divided between Russia (75% minus 1 share) and Tajikistan (25% plus 1 share). The only consumer of electricity from the Sangtuda HPP-1 power plant is the Barki Tojik State Energy Holding, which distributes and exports it. In October 2023, during the Russian Energy Week in Moscow, representatives of the Russian and Tajik governments discussed bilateral cooperation

<sup>341</sup> C. Oliphant, *Russia's role and interests in Central Asia*, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/172941/russias-role-and-interests-in-central-asia.pdf>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>342</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>343</sup> Е. Слюсаренко, *Эксперт объяснил важность новых энергетических проектов России и Таджикистана для безопасности*, <https://www.pnp.ru/in-world/ekspert-obyasnil-vazhnost-novykh-energeticheskikh-proektov-rossii-i-tadzhikistana-dlya-bezopasnosti.html>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>344</sup> К юбилею Сангтудинской ГЭС-1. Посол России в Таджикистане рассказал, как все начиналось, <https://asiaplustj.info/news/tajikistan/economic/20190731/k-yubileyu-sangtudinskoi-ges-1-posol-rossii-v-tadzhikistane-rasskazal-kak-vse-nachinalos?ysclid=ly1fo9xnxz995614347>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>345</sup> Ibidem.

in the energy sector, in particular on securing bilateral commitments for the reliable operation of the Sangtuda 1 power plant. The debt of Tajikistan's Barki Tojik Energy Holding to Sangtuda HPP-1 for the supply of electricity has increased and, as of 30 June 2023, amounted to approximately \$245 million<sup>346</sup>.

Tajikistan imports petroleum products mainly from Russia and Kazakhstan. More than 90% of the total import of petroleum products in 2019-2020<sup>347</sup>. Almost all LPG is imported. In 2020, Tajikistan consumed 420,759,271 kg of LPG, of which 380,143,604 kg from Kazakhstan, 28,478,153 kg from Uzbekistan and 11,957,514 kg from domestic production. Diesel and petrol are mainly imported from Russia, with small additional quantities from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan<sup>348</sup>. The majority of petroleum products arrive by road. As almost 100% of petroleum products are imported, the government does not provide any subsidies. Russia does not impose an export tax on Tajikistan provided the total volume is less than 830,000 tonnes<sup>349</sup>. Tajikistan's oil sector is small, so only a few companies hold upstream licences. Although there are two refineries, of which only one is currently operating, the economic justification for a domestic refinery remains unclear, as these refineries are not able to operate at full capacity throughout the year. To meet its fuel needs, Tajikistan is almost entirely dependent on imports, with the vast majority of total imports supplied by refineries in Russia and Kazakhstan. In 2023, the Russian Federation was recognised by Tajikistan as the main supplier of petroleum products to the country. According to the Customs Service, in the first half of 2023, imports from Russia accounted for more than 85% of the country's total imports of these products. In the first half of 2023, Tajikistan imported more than 451,000 tonnes of petroleum products from Russia, an increase of almost 100,000 tonnes compared to the same period in 2022<sup>350</sup>.

Furthermore, energy supplies from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia to Tajikistan are no longer regulated systematically as they used to be but are subject to negotiations between the leaders of the respective countries. In contrast, the supply of natural gas from Uzbekistan to

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<sup>346</sup> *Tajikistan, Russia discuss partnership in fuel and energy complex, including problems of Sangtuda 1 HPP*, <https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/95517/>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>347</sup> *Tajikistan 2022. Energy Sector Review*, <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/ab8f5f01-4b54-4636-b2e8-7818e2ed55a8/Tajikistan2022.pdf>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>348</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>350</sup> *В Таджикистане назвали Россию главным поставщиком нефтепродуктов в страну*, <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/18908169>, (25.06.2024).

Tajikistan plays a major role in the winter energy supply of these two countries, as their thermal power plants rely mainly on natural gas and to a lesser extent on coal and fuel oil<sup>351</sup>.

In September 2023, Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Daler Juma, announced ambitious plans for the future of the country's energy sector. As well as significantly increasing the production of green hydrogen, the plans include achieving that, by 2040, 10% of Tajikistan's energy will come from other renewable sources such as wind and solar. Tajikistan's current energy system, which relies almost entirely on hydroelectric power plants, is outdated and unstable, which has caused energy shortages and interruptions for years<sup>352</sup>. With China mainly focusing on investments in Tajikistan's hydropower sector, the European Union is also trying to gain influence in Central Asia, in this case by investing in renewable energy sources in Tajikistan. Russia itself, in May 2024, expressed its willingness to invest in the construction of wind power plants of up to 1 gigawatt over the next 10 years. A representative of Novawind, which is a subsidiary of RosAtom, Dimitri Rodionov expressed the hope of establishing a dialogue with the Tajik energy ministry, which could result in cooperation<sup>353</sup>.

### Summary

W Energy security is a national priority for Tajikistan. Although the country has abundant water resources, its hydroelectricity is seasonal, with supply shortages often occurring during the winter months. Hence, energy policy focuses on ensuring uninterrupted access to energy for all users, improving regional cooperation and energy efficiency (EE), as well as diversifying energy sources. Improving energy efficiency and diversifying supply from renewable sources (solar and wind) is envisaged in the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030<sup>354</sup>.

Russia, as heir to the Soviet Union, has had a significant impact on Tajikistan's energy sector since it was providing vital technological and financial support. This cooperation was crucial for the survival and stabilisation of Tajikistan, which was struggling with the challenges of civil war and difficult economic conditions. However, the situation has changed significantly in

<sup>351</sup> V. Paramonov, A. Stokov, *Structural Interdependence of Russia & Central Asia in the Oil and Gas Sector*, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/92593/07\\_June.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/92593/07_June.pdf), (25.06.2024).

<sup>352</sup> N. Castillo, *Tajikistan's Efforts to Build Out its Energy System Reflects Geopolitical Competition*, <https://www.caspianpolicy.org/research/energy/tajikistans-efforts-to-build-out-its-energy-system-reflects-geopolitical-competition>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>353</sup> *Россия знает, как победить энерголимит в Таджикистане*, <https://dzen.ru/a/Zkbh5f3bwX6g3DMq>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>354</sup> *Tajikistan – European Union Conference: Just Energy Transition, Energy Efficiency, Renewables in Focus*, <https://secca.eu/tajikistan-eu-conference-just-energy-transition-in-focus/>, (25.06.2024).



2019-2023. New players such as China and the European Union have emerged in Tajikistan's energy arena, significantly affecting the country's energy strategy. China, with its growing influence in Central Asia, began to invest in Tajikistan's hydropower sector, offering cutting-edge technology and financing. Chinese investments have contributed to the development of energy infrastructure and increased hydropower production.

The European Union, in turn, has shown interest in investing in green energy in Tajikistan. The EU's priorities to combat climate change and promote renewable energy sources have coincided with Tajikistan's ambitions to diversify its energy sources. EU interest in Tajikistan's green energy and sustainable development dates back to 2021, when EU invested €12m in funds for green energy projects<sup>355</sup>. Brussels also seems to see investment in Tajikistan's energy sector as a way of counterbalancing a much stronger adversary: Russia. Russia, the traditional regional hegemon in Central Asia, controls Tajikistan's second-largest hydropower plant, Sangtuda-2 and Tajikistan imports petroleum from Moscow. EU officials are much more explicit about their investments in Tajikistan as moves that are supposed to limit Moscow's influence<sup>356</sup>.

However, the changing geopolitical realities in the region required Tajikistan to adopt a cautious political strategy. Tajikistan's lack of an official position on Russia's war in Ukraine is a prime example. Tajikistan abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine on 2 March 2022. Such strategic silence, shared by other Central Asian states consists of avoiding punishment from Russia for not siding with it, as well as avoiding isolation by the West for siding with Russia. The strategy seemed to somehow worked since the International Conference 'Energy Efficiency in Tajikistan: prospects and challenges' was held in October 2023 and it was a part of European Union project<sup>357</sup>.

At a time when the energy systems of all Central Asian republics are deteriorating and new social instabilities are emerging, Russia's offer of cooperation is too appealing and timely for Central Asian leaders to refuse. Most non-Russian energy investments focus on green energy, which does not address the urgent energy deficits and related issues in the region. The risks of increased political and economic dependence on Russia are outweighed by the potential dangers of new social upheavals, such as the one in Kazakhstan in 2022. Consequently, Russia is

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<sup>355</sup> N. Castillo, *Tajikistan's Efforts to Build Out its Energy System Reflects Geopolitical Competition*, <https://www.caspianpolicy.org/research/energy/tajikistans-efforts-to-build-out-its-energy-system-reflects-geopolitical-competition>, (25.06.2024).

<sup>356</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>357</sup> *Tajikistan – European Union Conference: Just Energy Transition, Energy Efficiency, Renewables in Focus*, <https://secca.eu/tajikistan-eu-conference-just-energy-transition-in-focus/>, (25.06.2024).

expanding its influence in the region, capitalizing on the cheap fossil fuels that Central Asian countries desperately need.<sup>358</sup>.

### Streszczenie:

Poniższy artykuł analizuje ewoluującą sytuację energetyczną Tadżykistanu od czasów postsowieckich do chwili obecnej, koncentrując się na pytaniu badawczym: Jak zmieniła się zależność energetyczna Tadżykistanu od Rosji w kontekście nowej dynamiki geopolitycznej i pojawienia się innych międzynarodowych graczy? Artykuł podkreśla początkową dużą zależność Tadżykistanu od rosyjskiego wsparcia energetycznego i infrastruktury, zestawioną z niedawnym wejściem Chin i Unii Europejskiej jako kluczowych inwestorów w inicjatywy związane z zieloną energią. Pomimo tych nowych wpływów, Rosja nadal utrzymuje swoją dominację w regionie poprzez dokonywanie inwestycji w sektorach energetycznych lub wyrażanie chęci takowego działania. Wyniki badania sugerują, że chociaż partnerstwa energetyczne Tadżykistanu uległy dywersyfikacji, kraj ten pozostaje pod znacznym wpływem Rosji ze względu na bezpośrednie potrzeby energetyczne i presję geopolityczną. Ta utrzymująca się zależność podkreśla złożoność pozycji Tadżykistanu w szerszym kontekście energetycznym Azji Środkowej.

### Słowa kluczowe:

Wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, zakupy uzbrojenia, wojska lądowe

### Key words:

Tajikistan, energy sector, Russia, energy dependence, hydroenergy

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<sup>358</sup> T. Mitrova, *Russia's Expanding Energy Ties in Central Asia*, <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/russias-expanding-energy-ties-in-central-asia/>, (25.06.2024)

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## **Ukrainization of Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war<sup>359</sup>**

### **Introduction**

The Russian-Ukrainian war, which for the Ukrainian nation is in many respects a conflict of attrition, paradoxically also has beneficial effects: it helps strengthen the identity and sense of national distinctiveness among the Ukrainians themselves, reinforces their belief in the value of having their own state, and promotes the “Ukrainian cause” in Europe. Ukraine is thus emerging from the long (both geographically and historically) shadow of Russia, not only thanks to the committed and effective defense of the Ukrainian army against the Russian aggression but also as a result of the unprecedented media activity of the Ukrainian president, seeking Western support for Kyiv. The essence of the “Ukrainian issue”, formerly recognized outside Central and Eastern Europe mostly by a small group of experts and geopoliticians, after 24 February 2022 became tangible to almost everyone. The activities of numerous Ukrainian creative communities throughout Europe cannot be overestimated. The phenomenon outlined above carries multiple consequences and challenges that affect all its participants to varying degrees. Primarily, it has influenced the Ukrainians, who are rediscovering themselves and expressing their will for independence. It has forced them to make clear identity declarations, not only in national terms. It encourages reflection on one’s own Europeanness and the degree of acceptance of the currents of thought characteristic of contemporary Europe. This is well illustrated in the post-colonial and feminist work by Vira Ageeva, published in Ukraine literally

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on the eve of the outbreak of the war: *In the Shadow of the Empire. Behind the scenes of the Ukrainian-Russian cultural war* (Ukrainian edition 2021<sup>360</sup>, Polish edition 2023<sup>361</sup>), which – despite the difficulties of promotion in the face of war and disorganization of the publishing market – is very popular in the country, clearly filling the gap in research on the evolution of the cultural subordination of Kyiv to Moscow.

Perceiving the Ukrainian issue as part of the European issue is an equally serious challenge for Western European societies geographically distant from the theater of war. The further west you go, the elites in countries such as France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Belgium had traditionally shown a weakness for Russian culture, which often influenced their perception of Russia and its actions, but above all it had obscured the experience of the nations dominated by Moscow. Today's hybrid confrontation between the West and Moscow has resulted in actions aimed at blocking Russian political influence in European countries, limiting the expansion of the Kremlin's information policy as well as restricting the mobility of Russian citizens within the territory of the European Union and boycotting Russian culture. However, such reactions carry high costs and may prove ineffective or, in the case of cultural boycott, even counter-productive. Moreover, they conflict with the values that Europe represents: openness, freedom of speech and cultural expression, and individual responsibility<sup>362</sup>. A more effective tool seems to be the redefinition of the West's current attitude towards Eastern Europe as a region subordinated to Russia and secondary to the importance and needs of Moscow.

### Methodology

The study on the phenomenon of Ukrainization was conducted using several complementary research methods, which enabled a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon from various perspectives. The basic method was desk research analysis, which involved collecting and studying existing written sources, such as books, scientific articles, reports, and press publications. Particular attention was paid to the work of researchers dealing with Ukrainization, including political, cultural, and historical analyses. This served as the basis for identification of key trends and changes in how Ukrainization is understood in the context of the current geopolitical situation. In addition, Ukrainian writers and poets were interviewed to

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<sup>360</sup> В. Агеєва, *За лапшунками імперії*, Київ 2021.

<sup>361</sup> W. Ahejewa, *W cieniu imperium. Kulisy ukraińsko-rosyjskiej wojny kulturowej*, Kraków 2023.

<sup>362</sup> P. Zerka, *The European sentiment compass 2023. Culture clash: Russia, Ukraine, and the fight for the European public*, [https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Culture-clash-Russia-Ukraine-and-the-fight-for-the-European-public\\_sc.pdf](https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Culture-clash-Russia-Ukraine-and-the-fight-for-the-European-public_sc.pdf) (23.05.2024).

obtain direct information and perspectives on Ukrainization from the point of view of people involved in the development of Ukrainian culture. These interviews aimed to explore the personal experiences, observations, and interpretations of the interviewees, which allowed a better understanding of what impact the Ukrainization process has had on literature and culture. Another important element of the research methodology was library and archival research, while the interviews were supplemented with participant observations conducted in Poland and France during cultural, literary, and political events related to Ukraine. Taking part in events such as literary festivals, author meetings, and public debates allowed the authors to collect direct observations on the dynamics of Ukrainization in practice and establish contacts with key actors in the cultural and political scene of Ukraine.

In addition, an analysis of the Ukrainian, Polish, and French publishing markets was carried out, which included a review and analysis of literary and scientific publications regarding Ukrainization. Publishing trends, popularity of individual titles, and reader profiles were examined. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of publications promoting Ukrainian culture in order to assess how the Ukrainization process affects the book market. The use of the above research methods allowed a comprehensive and multi-aspect understanding of the phenomenon of Ukrainization both in the cultural and political context. By integrating different research approaches, it was possible to obtain deeper and more nuanced conclusions regarding this dynamic process.

### **Ukrainization as an element of war-related narrative: the cultural aspect**

In the context of a full-scale war, the term “Ukrainization” took on a new political meaning. Currently, it refers to the rebirth of Ukrainian culture redefining itself after years of Russian influence and to certain political attitudes and defense strategies. Yuri Andrukhovych uses the term “Ukrainization” in the context of changes in security policy. He mentions “Nordic Ukrainization”, a situation in which Ukraine's values, practices, and aspirations have become a model for other countries, especially in international relations and defense. After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the term gained a new meaning, symbolizing the determination to defend independence and sovereignty. For over a decade and a half, Ukraine has pursued membership in NATO and the European Union, aspiring to integrate with the West and strengthen its security. Although these efforts have not yet resulted in full membership, Ukraine has become a symbol of resistance to Russian aggression. Unlike Ukraine, Finland and Sweden have pursued a policy of neutrality for a long time, trying not to provoke Russia.

“Finlandization” was a term coined to describe Finland’s policy of remaining neutral towards Russia. However, Russia’s growing aggression, especially after 2022, has prompted these countries to change their approach and apply for NATO membership. The Ukrainization of Finland and Sweden therefore means adopting Ukraine’s attitude and strategy of actively seeking cooperation with NATO, increasing defense spending, and preparing for potential defense against Russian imperialism. Ukraine’s efforts to integrate with NATO and the EU as well as its resistance to Russian aggression have become a model for other countries fearing Russian expansionism.

The term “Ukrainization” is also used in another context: it has become a tool of Russian and pro-Russian propaganda, used to incite fear and ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe. The Russian propaganda presents Ukrainization as an existential threat to Ukraine’s neighbors, intended to intimidate the inhabitants of these countries. In Poland, Hungary, and Romania, there are speculations about scenarios of the unification of Ukraine with Poland, the secession of Hungarian territories in Romania, or the recovery of Transcarpathia by Hungary. Additionally, in Poland, narratives have emerged about the threat resulting from Ukrainian immigration, which allegedly led to the ethnic and cultural breakdown of the country and caused negative social and economic consequences<sup>363</sup>. Thus in the face of these complex and multidimensional interpretations, “Ukrainization” has become a term describing both Ukraine’s aspirations to integrate with the West and defend its sovereignty, as well as a propaganda tool aimed at destabilizing the region. In this text, however, “Ukrainization” will be limited to the cultural and linguistic meaning that originally dominated the discourse.

The following text is an attempt to analyze the phenomenon of “Ukrainization” of Ukraine, carried out both by the inhabitants of the country fighting the aggression of Russian troops, and by Western elites and societies, especially the French ones. This phenomenon is shown through changes observed in language policy, intellectual discussions, and the media sphere, but also in the field of cultural phenomena, especially literary ones. The term itself refers to a policy and process aimed at promoting Ukrainian culture, language, and identity in various aspects of public life. Historically, it has been implemented in a variety of contexts and periods, each with specific goals and impacts. In the early Soviet period, in the 1920s. Ukrainization was part of a broader “indigenization” policy intended to appease non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet

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<sup>363</sup> Ukraine Monitor, “Ukrainization” in pro-Russian propaganda in Romania, Poland, Serbia and Hungary, [https://frontstory.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ukrainization\\_Report.pdf](https://frontstory.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ukrainization_Report.pdf) (12.06.2024).



Union by encouraging the use of native languages and cultural practices with a view to integrating non-Russian ethnic groups into the Soviet system. In Ukraine, this has led to a significant increase in the number of Ukrainian-language schools, publications, and public institutions<sup>364</sup>.

After Ukraine gained independence in 1991, the government returned to the policy of Ukrainization to strengthen the country's national identity and limit Russian influence. This phase of Ukrainization included legislative changes that gave the Ukrainian language priority in education, media, and public administration. The aim was to strengthen the presence of Ukrainian culture and ensure the importance of the Ukrainian language in everyday life. These efforts were part of a broader strategy to distance the newly independent state from its Soviet past and foster a distinct Ukrainian identity in the face of continuous regional and geopolitical challenges. Ukrainization has so far been a cultural and political process aimed at supporting a separate Ukrainian identity and has also reflected Ukraine's struggle to assert its national identity and cultural autonomy amid external influences and internal dynamics. However, as Oksana Zabuzhko claims, "in thirty years of independence, Ukrainians have not yet fully rebuilt knowledge about their own cultural heritage"<sup>365</sup>. Nowadays, after the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine, Ukrainization has expanded the field of action: on the one hand, it plays the same role as before, participating in the process of building Ukraine's identity and confirming its sovereignty also outside the country's borders, while on the other, it now takes part also in the process of building awareness about Ukraine and its statehood and culture beyond the borders of Ukraine and even Eastern Europe.

Since 1991, the issue of the Ukrainian language has been important in the country's public discourse, mainly because of its Soviet past. During 26 years of independence, Ukraine has not developed a uniform solution to the problem of this heritage, which constitutes a key challenge to the country's internal policy. After the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, the language problem in Ukraine has intensified. In response, Ukraine has developed strategies to promote the use of the Ukrainian language, especially among children and young people. The process of Ukrainization of the older generation has so far been ineffective and unnecessary, so it was important for the older generation to understand the importance of the Ukrainian language for the existence of the state and support its use and learning in families. The Internet,

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<sup>364</sup> See: H. Carrère-d'Enacusse, *Bolszewicy i narody czyli Wielkie Urągowisko 1917-1930*, Warszawa 1992, p. 142-160.

<sup>365</sup> O. Zabuzhko, *Najdłuższa podróż*, Warszawa 2023, p. 45.

books, radio, and television played an important, perhaps even a crucial role in the popularization of the Ukrainian language. The process of Ukrainianization of the Internet was slow, due to the competition from Russian and English content. Publishing books in Ukrainian was important as well, but their high price limited interest. Prior to the start of the full-scale war, the statistical data showed that changes were going in the right direction, but the Russian language still dominated the national media. It was known that introducing the Ukrainian language into all areas of life – everyday (interpersonal communication), commercial (media and advertising market), formal and official (functioning of the state, judiciary, education), and symbolic/identity – is a difficult, long-term process and requires active involvement from both state and society<sup>366</sup>. Despite the authorities' efforts to promote the Ukrainian language, there were no consistent legal solutions. On the one hand, the Ukrainian-speaking elite tried to promote Ukrainian culture; on the other, the Russian-speaking part of society often perceived this as their marginalization. The language policy aimed at weakening the position of the Russian language<sup>367</sup> had not yielded the expected results by the outbreak of the full-scale war.

Ultimately, the language situation in Ukraine has been very complicated, even though it remains one of the key elements in shaping national identity and state policy. As the threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity increased, society showed a strong attachment to the state established in 1991. Patriotism, previously often associated with the Ukrainian language, began to open up to Russian-language content. The actions and changes in social attitudes indicated a departure from the old, linguistically colored divisions and the growing unity of Ukrainian society in the face of external threats. Conflicts and common challenges have contributed to strengthening the national identity, regardless of the language used by citizens<sup>368</sup>.

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<sup>366</sup> O. Voytyuk, *Problem języka ukraińskiego na Ukrainie na tle aneksji Krymu i wojny w Donbasie*, "Sprawy Narodowościowe", 2019, № 51.

<sup>367</sup> The 1996 Constitution of Ukraine recognizes the Ukrainian language as the state language while protecting the Russian language and other minority languages. Earlier laws, including the one from 1989, guaranteed bilingualism, and a 2012 law introduced official bilingualism in some regions. However, this law was repealed after Yanukovich was overthrown, and in 2018 the Constitutional Court invalidated the 2012 law, which enabled work on a new project. In 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a law on ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language, which was signed by President Petro Poroshenko. This law does not concern the general language policy of the state but regulates the role of the Ukrainian language as the official language. The main goal is to eliminate the Russian language from various spheres of public life, especially education and the media, and to develop, standardize, and modernize the Ukrainian language.

<sup>368</sup> M. Studenna-Skrucka, *Rosyjskojęzyczny patriotyzm ukraiński o zmianie funkcji języka rosyjskiego na Ukrainie pod wpływem Euromajdanu i wojny w Donbasie*, „Kultura i społeczeństwo”, *Ukraina przed przełomem 2014 roku i po*, № 2.

Ukraine, as a post-colonial state, has been using language to overcome the effects of colonialism and regain cultural and political sovereignty. The national language has been crucial for the security of the Ukrainian state, which is consistent with the securitization theory<sup>369</sup>. This started to be discussed especially after the outbreak of the conflict in Donbas between pro-Russian separatists from eastern Ukraine and the Russian Federation supporting them, and forces loyal to the legal authorities of Ukraine. The then accelerated processes of linguistic decolonization, as Zabuzhko rightly notes, “occur based on *emotio* rather than *ratio*”<sup>370</sup>, and are sometimes violent and sometimes not well thought out, as exemplified by the changes of street names. The full-scale conflict in Ukraine has significantly influenced Ukrainians’ perception of their language. Taras Prokhasko even believes that “this war is fought primarily by narrative[s]”<sup>371</sup>. After all, one of Putin’s reasons for declaring war was to defend the Russian-speaking population living in Ukraine. In response to Russian aggression, Ukrainian writers began to call for the use of the Ukrainian language only. Oleksandr Irvanets wrote: “Do something about it, please! Switch to Ukrainian! You all passively know it! (...) Finally, become Ukrainians”<sup>372</sup>. There has been a visible revival of the Ukrainian language: an unprecedented scale of spontaneous Ukrainization has been recorded in the south-east of the country, where the use of Russian has significantly decreased. The change in everyday language use is described as a “drastic transition” from Russian to Ukrainian. Ethnographic research has shown that the transition to Ukrainian is driven by patriotism and the desire to consolidate the nation. The narrative that “real Ukrainians speak Ukrainian” became the main motivation for changing the language, and the Ukrainian language became a symbolic sign of national identification, civic attitude, and a means of fighting against the invaders<sup>373</sup>. The defense of the homeland against the aggressor is carried out not only by using weapons but also by the power of words. The Ukrainian armed forces officially communicate only in Ukrainian, which has become a tool for identity verification. Russian-speaking Ukrainians are increasingly switching to Ukrainian, which is seen as a chance to permanently break cultural ties with Russia. As research shows,

<sup>369</sup> N. Gergało-Dąbek, *Ukrainian language as a symbol of resistance against the invasion of the Russian federation*, „Wiedza obronna”, 2023, Vol. 285, № 4.

<sup>370</sup> O. Zabuzhko, *Najdłuższa droga*, p. 21.

<sup>371</sup> T. Prochaśko, *Wojna zaczyna się prywatnie* [in:] *Piszq, więc żyj: pierwsze sto dni wojny*, selection and afterword B. Zadura, Kołobrzeg 2022, p. 38.

<sup>372</sup> O. Irwaneć, *Moja niewygodna mowa* [in:] *Piszq, więc żyj...*, op.cit., p. 61.

<sup>373</sup> N. Kudriavtseva, *Motivations for Embracing the Ukrainian Language in Wartime Ukraine*, „Ukrainian Analytical Digest”, 2023, № 1, p. 12-15.

social media and literature have been playing an important role in the process of Ukrainization during the war.

Daniel Racek and others point out that before the war there was already a tendency to switch from Russian to Ukrainian, which accelerated rapidly with Russian aggression. The choice of language both used on social media and in literature read by Ukrainians reflects identity and political attitude, showing a conscious shift from Russian to Ukrainian as an expression of national identity and opposition to the invasion<sup>374</sup>. Ukrainian writers and poets also emphasize that the full-scale war paradoxically led to the development of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian-language literature. In the face of war, literature became both a tool for documenting reality and a form of psychotherapy for many authors. Since the beginning of the invasion, many texts have appeared that describe experiences related to fighting, seeking refuge, and volunteering. Writing about these traumatic events allows many writers to engage in a form of psychotherapy, helping them process their own emotions and experiences.

Ksena Tsyhanchuk, an Ukrainian writer, notes: “We now have more literature about the war (both poetry and prose). It’s understandable, I think. Many Ukrainian writers went to war. So the war has a huge influence on Ukrainian literature”<sup>375</sup>. Moreover, readers’ interest in classic Ukrainian literature and authors previously undeservedly forgotten has increased. Publishing houses focus on this trend, bringing back into circulation the works of old masters. The war has also brought the emergence of many new writers. Tsyhanchuk emphasizes: “At the same time, many new writers have appeared during the war, which is good. It is a very difficult time for Ukrainian literature. But we are fighting and we have our Victory”. New authors, especially those who went to the frontlines or died, have gained special importance. Their words and experiences have become a testimony to heroism and suffering. Before the full-scale invasion, many Ukrainians read Russian books; now people want to read Ukrainian books and meet Ukrainian authors. This trend is visible not only in reading preferences but also in the actions of publishing houses, which refrain from publishing Russian authors, and of libraries, which in Ukraine play an important role in promoting Ukrainian literature and language by organizing book presentations, meetings with authors, and language courses for Russian-speaking Ukrainians. “People need these events now. Many people have started communicating in

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<sup>374</sup> D. Racek, B.I. Davidson, P.W. Thurner, G. Kauermann, *The Russian war in Ukraine increased Ukrainian language use on social media*, „Communications Psychology” 2024, № 2(1), January.

<sup>375</sup> Quotes from Tsyhanchuk come from an interview conducted by the authors. The authors of the text would also like to thank the Ukrainian poets Natalia Belczenko and Marianna Kiyanovska for the conversation and observations.

Ukrainian”, Tsyhanchuk emphasizes. Despite the difficulties caused by the war, Ukrainian literature is developing dynamically. New books are printed and new publishing houses appear on the market. Although some publishing houses did not survive the war, the growing number of new publications proves the vitality and adaptability of Ukrainian literature.

Most citizens today prefer the Ukrainian language and consider language rights to be crucial to their dignity. The process of de-Russification and decolonization has accelerated, and many Ukrainian citizens stopped using Russian in everyday life. The Ukrainian language is now perceived as an important element of national security and crucial in the fight for national identity. Professor Pavlo Hrycenko noted that the Ukrainian language has become a powerful factor uniting all Ukrainians, even if not everyone speaks it at home. Ukrainian citizens no longer separate the concept of the Ukrainian language from Ukraine itself, which has resulted in a visible transformation of the language code throughout the country<sup>376</sup>. Olena Zelenskaya noted that the Ukrainian language resonates in the world as a language of resistance and perseverance, unlike Russian, which is associated with aggression and brutality. Ukrainian is a symbol of humanity, culture, and opposition to modern barbarism<sup>377</sup>. Ukrainians believe that after the end of the war, after their “inevitable victory, Ukrainization should receive a new impetus. Because being ‘Russian’ will become (permanently) uncomfortable, especially abroad, where all Russian speakers are automatically taken for Russians, but also in Ukraine”<sup>378</sup>.

Despite all difficulties, the Ukrainian language and the literature promoting it remain an important tool in the fight for national identity and documenting the reality of war both in Ukraine and abroad. They are beginning to be discussed and thus gaining recognition in Europe and globally. For example in Poland, there had already been a marked interest in the latest Ukrainian literature, especially poetry, regularly translated and published; however, the conflict in Donbas and then the full-scale war significantly increased in the popularity of the works of Ukrainian-language authors. Anthologies of their works and individual books have mushroomed on Polish book market, and meetings with authors are organized regularly, while significant funds are assigned for promoting Ukrainian culture in general. Particularly notable is the popularity of Serhiy Zhadan and Oksana Zabuzhko, whose books are re-printed and widely available on the Polish market. Another interesting phenomenon is the emergence of

<sup>376</sup> N. Gergało-Dąbek, *Ukrainian language as a symbol...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>377</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>378</sup> O. Irwaneć, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

new authors, such as Tamara Duda and Volodymyr Rafiejenko, whose novels discuss the issue of the war in Donbas. Publishers try to provide readers with both Ukrainian literature classics, and contemporary works. Examples include Serhiy Zhadan's *War in the City*<sup>379</sup>, showing the mood of citizens after Russia's aggression, presenting their everyday life in the face of danger, and Eugenia Kuznetsova's *The Ladder*<sup>380</sup>. *Mom, Do you Remember?* by Kateryna Babkina<sup>381</sup> and already cited *The Longest Journey* (Pol. *Najdłuższa droga*) by Oksana Zabuzhko, describe emigration and the search for identity in the face of war. *Dictionary of War* by Ostap Slyvynsky<sup>382</sup> is a collection of conversations with people affected by the conflict, showing changes in language and society during the war. Also, Aneta Kamińska translated the war poems of Maksym Kryvtsov<sup>383</sup>, who was killed on the front line at the beginning of the year. Translations of such works help the international community better understand the Ukrainian military and literary reality.

In the face of Russian aggression, Ukraine focused on defending its sovereignty on various levels, including the field of culture. This is a key element of the fight for independence and preserving national identity. For Ukrainians, the fight against Russian cultural influence is one of many fronts in this war, so they are trying to prove that the presence of Russian discourse threatens their national security. Hence, Ukrainians see the boycott of cultural events involving Russians as an effective tool in this fight.

The relevance of Ukrainian issues is also of key importance for Poland. Not only because after 24 February 2022, after eight decades of absence, the Ukrainian community is the largest, ethnically separate component, forcing both sides to re-arrange their relations and rethink their common past. Also independent Ukraine has been perceived by almost all political forces for three decades as a guarantor of Polish security in the east. Ukraine, consumed by the conflict with Russia, but at the same time strengthened by it in its own will to survive, is becoming a much more expressive partner than before and more willing to secure its own interests: political, economic as well as cultural.

Undoubtedly, from the point of view of Polish political and intellectual elites, the success of the Ukrainian state project brings, apart from political security, also numerous challenges,

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<sup>379</sup> S. Żadan, *W mieście wojna*, Wołowiec 2024.

<sup>380</sup> E. Kuzniecowa, *Drabina*, Kraków 2024.

<sup>381</sup> K. Babkina, *A pamiętasz, mamo?*, Wrocław 2023.

<sup>382</sup> O. Sływynski, *Słownik wojny*, Sejny 2023.

<sup>383</sup> M. Krywcow, *Talk-show Wojna*, Sejny 2024.

referring to the dilemmas of Polish visions of Central and Eastern Europe. The process of redefining the Polish view of the international and regional environment, so far focused almost exclusively on the East-West axis, burdened with the trauma of dependence on Russia and Germany, is undoubtedly accelerating in the face of the intensification of Polish-Ukrainian relations. The exhaustion of the existing Polish geocultural narratives was pointed out by Przemysław Czapliński (even before the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine): “We are in the phase of moving out of the current map, and the movement is taking place in an unknown direction and for an unknown purpose. In other words, we live elsewhere not because our country is in a different hemisphere, but because the dissolution of the narratives that anchor us in larger wholes is progressing faster than the creation of connections”<sup>384</sup>.

The rapid update and intensification of Polish-Ukrainian relations indicate the outline of a possible new map, including a redefinition of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe, previously burdened with a borderland identity. Przemysław Czapliński points this out again, anticipating subsequent changes: “The reorientation of the imagination from the East-West axis to the North-South axis is not a simple adaptive phenomenon. It is a complex process in which the imagination moves from a history dominated by thinking about freedom to a history focused on thinking about connections”<sup>385</sup>. The quality and coherence of these ties in relations with Ukraine will undoubtedly determine the success of of this paradigm shift.

The processes of “Ukrainization of Ukraine” are noticed not only in Kyiv or in Poland but also among Ukraine’s Western partners. At the same time, they make a surprising contribution to the view of Westernization phenomena that has been developed over the years of postcolonialism. The French anthropologist Maurice Godelier emphasizes in his recently published work *Quand l'Occident s'empare du monde* (When the West takes over the World) that Western societies often make the mistake of equating the phenomenon of modernization with Westernization: “For the West, modernization and Westernization are the same process, but for all other countries Westernization rather means the implementation of Western means to increase one’s power and wealth and better manage the state”<sup>386</sup>.

The current disappointment of the West with the effects of modernization and superficial Westernization taking place in Russia and China even more emphasizes the importance of the

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<sup>384</sup> P. Czapliński, *Poruszona mapa. Wyobrażenia geograficzno-kulturowa polskiej literatury przełomu XX i XXI wieku*, Kraków 2016, p. 6.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>386</sup> M. Godelier, *Quand l'Occident s'empare du monde*, Paris 2023, p. 20.

Ukrainian case. Kyiv represents its fight against Moscow not only as a defense of the right to modernize on its own. It uses arguments close to the Western understanding of the phenomenon of Westernization as “a profound change in the way of thinking and functioning of the entire society”<sup>387</sup>. Referring to the ideological, and not only technical aspect of Westernization is of great importance for the popularity of the Ukrainian struggle in the West. It maintains the impression of the closeness and importance of the struggles taking place in Eastern Europe, while it strengthens and justifies the recently weakening belief in the attractiveness of the Western model of life and the values of liberal democracy that constitute its basis. Hence, the interest in Ukraine and its hasty political, linguistic, and cultural Ukrainization by the West are a variant of its parallel “Europeanization”: the search for similarities intended to strengthen and confirm Kiev’s European aspirations.

The elites and societies of many European countries, observing the conflict in Eastern Europe through the media for the last two years, often for the first time become aware of the territorial extent and geography of Ukraine. They will also learn about the identity expression of Ukrainian society, having daily contact with its representatives: not only with millions of refugees scattered across the continent but also with active advocates of the Ukrainian cause in the West: Ukrainian writers, journalists and political scientists who have been commenting in the Western infosphere on the course of events almost every day of the conflict.

The French case seems to be particularly interesting. The discovery of Ukraine in France has accompanied a broader debate, both political and intellectual, regarding relations with Russia. In this discussion, the parties to the political dispute occupy strongly polarized positions. President Emmanuel Macron has been increasingly outspoken about the need for European countries to replace the US as Ukraine’s main ally, not ruling out military involvement on Kyiv’s side<sup>388</sup>. His main rival, Marine Le Pen, the former leader of the National Rally party with growing public support, takes a much more pro-Russian position. Before the outbreak of the war, she did not hesitate to say that Ukraine “belongs to Russia’s sphere of influence”<sup>389</sup>. It is worth adding, however, that as the conflict progresses and the inflow of information about Russian war crimes continues, the political group with which Marine Le Pen

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<sup>387</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>388</sup> J. Bielecki, *Ewolucja francuskiego prezydenta. Nowy Macron Putinowi nie daruje*, <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art40581511-ewolucja-francuskiego-prezydenta-nowy-macron-putinowi-nie-daruje> (12.06.2024).

<sup>389</sup> *Eadem*, *Le Pen: Ukraina należy do sfery wpływów Rosji*, <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art19168311-le-pen-ukraina-nalezy-do-sfery-wplywow-rosji> (12.06.2024).



is associated is softening its pro-Russian (and far-right) face, seeking wider public support in the country<sup>390</sup>.

While these diametrically opposite positions do not exhaust the spectrum of French attitudes towards Russia, they set the direction of international debates taking place in France, in which the “Ukrainian issue” occupies an important place. Similar dilemmas and lively discussions are present in the French intellectual scene, which is traditionally reluctant to subordinate Paris’s policy to Washington’s and draws heavily on the Russian experience when resolving its development dilemmas. After February 2022 the French intellectual debate has been split between decisive (and emotionally involved) support for Ukraine (Bernard Henri-Lévy<sup>391</sup>) and the search for a solution in returning to the traditional Gaullist policy of double security, i.e. sovereignist distancing from both Washington and Moscow in finding one’s own way (Michel Onfray<sup>392</sup>).

The interest and involvement in resolving the conflict in Ukraine clearly constitute an impulse for the elites of the Fifth Republic to develop a new and stronger place for France in the international arena and to define the directions of development of European integration, in which Paris would like to occupy a central place. These intentions of the French elites encouraged them to increase their knowledge of Ukrainian issues and to accept a stronger Ukrainian and, more broadly, Eastern European voice in the debate taking place within France. A similar line of reasoning is perfectly illustrated by the message of the first issue of the magazine *Kometa* published in France in the fall of 2023, with the significant subtitle *A l’Est, du nouveau* (To the East, anew), focusing in its content on discovering and popularizing the problems of Eastern European societies (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, as well as Poland and Hungary), seen from the perspective of their European aspirations. The authors of the periodical, including Emmanuel Carrère, Cédric Gras, André Markowicz, and Lena Maugeras well as Jarosław Kuisz and Andrei Kurkov, openly declare their goals: “If we put the East in

<sup>390</sup> RP.pl, *Marine Le Pen odcina się od niemieckiego AfD. Powodem wypowiedzi o nazistach*, <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art40420791-marine-le-pen-odcina-sie-od-niemieckiego-afd-powodem-wypowiedzi-o-nazistach> (12.06.2024); J. Bielecki, *Le Pen kochała Putina. Kłopot dla Morawieckiego*, <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art38561721-le-pen-kochala-putina-klopot-dla-morawieckiego> (12.06.2024).

<sup>391</sup> Atlantic Council, *SOS Ukraine: A conversation with Bernard-Henri Lévy*, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/sos-ukraine-a-conversation-with-bernard-henri-levy/> (13.06.2024); C. Young, *Bernard-Henri Lévy and the Heroes of Ukraine*, <https://www.thebulwark.com/p/bernard-henri-levy-and-the-heroes-of-ukraine> (13.06.2024).

<sup>392</sup> M. Onfray, *Penser Poutine*, <https://michelonfray.com/interventions-hebdomadaires/penser-poutine?mode=video> (13.06.2024); See also: M. Onfray, *Vies parallèles. De Gaulle – Mitterrand*, Paris 2020.

the Center, it will no longer be in the East. This is our goal, to change the perspective, to question existing certainties”<sup>393</sup>.

The strengthening of the Ukrainian voice in France is therefore not necessarily similar in its forms to the Ukrainization carried out by the authorities in Kyiv, promoting the Ukrainian language in the face of the previous domination of Russia. The linguistic nuances of Eastern Slavic languages, inflected and using the Cyrillic, are hardly perceived by the users of a Romance language. The phenomenon of Ukrainization of Ukraine as seen from the banks of the Seine has a more cultural and civilizational dimension and is related to the issue of French sensitivity to decolonization processes. Therefore, it is clearly visible primarily in the media space and in the publishing market.

Since the beginning of the full-scale war, the largest television news programs (TF1 Info/LCI, BFM, Franceinfo) have been airing cyclical programs informing about the course of the conflict, familiarizing French viewers with the political and geographical nuances of Ukraine. Such broadcasts are accompanied by long expert debates where the participants include not only French correspondents and opinion-leaders (including Gallagher Fenwick, Ranaud Pila, Didier François, and Yves Thérard<sup>394</sup>) but also Ukrainian commentators present in France, representing literary, cultural and journalist circles as well as political science (Bogdan Obraz<sup>395</sup>, Masha Kondakova<sup>396</sup>, Oksana Melnychuk<sup>397</sup>, and Oksana Mitrofanova<sup>398</sup>).

In a similarly dynamic way, the Ukrainian footprints are spreading on the publishing market<sup>399</sup>. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, bookstore shelves became filled with works relating not only to the conflict between Kyiv and Moscow but also to the history of Ukraine. Among the war novelties in French bookstores, there appeared works as diverse in terms of

<sup>393</sup> L. Mauger, *Preface*, [in:] „Kometa”, 2023, № 1, *Impérialism*, p. 3.

<sup>394</sup> LCI, *Rentrée 2023-2024*, <https://tflpro.com/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-09/DP%20rentr%C3%A9e%20info%20LCI%202023%20-%202024.pdf> (13.06.2024).

<sup>395</sup> LCI, *LCI Midi du 9 août*, <https://www.tflinfo.fr/replay-lci/video-lci-midi-du-9-aout-2266172.html> (13.06.2024).

<sup>396</sup> Radiofrance, *Avec la cinéaste ukrainienne Masha Kondakova - Épisode 1*, <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/regards-croises/regards-croises-du-samedi-25-fevrier-2023-2983862> (13.06.2024).

<sup>397</sup> LCI, *Le Club Info du 7 août 2023*, <https://www.tflinfo.fr/replay-lci/video-le-club-info-du-7-aout-2023-2265978.html> (13.06.2024).

<sup>398</sup> Canal U, *Oksana Mitrofanova - France-Ukraine*, <https://www.canal-u.tv/chaines/fmsh/interviews-d-auteurs/oksana-mitrofanova-france-ukraine> (13.06.2024).

<sup>399</sup> Observations of book market transformations were conducted by the co-author of the text (M.K.) during his research stays in France in March and October 2023 (Bordeaux, Nancy, Paris).

cognitive value as *At the Heart of the War* by Étienne de Poncins<sup>400</sup>, *Ukraine. Double-blinding* by Hamit Bozarslan<sup>401</sup>, *Operation Z* by Jacques Baud<sup>402</sup>, *Diary of the First French Ambassador to Kiev* by Hugues Pernet<sup>403</sup>, *The Crucifixion of Ukraine* by Jean-François Colosimo<sup>404</sup>, *Never brothers? Ukraine and Russia: a Post-Soviet Tragedy* by Anne Colin Lebedev<sup>405</sup>, *War in Ukraine and the New World Order*, edited by Michel Duclos<sup>406</sup>, and *What If Ukraine Freed Russia?* by André Markowicz<sup>407</sup>. Translations of strictly Ukrainian texts also appear on the French market, including synthetic approaches to the history of Ukraine (e.g. *At the Gates of Europe. The History of Ukraine* by Serhiy Plokhii<sup>408</sup>) and literary works. The previous shortage of similar works is well illustrated by the publication in Paris in 2022 of a “representative” bilingual anthology of Ukrainian poetry, titled *Ukraine: 24 Poets for One Country*, edited by Ella Yevtushenko and Bruno Doucey<sup>409</sup>. It introduces the French audience to the texts that are canonical for Ukrainians, such as the works by Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, and Vasyl Stus.

These activities seem to have two goals. They aim to familiarize the French reader with Ukrainian literature and history, thus eliminating the dissonance of ignorance about the existence of a nation of forty million people in the eastern part of the continent, which bothers the French elites especially as this nation is fighting for its Europeanness. But at the same time, such actions create a bridgehead in the accessibility of Ukrainian texts for the growing Ukrainian diaspora in France. Oksana Zabuzhko wrote about the clear lack in this respect in the introduction to the mentioned work by Vira Aheeva: “A new and increasingly painful experience for me as a writer is signing my Ukrainian books after European meetings to Ukrainians who, fleeing from the war, took them with them from home, because they knew that no matter where they went in Europe, they would not find them there”<sup>410</sup>.

<sup>400</sup> É. de Poncins, *Au coeur de la Guerre*, Paris 2022.

<sup>401</sup> H. Bozarslan, *Ukraine. Le double aveuglement*, Paris 2023.

<sup>402</sup> J. Baud, *Operation Z*, Paris 2022.

<sup>403</sup> H. Pernet, *Journal du premier ambassadeur de France à Kiev*, Paris 2023.

<sup>404</sup> J-F. Colosimo, *La Crucifixion de l'Ukraine*, Paris 2022.

<sup>405</sup> A.C. Lebedev, *Jamais freres? Ukraine et Russie: une tragédie postsoviétique*, Paris 2022.

<sup>406</sup> *Guerre en Ukraine et nouvel ordre du monde*, Ed. M. Duclos, Paris 2023.

<sup>407</sup> A. Markowicz, *Et si l'Ukraine libérerait la Russie?*, Paris 2022.

<sup>408</sup> S. Plokhii, *Aux portes de l'Europe. Histoire de l'Ukraine*, Paris 2022.

<sup>409</sup> *Ukraine: 24 poètes pour un pays*, Ed. B. Doucey, E. Yevtushenko, Paris 2022.

<sup>410</sup> O. Zabuzhko, *Notatki do historii niezakończonych wojny* [in:] W. Ahejewa, *W cieniu imperium. Kulisy ukraińsko-rosyjskiej wojny kulturowej*, Kraków 2023, pp. 7-8.

A similar problem was experienced by the Zabuzhko herself; while she is a leading representative of contemporary Ukrainian literature, she used to be almost absent from the French market in recent decades. The first translation of her book into French was published only in 2015, i.e. in the first “post-colonial” period of interest in Ukrainian issues in the West (after the events on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in 2013-2014 and as a result of the Russian annexation of Crimea). The choice of the text translated at that time, *Fieldwork in Ukrainian sex*<sup>411</sup>, was symptomatic, demonstrating the French need to look for debates in Ukraine that bore similarities to the cultural discussions taking place in Western Europe. It can be expected that the current process of Ukrainization / Europeanization of Ukraine in the West will result in a multiplication of similar phenomena.

### Summary

The war forced Ukrainians to make clear identity declarations and reflect on what it means to be “European”. It also forced Western societies to revise their traditional favorable attitude towards Russia and to take into account the autonomy of Eastern Europe as a region with its own needs and importance. This article proves that the Russian-Ukrainian war, although destructive for Ukraine, paradoxically has also brought positive effects. The conflict has strengthened Ukrainian national identity, emphasized the value of a sovereign state, and had its share in promoting the Ukrainian issue in Europe, where the fight in Ukraine is now perceived as a fight not only for independence but also for modernization of this part of the continent and for its European identity. Ukraine is fighting Moscow not only for the right to modernize itself but also for a profound change in the society, which attracts the attention and support of the West. Ukrainian creative communities play a key role in promoting these values as well as Ukrainian culture and language in Ukraine. They are currently actively participating in the process of Ukrainization of Ukraine in the country and abroad. This process is also noticed by Kyiv’s Western partners, which is associated with political, linguistic, and cultural transformation, as well as the Europeanization of Ukraine in the perception of Western societies. In France, for example, the topic of Ukraine has become part of a broader political and intellectual debate on relations with Russia. European-Ukrainian relations are intensifying, which leads to a redefinition of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe and affects regional and international political and cultural arrangements. The conflict therefore affects European

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<sup>411</sup> O. Zaboujko, *Explorations sur le terrain du sexe ukrainien*, translated by I. Dmytrychyn-Bonin, Paris 2015. Symptomatic of this “belated” discovery is the fact that the work was published in the original two decades earlier: *Польові дослідження з українського сексу*, Київ 1996.

elites and society, leading to increased interest in Ukrainian issues. The media and the publishing market respond to it, offering information programs and books about Ukraine, which are aimed at educating their own citizens and supporting the Ukrainian diaspora. There is a growing interest in Ukrainian literature and publications about the conflict, as well as translations of Ukrainian works, which demonstrates the desire to better understand the Ukrainian perspective. Ukrainian literature, despite the difficulties of war, remains a key tool in the fight for national identity and documenting the war reality, both in Ukraine and abroad. This process of interest in Ukrainian culture and language can be called Ukrainization.

Ukrainization is a multi-aspect cultural, political, and social process that is intensifying in the context of European-Ukrainian relations, leading to a redefinition of the concept of Eastern and Central Europe and influencing regional and international political and cultural systems. Ukrainization also means decolonization, i.e. the cultural and political emancipation of Ukraine, which means moving away from Russian influence in favor of autonomy. This process includes the de-Russification of the media, literature, and education, which contributes to the increasing importance of Ukrainian culture and history. Ukrainization is also understood as the Europeanization of the identity of this region. Finally, the Ukrainization process is reflected in the actions of Ukraine's international partners, who support the country's efforts to join NATO and the European Union.

### **Streszczenie:**

Celem artykułu jest analiza zjawiska ukrainizacji, które zyskało na znaczeniu w wyniku wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej. Autorzy podkreślają, że paradoksalnie pomimo destrukcyjnych skutków konfliktu, ukrainizacja przynosi korzyści w postaci wzmocnienia ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej oraz promocji ukraińskiej kultury i suwerenności na arenie międzynarodowej. Proces ten obejmuje promocję języka ukraińskiego, rozwój literatury i sztuki, a także redefinicję polityki bezpieczeństwa. Ukrainizacja zmienia również postrzeganie Europy Wschodniej w społeczeństwach zachodnich, zachęcając je do postrzegania regionu jako bytu odrębnego od Rosji. Wsparcie Zachodu i rosnące zainteresowanie literaturą ukraińską wskazują na coraz większe zrozumienie i zaangażowanie w kwestię ukraińską, co wpływa na stosunki międzynarodowe i regionalne.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Ukrainizacja, tożsamość narodowa, kultura ukraińska,  
wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, derusyfikacja, literatura ukraińska

**Key words:**

Ukrainization, national identity, Ukrainian culture, Russian-Ukrainian war, derussification, Ukrainian literature

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## **Geopolitical code and sovereignty in aegis of the Central Asian regional security perspectives: Kazakhstan case-study**

### **Introduction**

Kazakhstan is the greatest country among the post-Soviet space and its political system in a less dimension squeezes and experienced with turbulent instability and has demonstrated its moderate high political culture at societal level. Kazakhstan is also considering as the one of the biggest nations in the world. The country holds the ninth place in the world by territory and the sixth place by possession of the natural resources. The population of the country is about 20 million citizens. Kazakhstan is divided into six economic regions and zones that include the following:

- *The North Kazakhstan – developed grain farming, extracted raw materials, promoted heavy mechanical engineering industry and oil production;*
- *The East Kazakhstan – developed non-ferrous metallurgy and energy sector as well as forestry and mechanical engineering;*
- *The West Kazakhstan – the most key oil and gas production region;*
- *The Central Kazakhstan – developed ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, mechanical engineering and livestock farming;*
- *The South Kazakhstan – developed agricultural business industry, non-ferrous metallurgy, light and food industry, fisheries and forestry industry<sup>412</sup>.*

Kazakhstan locates in the central part of the Eurasian continent where traced historical “The Great Silk Road” connected Pacific Ocean region with the MENA and the Europe bypassing

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<sup>412</sup> А. Темирова и А. Абдимомынова «Социально-Экономические Дифференция Регионов Республики Казахстан», Кызылординский государственный университет, Кызылорда, 2016, стр.60-62

namely the state. It is interesting to note that the country has got around 170 million people as a labor power with summary GDP in \$259.7 billion in 2023<sup>413</sup>.

The geopolitical implication of Kazakhstan mainly links with the Central Asia region and its security provisions. The geopolitics of the Central Asian countries has changed recently due to numerous events in the world. Most of these countries have opted for a multi-vector foreign policy and economic diversification. The process of changing the approach to these issues has been forced by the war in Ukraine and by Russia's attitude itself. These countries, which are economically dependent on Russia, are increasingly feeling the sanctions imposed on Russia and are trying to find alternatives at various levels. Recently, there have also been major changes in the internal politics of these countries, such as the political transformation and reforms in Kazakhstan, which strengthened the power of President of Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, or the transfer of power in Turkmenistan from vice versa with authoritarian transformation, from father Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow to son Serdar Berdimuhamedow. The issue of internal tensions, such as the unrest in the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan or the fighting in Gorno-Badakhshan in Tajikistan, is not without significance. One of the key elements in shaping cooperation between the countries is the issue of drinking water. This has long been a source of conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This is something of a paradox when you look at the economic problems of the countries in the region. Countries such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, which are rich in natural resources such as oil and gas, have problems with access to drinking water. On the other hand, the two poorest countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, have water resources due to their mountainous location and the fact that the largest rivers in the region originate there. Central Asia is an area rich in natural resources, which naturally attracts the attention of China, but also Turkey, Azerbaijan and the European Union. In addition, its proximity to Afghanistan, where the Taliban rule, forces countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. All of these factors have shaped the foreign policy approaches of these countries. In order to better understand this process, it is necessary to look at each of them in more detail. It is important to understate that China and Russia vie for influence in Central Asia<sup>414</sup>.

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<sup>413</sup> «Экономика Казахстана: О развитии казахской экономики», see in detail: <https://www.orexca.com/rus/kazakhstan/economy.htm>

<sup>414</sup> A. Kendall-Taylor and R. Fontaine "The Axis of Upheaval: How America's Adversaries Are Uniting to Overturn the Global Order" in "Foreign Affairs" Volume 103, Number 3, New York, May/June 2024, p.56

The analysis of changes in the geopolitics of the Central Asian countries should begin with Russia and its recent activities in the international sphere. All Central Asian countries, i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, were part of the Soviet Union, which led to a very strong Russian influence in the region. Russia's invasion of Ukraine showed these countries that Russia was beginning to pursue an imperial policy, seeking to rebuild its former influence, including territorial influence in the former territories of the Soviet Union, which could pose a threat especially to Kazakhstan, which borders Russia directly and has a large Russian minority in the north of the country. Major failures on the Ukrainian front and the protracted conflict mean that the Kremlin's full attention is focused on Ukraine, which could allow the countries of Central Asia to change their foreign policy, something that countries such as China, Turkey and Iran will be keen to exploit<sup>415</sup>. On the other hand, the conflict in Ukraine has led to the imposition of economic sanctions against Russia, which are also causing price rises and inflation in the Central Asian countries, which are still closely linked to Russia economically. Given Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it is also worth looking at the reaction of individual countries in the region.

By and large, Kazakhstan is the ninth-largest country in the world, covering some 2.7 million square kilometers. Kazakhstan is bordered by Russia to the north, the Caspian Sea to the south-west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to the south, and China to the east.

Kazakhstan gained its independence from the former Soviet Union on 16 December 1991. In 1998, the capital was moved from the south-eastern city of Almaty to the northern city of Astana. The population of Kazakhstan is 18.4 million people, of which around 68 per cent are ethnic Kazakhs. 19 per cent of the population comprises a sizeable ethnic Russian minority and the rest comprises ethnic Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tartars and Germans. Kazakhstan is a secular country, however around 70 per cent of the population identify as Muslim and 26 per cent of the population identify as Orthodox Christian<sup>416</sup>.

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<sup>415</sup> А. Фененко «Современная история международных отношений 1991-2018», учебное пособие, АСПЕНТ ПРЕСС, Москва, 2019 год, стр.288-289

<sup>416</sup> Kazakhstan Country Brief, Australian Government, see in detail: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/kazakhstan/kazakhstan-country-brief>

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### **Kazakhstan New Geopolitics and Its Version of “New Silk Road” – “Bright Road” Strategy**

The Eurasian geopolitics attained great attention from the global powers and really became as a “New Heartland” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each state had to find its own place in the new design of the Eurasia space. For Kazakhstan the formal and planned beginning of this journey was year 1997 when a strategy Kazakhstan 2030 was introduced<sup>417</sup>. Its main goals was to restore an order after the collapse of the Soviet system by transforming into the market economy, preparing an entirely new social system but most of all creating a new Nation in terms of so-called “Noosphere” (Near Sphere), a Nation free from the grasp of foreign influences which was bound to go its own way. This was a strategy outlined during the disturbing times following the downfall of the soviet empire. The most visible symbol of the present day Kazakhstan way to the future emerged in 2012 when the then president Nursultan Nazarbayev in his address to the Nation outlined the Strategy "Kazakhstan 2050" presenting a far-reaching and multidimensional strategy which was bound to guarantee that Kazakhstan will be a prosperous country in various spheres of political existence.

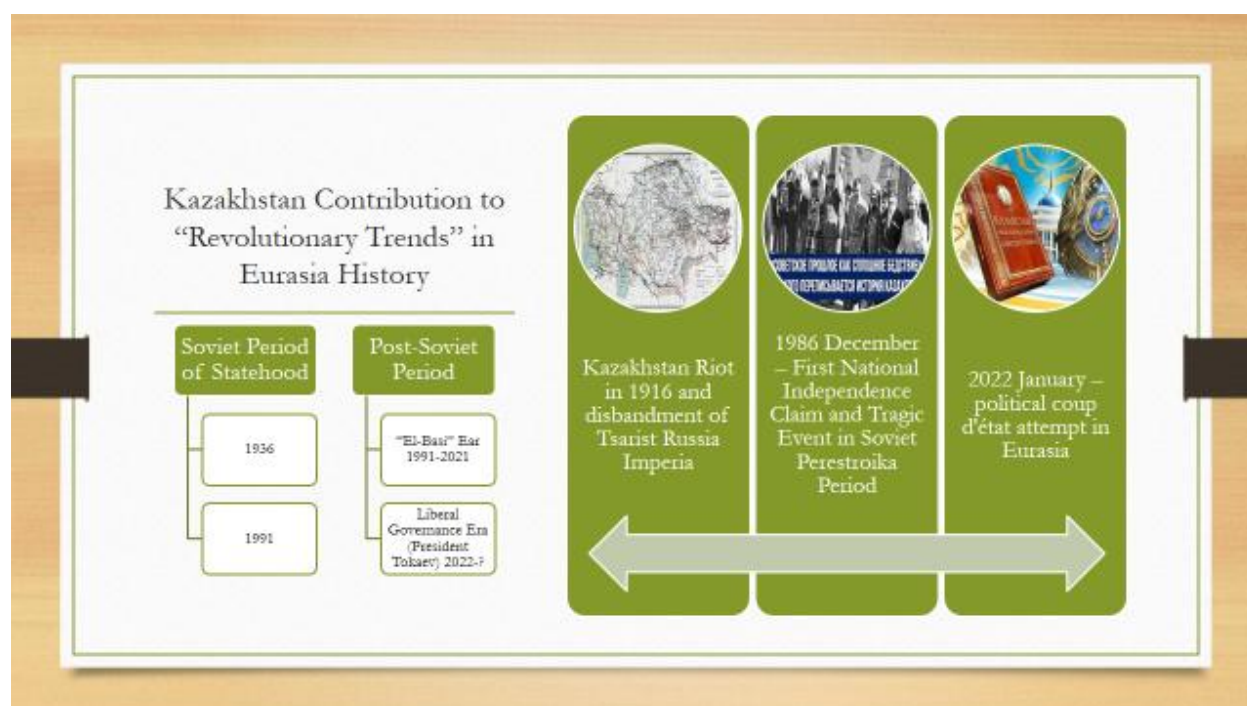
Being a largest landlocked country beside Russia in what sir Halford Mackinder described as Heartland required a lot of intelligent and long distance planning, on one hand Kazakhstan was strongly connected with Russia through the seventy years of the Soviet dominance in that region, on the other, it faced being a fully independent country on the border of two pan-regions, that is, Russian and Japanese as the Haushofer presented it in his works although in the XXI century it should be called rather a China pan-region as the shift of political and cultural power occurred in this area. Putting a currently dominating political and cultural center of power aside, Kazakhstan quickly realized that isolation is not an option, just as the states in Central Europe realized full security depends on NATO and to some extent on the European Union the eastern people decided to join new international organizations of both military and civil nature such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the United Nations. Such a wide range of alliances clearly shows that the foreign policy of the Kazakh's state is based on multilateral relations. The “passionarism” of Kazakh people is to be defined as Eurasianism. The Kazakh ethnos is supposed to be a 'biological' entity determined by its place in the natural environment, but at

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<sup>417</sup> A. Utegenova “Kazakhstan’s 2030 Development Strategy: Significance and Results” in OSCE Yearbook, Baden-Baden, 2011, pp.133-135

the same time, inspired by a few innovative leaders, each 'ethnos' has its special time of intense flowering<sup>418</sup>.

Kazakhstan's political system development was first emerged in 1917 when was created independent nation, first autonomous political entity – Alash Orda. The second All-Kazakh Congress of the Alash Party was held in Orenburg in December 1917 and resulted in the forming of the government of the Alash autonomy, called Alash Orda. The congress decreed the territory of Alash autonomy that included the Bokeyev Horde, Ural, Turgai, Akmola, Semipalatinsk regions, districts of the Transcaspian region, and Altai province inhabited by Kazakhs<sup>419</sup>. The second phase of the statehood was linking with the Soviet period of time. The statehood transformation started in Tsarist Russia Imperia period transcended in the Soviet Union duration became very important stage of creation national identity. The transformation is being illustrated in below mentioned chart, including post-Soviet era:



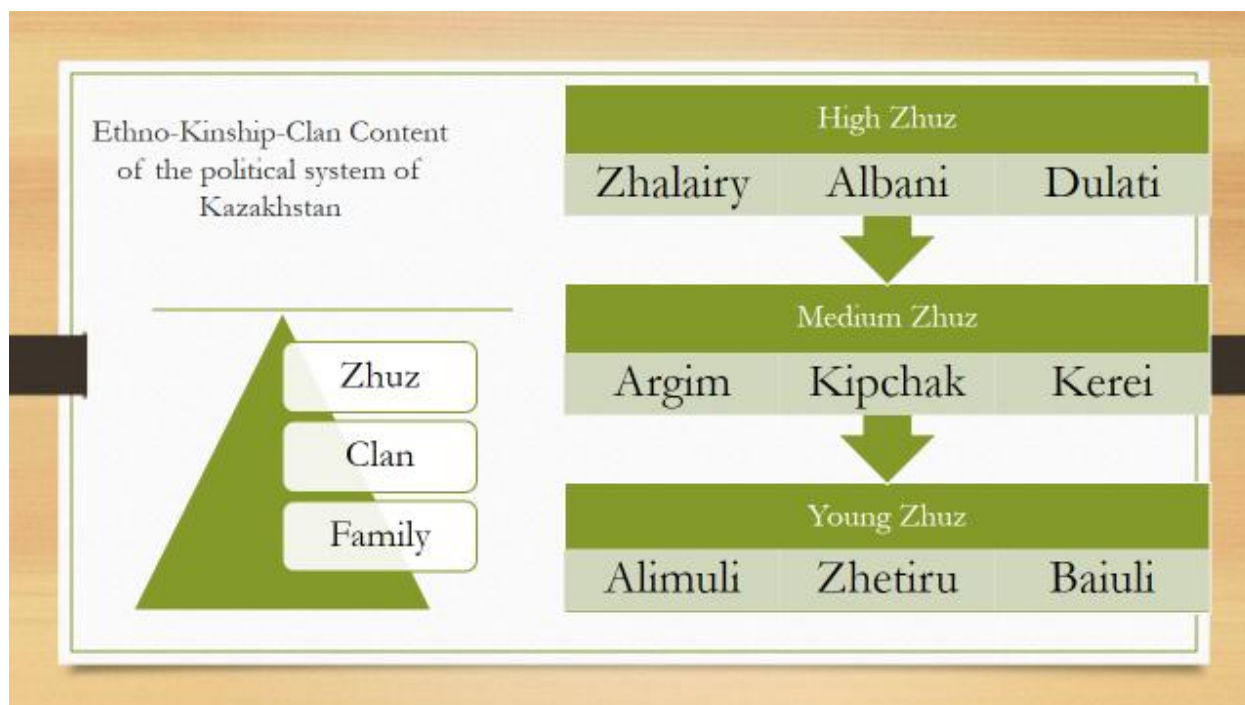
The political system of Kazakhstan is linked with structure and identification of national societal basis where affiliated with clan-geographical distribution of various Kazakh tribes and associated with the systematic approach<sup>420</sup>. The clan distribution has become dominant factor

<sup>418</sup> V. Shnirelman and S. Panarin "Lev Gumiliev: His Pretensions as Founder of Ethnology and his Eurasian Theories" in JSTOR Vol.3, No.1, New York, 2001, pp. 1-2, see: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23615444>

<sup>419</sup> A. Akhmetkali "Alash Orda: Reflecting Foundations" of Kazakh Statehood" in "The Astana Time" published on 25 October 2023, see in detail: <https://astanatimes.com/2023/10/alah-orda-reflecting-foundations-of-kazakh-statehood/>

<sup>420</sup> Д. Рекк и В. Егоров «Кланы в Постсоветской Центральной Азии», издательство «Алетейя», Санкт-Петербург, 2022, стр.38-39

in forming political system of modern statehood in Kazakhstan. The system could be defined as follow:



To very first idea which comes to a mind is the geopolitical position between two superpowers, Russia and China, and further a huge European market, this gave Kazakhstan a chance to take a role of the east - west corridor, a role they decided to take without any hesitation. Just two years after announcing Strategy 2050 the authorities published a “Нұрлы Жол” / Bright Path plan to stimulate its economy by modernizing the existing infrastructure and create new roads, railways, ports, airports and IT infrastructure. The estimated budget was nine billion dollars. The major reason behind this initiative was to link with “One Belt, One Road” project especially when it comes to the railway modernization. The main aim of the Astana was to serve as a gateway to Europe for the People's Republic of China. The goal of being a buckle for the “One Belt, One Road” initiative can be marked as achieved, Kazakhstan used its favourable geographical situating to its advantage and it worked perfectly as the Bright Road programme was not just a wishful thinking. Both Kazakh and Chinese officials realized that route through Kazakhstan gives more security and stability than the alternative route through the Middle East, especially after the “Arab Spring” and the offensive of The Islamic State, which both make the region unstable till the present, broke out. The circumstances were almost ideal for the Government in Astana and this ended up in a dynamic cooperation. Wave of international financing started floating to Kazakhstan from various institutions, for instance, Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the total number of projects carried out in Kazakhstan

on 2020-10-05 reached 32. As it can be read in the outline published by the United States International Trade Administration the programme cover a variety of sectors including Architectural, Construction and Engineering Services, development of roads, railways and ports. What is particularly interesting is the case of airports as the number of such facilities with automated control systems is planned to rise from three to fifteen by the end of 2025. All this measures were implemented to strengthen the position of Kazakhstan as a main hub between the Asian space and European market. The first results are already visible in the official statistics of Bureau of National statistics of Kazakhstan, the number of operating railways dropped in 2011 to 14 892 kilometers, however in the following year it raised to 15 333 kilometers and was slowly but constantly increasing to the value of 16 635 km in 2019. The expansion of railway system connecting PRC and Republic of Kazakhstan is not slowing down even during the COVID pandemic as the new railway connecting China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region with capital of Kazakhstan Astana was opened March 13, 2021. This was a premature to promote the “Middle Transit Corridor” geoeconomic project<sup>421</sup>.

### **Kazakhstan’s New Foreign Policy and Geopolitical Code in Controversial World Order Conditions**

The 19 March 2023 early parliamentary elections were held in the context of reforms introduced to bring Kazakhstan closer to holding elections in line with international standards and OSCE commitments, as legal amendments addressed several previous recommendations and provided increased choice for voters. However, limits on the exercise of fundamental freedoms remain, and some political groups continued to be prevented from participation as parties in elections. Further changes to the legal framework are needed to provide a sufficient basis for conducting democratic elections, the international observers said in a statement released on 20 March 2023. The elections determined that the country is seeking to achieve democratic transformation as the elections have indicated second serious political reform stage in promoting political stabilization and liberty orientation not only at national but also at regional level. By doing so, Kazakhstan has become indeed natural regional leader-nation in bringing up democratic values in aegis of the Central Asia. The elections marked on adaptation of the parliamentary type of political governance with balanced Presidential rulership system

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<sup>421</sup> V. Maisaia “Three “Giants” Geoeconomic Wargame Over “Middle Transit Corridor”” published in “Azerbaijan Today”, an International Magazine, 06 July 2022, Astana – see in detail: <https://www.azeribaijantoday.az/2024/06/07/three-giants-geoeconomic-wargame-over-middle-transit-corridor/>

only with one term in 7 years period. The Parliamentary elections were held on so-called “combined proportional and majoritarian” style with involvement 10 political parties and movements. Firstly, of the more than 400 candidates competing for the 29 seats reserved for single-mandate races, many were ruling party “Amanat” representatives. Firstly, of the more than 400 candidates competing for the 29 seats reserved for single-mandate races, many were “Amanat” representatives. Preliminary results show that fully 23 of those races were won by ruling party “Amanat” members, meaning the party is likely to have at least 60 of the 98 seats in the lower house. With none of the seven parties competing resembling any type of opposition to the system, it was the single-mandate races that added an element of the unknown to these elections. It is interesting to stress that the elections covers also local legislative council elections. With combination of federal and local parliamentary elections could be considering very interesting political novelty in the regional scope. Snap elections for the Kazakhstan lower house of the federal Parliament (*Majilis*) and local councils (*maslikhats*) will be held March 19, 2023. A total of 3,749 deputies of *maslikhats* will be elected—2,130 in regional councils and 617 in city councils.

Nevertheless, the provisions that opposition parties could not create a common coalition to suppress the ruling party dominance would not affect the whole political landscape and further promote the political reforms ahead. As it is known in 2021 the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared the 10 principles of the political reforms for improving the political system of the country and promote new political culture posture. The principles included the following ones:

- ☐ The President’s Power limitation
- ☐ Reformatting representative branch of government
- ☐ Improvement of electoral system
- ☐ Expanding opportunities for development of party system
- ☐ Modernization of electoral process
- ☐ Strengthening human rights institutions
- ☐ Increasing competitiveness of mass-media and strengthening the role of civil society institutions



- ❑ Improvement of administrative-territorial structure of the country
- ❑ Decentralization of local self-government
- ❑ Priority anti-crisis measures<sup>422</sup>

The 19 March 2023 early parliamentary elections were held in the context of reforms introduced to bring Kazakhstan closer to holding elections in line with international standards and OSCE commitments, as legal amendments addressed several previous recommendations and provided increased choice for voters. However, limits on the exercise of fundamental freedoms remain, and some political groups continued to be prevented from participation as parties in elections. Further changes to the legal framework are needed to provide a sufficient basis for conducting democratic elections, the international observers said in a statement released on 20 March 2023. The elections determined that the country is seeking to achieve democratic transformation as the elections have indicated second serious political reform stage in promoting political stabilization and liberty orientation not only at national but also at regional level. By doing so, Kazakhstan has become indeed natural regional leader-nation in bringing up democratic values in aegis of the Central Asia. The elections marked on adaptation of the parliamentary type of political governance with balanced Presidential rulership system only with one term in 7 years period. The Parliamentary elections were hold on so-called “combined proportional and majoritarian” style with involvement 10 political parties and movements. Firstly, of the more than 400 candidates competing for the 29 seats reserved for single-mandate races, many were ruling party “Amanat” representatives. Firstly, of the more than 400 candidates competing for the 29 seats reserved for single-mandate races, many were “Amanat” representatives. Preliminary results show that fully 23 of those races were won by ruling party “Amanat” members, meaning the party is likely to have at least 60 of the 98 seats in the lower house. With none of the seven parties competing resembling any type of opposition to the system, it was the single-mandate races that added an element of the unknown to these elections. It is interesting to stress that the elections covers also local legislative council elections. With combination of federal and local parliamentary elections could be considering very interesting political novelty in the regional scope. Snap elections for the Kazakhstan lower house of the federal Parliament (*Majilis*) and local councils (*maslikhats*) will be held March 19,

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<sup>422</sup> V. Maisaia “Kazakhstan New Political Transformation – Early Parliamentary Elections and Its Geopolitical Impact” published in “Azerbaijan Today” an International Magazine, Baku, 28 March 2023 – see in detail: <https://www.azerbaijantoday.az/2023/03/28/kazakhstan-new-political-transformation-early-parliamentary-elections-and-its-geopolitical-impact/>

2023. A total of 3,749 deputies of *maslikhats* will be elected—2,130 in regional councils and 617 in city councils.

The snap Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Kazakhstan became a test to conduct and provide solid basis for structural and political reforms led by President Toqaev and facilitated to develop a “New Kazakhstan” statehood.

The parliamentary elections were the third stage for promoting the political reforms in the country. As considering the previous election results showed that the percentage threshold for entering the “Mazhlis” was too high and did not reflect the real situation in the party system of the country. In order to increase the representation of different actors in the legislature, in May 2021, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed amendments to the Constitutional Law “On Elections in Kazakhstan”, which provides for reducing the threshold for political parties in elections to the “Mazhlis” from 7 to 5%. Another significant step towards democratization was the decision to introduce the election of Akims of cities (city governors) of district significance, villages and rural districts. A total of 864 Akims were elected directly in 2021 (730 rural Akims were elected in the first direct elections on July 25, 2021, 134 were elected in the period of from August to December 2021). Currently due to the preliminary results, six political parties entered the lower house of the Parliament and ruling party “Amanat” won the elections with 53% of the votes.

After reviewing and analyzing the political system of Kazakhstan is important to consider how foreign policy has been adopted. In time of power transformation, Kazakhstan develops its own geopolitical code. In this case is necessary to identify what does mean geopolitical code. According to some sources, a geopolitical code is the manner in which a country orientates itself to the world. There are five main calculations that define a country’s geopolitical code. They are:

- Who are our current and potential allies?
- Who are our current and potential enemies?
- How can we maintain our allies and nurture potential allies?
- How can we counter our current enemies and emerging threats?

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- How do we justify the four calculations above to our public, and to the global community?<sup>423</sup>

Adopted the modality to Kazakhstan reality is possible to identify the national geopolitical code with three levels: local, regional and global ones. Kazakhstan has already elaborated its own geopolitical code that is to be identify in the following manner:

#### **Kazakhstan Global Geopolitical Code:**

- Endorsement of New Geopolitical Initiative of Creation of Biosecurity “MAGATE” Institution
- G-20 Membership Status Aspiration

#### **Kazakhstan Regional Geopolitical Code:**

- Regional leadership status in aegis of the Central Asia
- Promotion of Geoeconomic Hub status

#### **Kazakhstan Local Geopolitical Code:**

- Reinforcement Good Neighborhood Status
- New Ethno-Political Concept and Identity Promotion

With the development of infrastructure the second strategically direction of expanding the trade by exporting should be an easy task, yet this was not a case in this particular area of development. According to statistics by the World Trade Organization there was a continuous growth in value of the export however since 2013 a constant drop can be observed, the decline ranged from 84,700 million dollars to 36,685 million dollars in 2016, a slight improvement occurred in the two-year period preceding the outbreak of COVID-19 to drop again when the pandemic started<sup>424</sup>. After the pandemic trend, Kazakhstan managed improved its economic and financial conditions. Kazakhstan's economic growth is largely based on gas and oil revenues, accounting for around 35% of GDP and 75% of exports. The estimated GDP growth for 2023 stood at 4.6%, fueled by growth in both the oil and non-oil sectors, with the impact of the conflict in Ukraine remaining contained. Strong credit growth has also supported activity.

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<sup>423</sup> C. Flint “Introduction to Geopolitics”, third edition, Routledge, London, 2016, p.52

<sup>424</sup> “World Trade Statistical Review”, World Trade Organization, Geneva, p.58

According to the IMF, anticipated growth in 2024 is projected to moderate within an uncertain economic climate, expected to slow to 3.1% primarily due to delays in the Tengiz oil field expansion. Over the medium term, non-oil GDP growth is set to stabilize at around 3.5%<sup>425</sup>.

### Resume

To summarize all of the above, both the "Strategy 2050" and "Bright Road" initiative proved to be a well-designed documents which evaluated the geopolitical potential properly and outlined the directions in which the new, independent Kazakhstan, should proceed in the XXI century. It cannot be denied that certain aspects of the plan were not achieved, nevertheless, the persistence combined with the ability to adjust to the dynamically changing circumstances occurring in the Eurasian space paved the way for the Kazakhstan to be a self-governed regional player which uses its geopolitical advantages in a variety of the spheres of the country's current political existence and further development<sup>426</sup>. The "Kazakhstan-2030" Strategy for development provides implementation of seven long-term priorities: National security. Domestic political stability and consolidation of the society. Economic growth based on an open market economy with high level of foreign investments and internal savings. The "Kazakhstan-2030" Strategy for development provides implementation of **seven long-term priorities**:

- National security.
- Domestic political stability and consolidation of the society.
- Economic growth based on an open market economy with high level of foreign investments and internal savings.
- Health, education and well-being of Kazakhstani citizens.
- Power resources.
- Infrastructure, more particularly transport and communication.

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<sup>425</sup> "Kazakhstan: Economic and Political Overview", October 2023, see in detail: <https://international.groupecreditagricole.com/en/international-support/kazakhstan/economic-overview>

<sup>426</sup> D. Szkarupski "Kazakhstan New Geopolitics and Its Version of "Silk Road" – Bright Road Strategy" published in "Azerbaijan Today", Baku, 16 January 2023 – see in detail: <https://www.azeribaijantoday.az/2023/01/16/kazakhstan-new-geopolitics-and-its-version-of-new-silk-road-bright-road-strategy/>

- Professional state<sup>427</sup>.

Kazakhstan has drastically transformed its political system from “soft” authoritarian governance into democracy transition provision and those political and economic reforms executed so far are indicating on real transformation of national statehood in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is to be a “successful case” for other nations of the Central Asia region. Mainly Kazakhstan new geopolitical code could be one of the instruments to settle regional conflicts among the actors, for instance water conflicts in the region<sup>428</sup>. Moreover, the country is also contributing in providing stability at international security level and promoting peace and accord at the regional level too, mainly at the Caucasus-Caspian Region. Being provider also geoeconomic security, Kazakhstan becomes global actor with unique geopolitical opportunity to increase its image and status-quo.

### Streszczenie:

Rozpad Związku Radzieckiego i pojawienie się nowych uwarunkowań geopolitycznych w przestrzeni euroazjatyckiej przekształciły ją w nowe polityczne obszary identyfikacji „suwerenizacji” lub paradygmatu dylematu suwerenności, który stał się sprzeczny z tym samym procesem, który miał miejsce w państwach Europy Wschodniej i Środkowej po zniknięciu całego Bloku Socjalistycznego. Postsowiecka transformacja polityczna przebiegała od koncepcji „ograniczonej suwerenności” (kiedy były republiki radzieckie miały formalną suwerenność z wszystkimi trzema rodzajami władzy: wykonawczą, ustawodawczą i sądowniczą, ale w praktyce politycznej bardzo ograniczoną) do koncepcji „liberalnej suwerenności”, kiedy wszystkie republiki radzieckie stały się niepodległymi i suwerennymi państwami z zachodnimi elementami systemu politycznego (przywileje konstytucyjne, niezależna polityka zagraniczna, ochrona praw człowieka i etnicznych, rządy prawa itd.). W tym kontekście interesujący jest przypadek Kazachstanu z jego nową strategią polityczną „Nowy Kazachstan”, zawierającą 10 zasad politycznej transformacji w kierunku demokratycznego i niezależnego geopolitycznie aktora pod egidą regionalnego systemu bezpieczeństwa Azji Centralnej. Transformacja polityczna jasno wskazała, jak w najbardziej wymagającym otoczeniu geopolitycznym, z nowymi wyzwaniami i zagrożeniami, można rozwijać się, zapewniając sobie istnienie, a w istocie suwerenność i kod geopolityczny (czyli sposób, w jaki kraj pozycjonuje się w globalnym sąsiedztwie).

Podsumowując powyższe, zarówno „Strategia 2050”, jak i inicjatywa „Jasna Droga” okazały się dobrze zaprojektowanymi dokumentami, które właściwie oceniły potencjał

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<sup>427</sup> “The Strategy for Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan” – see in detail: <https://agksit.kz/index.php/en-us/menu1/the-strategy-for-development-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan>

<sup>428</sup> K. Zhandildina-Nugmanova “Water Resources Security in Central Asia Is a Major Factor of Geopolitics” published in “Science Without Borders” Transactions of the International Academy of Science, Vol.7, Innsbruck, 2024, pp.335-336

geopolityczny i nakreśliły kierunki, w których nowy, niepodległy Kazachstan powinien podążać w XXI wieku. Nie da się zaprzeczyć, że pewne aspekty planu nie zostały zrealizowane, niemniej jednak wytrwałość w połączeniu z umiejętnością dostosowywania się do dynamicznie zmieniających się okoliczności w przestrzeni euroazjatyckiej utorowały Kazachstanowi drogę do stania się niezależnym graczem regionalnym, wykorzystującym swoje geopolityczne atuty w różnych sferach bieżącej egzystencji politycznej i dalszego rozwoju państwa.

### **Słowa klucze:**

Eurazja, polityka zagraniczna, kod geopolityczny, sąsiedztwo, Kazachstan, reforma polityczna, dylemat suwerenności,

### **Key words:**

Eurasia, foreign policy, geopolitical code, neighborhood, Kazakhstan, political reform, sovereignty dilemma,

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## **“Derussification” of economic policy in Turkmenistan**

Central Asia plays a very important role in the geopolitical rivalry between two superpowers: the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. The aim of this article is to present the process of "de-Russification" of the economic policy of Turkmenistan, which has been taking place since the early 1990s, right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, up to the present day (2024). Russia's economic relations with Turkmenistan have mainly concerned one sector – energy. Turkmenistan, rich in natural gas deposits, was dependent on the Russian Federation, which, in the early years of independence, was its sole sphere of influence. The situation began to change in the first decade of the 21st century when China became an economic power not only in the Eurasian region but also internationally. The article attempts to analyze whether the "de-Russification" of Turkmenistan's economic policy has led to its "sinicization" through close economic cooperation with the People's Republic of China.

### **Attempts to "derussify" Turkmenistan's economic policy in the 1990s.**

Shortly after Turkmenistan gained independence and the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (1991), a friendship and cooperation agreement was signed in Moscow in July 1992. However, apart from agreements with the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan signed a number of other agreements, including with China (November 1992) and Ukraine (October 1992). Turkmenistan also placed significant emphasis on resolving disputes related to economic relations with neighboring countries (Uzbekistan and the Caspian Sea basin countries), and intensified contacts with Islamic countries such as Kuwait, Iran, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as with international organizations. In this way, Turkmenistan hoped for assistance in rebuilding its economy, financial support, and the establishment of an institutional and legal infrastructure for foreign trade<sup>429</sup>.

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<sup>429</sup> T. Bodio, A. Wierzbicki, Z. Świerczyński, *Handel zagraniczny i polityka handlowa* [w:] “Turkmenistan. Historia - społeczeństwo - polityka”, Dom Wydawniczy Elipca, Warszawa, 200, s. 613.



In the 1990s, Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries remained dependent on the export-transport monopoly policy of the Russian Federation, which blocked plans to create alternative transmission of gas networks. Since 1991, Russia also remained the primary market for Turkmen gas. The struggle over the construction of gas pipelines was one of the elements of geostrategic rivalry in the region, known in the literature as the "New Great Game." In this context, Turkmenistan's authorities considered four possibilities for transmitting energy resources. The first was through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran (the so-called trans-Iranian pipeline); the second, across the Caspian Sea (the so-called trans-Caspian pipeline); the third, through Afghanistan to Pakistan (the so-called trans-Afghan pipeline); and the last - the so-called trans-Asian pipeline through the territory of the People's Republic of China, towards Japan and Korea<sup>430</sup>.

In the following year, 1993, another concept emerged. This time the construction of a pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey through Iran. In April 1994, representatives of these three countries signed an agreement on this matter, but it did not come to reality due to political pressure from the United States of America<sup>431</sup>. However, a few years later, in December 1997, a two-hundred-kilometer section of the pipeline leading from Turkmenistan to northern Iran, called "KKK - Kurt Kui - Korpedzhe," was opened. This was an alternative to transporting gas through the territory of the Russian Federation and undermined the monopoly of the Russian company "Gazprom." The authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran hoped that this project would make it an attractive importer and transit country for gas from Turkmenistan. The opening of this route was also beneficial for Turkmenistan itself, as it raised 10% of its investments, which cost 190 million US dollars<sup>432</sup>.

In 1996, another agreement was signed between Turkmenistan, Turkey, and Iran regarding the export of Turkmen gas to Turkey and further to Europe. In October of the following year, both sides expressed interest in jointly implementing the project and building an oil pipeline "Turkmenistan - Iran - the Persian Gulf". In 1997, RoyalDutch/Shell conducted thorough assessments regarding the implementation of a new pipeline project. Experts from the company suggested exporting gas from the Karadeniz field using the KKK pipeline route and the Iranian network<sup>433</sup>. The new "TIT" pipeline (Turkey – Iran – Turkmenistan) was to have a capacity of up to 15 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year and could double it, allowing the re-export of gas through the

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<sup>430</sup> S. Kardaś, *Szlaki komunikacyjne i transport*, [w:] "Turkmenistan...", s. 553.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 553.

<sup>432</sup> M. Piotrowski, *Polityka w sektorze gazowo – naftowym*, [w:] "Turkmenistan...", s. 605.

<sup>433</sup> S. Kardaś, *Szlaki...*, s. 555.

Turkish network to the European Union market<sup>434</sup>. On October 28, 1998, the authorities of Turkmenistan signed a "Memorandum on the implementation of the Turkmenistan - Turkey - Europe trans-Caspian pipeline project" with Turkey. However, it was not realized due to a lack of financial support from third countries, including the United States, which was unfavorably inclined toward any projects involving the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furthermore, realizing that the implementation of such projects would significantly weaken its influence in the Central Asian region, Russia signed an agreement with Turkey to create a pipeline called "Blue Stream" on the Izobilnoye - Black Sea - Samsun route (the pipeline was launched in 2002)<sup>435</sup>.

Another project concerned the construction of the trans-Afghan pipeline, whose main goal was to exclude the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and primarily the Russian Federation, from the struggle for the transit of Turkmen gas. In the first phase of this concept's implementation, there was close cooperation between Turkmenistan and Pakistan, whose leaders signed a memorandum on the construction of the pipeline in August 1993. The initial plans related to the implementation of this project were first presented in the same year by the Argentine oil company "Bridas" and two years later, in 1995, by the American company "Unocal." The series of consultations and meetings initiated at that time resulted in rivalry between the governments of Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, oil companies, and third countries interested in the project. On October 22, 1997, an Afghan government delegation agreed to form a joint Turkmen – Pakistani - Afghan trilateral commission to analyze the pipeline project proposed by "Unocal." However, three days later, on October 25, a consortium named "Central Asia Gas" ("CentGas") was established in the capital of Turkmenistan – Ashgabat, with "Unocal" holding the largest share (46.5%). The consortium, however, disbanded a year later, in 1998, due to "Unocal's" withdrawal from the project. This decision was a consequence of U.S. airstrikes on terrorist bases in Afghanistan. It was not until after the British-American joint forces conducted a military operation against the Taliban in the fall of 2001 that the idea of the trans-Afghan pipeline was revived. Elizabeth Jones, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, assured the President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, of support for the project, provided it was economically viable. Moreover, at the summit in Manila in 2003,

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<sup>434</sup> M. Piotrowski, *Polityka...*, s. 605.

<sup>435</sup> S. Kardaś, *Szlaki...*, s. 555.

Philippines, representatives of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan invited India to participate in the project as an investor and main purchaser of gas<sup>436</sup>.

The third project was the trans-Caspian gas pipeline (Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline - TCGP). The Turkmen authorities initiated talks about its creation in the second half of the 1990s. The route of this pipeline was to run from the port of Turkmenbashi across the Caspian Sea to the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, and from there through the territory of Georgia to the town of Erzurum via the Turkish network. The project, which was essentially intended to weaken Russia's position in the Central Asian region, sparked considerable U.S. activity regarding its implementation. The USA financed, among other things, the feasibility study and promised to provide a loan<sup>437</sup>.

The last project concerning gas transit was the idea of constructing a pipeline from Turkmenistan to the People's Republic of China, and ultimately also to Japan, with a planned length of eight thousand kilometers. An agreement on this matter was reached in 1997 between the companies: "Mitsubishi" (Japan), "Exxon" (United States), and "China National Petroleum Corporation." However, preliminary calculations showed that it would be difficult to find the necessary financial resources to build a pipeline 6,500 kilometers long<sup>438</sup>.

In the context of Turkmenistan's attempts to "de-Russify" its economic policy in the 1990s, it is also worth mentioning the idea adopted in 1998 to rebuild the "Great Silk Road," which passes through the territory of Turkmenistan. Its aim was the opportunity to modernize this desert country, especially its "lifeblood," which is the communication infrastructure. This idea will return at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century when the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, announces the creation of a strategic economic initiative – the "Belt and Road," or the so-called "New Silk Road," in which Turkmenistan will also participate<sup>439</sup>.

### **Economic Policy of Turkmenistan towards Russia in the Early 21st Century**

With the beginning of the 21st century, relations between Turkmenistan and the Russian Federation continued to gradually change.

Entering the 21st century, the authorities of Turkmenistan adopted the "Declaration on the Directions of Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century." One of the most important

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<sup>436</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 556 – 558.

<sup>437</sup> M. Piotrowski, *Polityka...*, s. 605.

<sup>438</sup> S. Kardaś, *Szlaki*, s. 558.

<sup>439</sup> M. Piotrowski, *Polityka...*, s. 617.

tasks mentioned in this document regarding economic policy was, among others, the entry into international energy resources markets. The declaration also emphasized that Turkmenistan consistently advocates a multifaceted approach to the development of international pipeline infrastructure, based on economic feasibility and the principle of complementarity in various pipeline construction options<sup>440</sup>.

Although in the 1990s, when Boris Yeltsin was President of the Russian Federation, Russia did not have a coherent economic strategy towards the countries of the Caspian Sea region, the assumption of the presidency by Vladimir Putin in 2000, as well as the consequences of the events of September 11, 2001 (i.e., the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York), created a favorable climate for building a new Russian strategy in the Caspian region. An element of this strategy was the idea of creating a so-called "gas OPEC," parallel to the project of creating a global cartel of gas exporters imposing price policies on importers from highly industrialized countries. This project, which proposed using the network of the Russian company "Gazprom" to export gas from Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, was presented during the visit of Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov to Moscow in January 2002, but it did not meet with his interest, which indicated Turkmenistan's desire to become independent of the Russian Federation in terms of raw material export<sup>441</sup>.

Despite the lack of response to President Vladimir Putin's proposal to create a regional gas exporters' cartel, Turkmenistan simultaneously supported the strategic plans of the Central Asian Regional Association. This organization advocates the creation of a so-called "Turkic zone," which would refer to the historical idea of the "Great Turkestan." This geostrategic and geopolitical zone would cover areas from the Mediterranean Sea to Eastern Siberia, separating the Muslim republics from the Slavic countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In this concept, Turkmenistan sees an opportunity to build new gas and oil pipelines towards Western countries<sup>442</sup>.

In this context, it is also worth mentioning the document adopted by the Turkmen authorities in August 2003, entitled "Strategy for Economic, Political, and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan until 2020"<sup>443</sup>. The authors of this document pointed to actions necessary for the development of the fundamental sectors of the state's economy. The main goal of developing

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<sup>440</sup> S. Kardaś, *Szlaki*, s. 559.

<sup>441</sup> M. Piotrowski, *Polityka...*, s. 603.

<sup>442</sup> T. Bodio, A. Wierzbicki, Z. Świerczyński, *Handel...*, [w:] "Turkmenistan...", s. 617.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 614.

the energy sector by 2020 was to increase exports to countries such as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other Central Asian countries<sup>444</sup>.

On April 10, 2003, an agreement was signed between the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan regarding the supply of natural gas to Russia, establishing a 25-year (until 2028) cooperation between the two countries in the raw materials and energy sectors. Despite the adoption of this document, the agreed transmission volumes (70-90 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas per year) were not considered realistic, as Turkmenistan's production capacity and Russia's gas demand were not deemed significant<sup>445</sup>. The signed agreement also did not specify the price for purchasing this raw material. As a result, negotiation rounds regarding gas purchase prices, involving representatives of Gazprom and Turkmen authorities, have to be held annually. These arrangements gave the Turkmen leader, Saparmurat Niyazov, the opportunity to raise gas prices. The first, albeit unsuccessful, attempt at gas blackmail against Russia took place in 2004, resulting in Turkmenistan cutting off gas supplies to Russia for several months. However, the following year – 2005, the Russian Federation had to agree to Turkmenistan's price increase from 44 to 65 US dollars per 1,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

The Russian Federation also wanted to make direct investments in the exploitation of hydrocarbon deposits on the Caspian Sea shelf. To this end, in 2003, Russian companies Itera, Rosneft, and Zarubezhneftgaz formed the Zarift consortium, which held talks with the Turkmen authorities. However, this project met with protests from the Islamic Republic of Iran, which does not have an agreement with Turkmenistan on the division of waters in the Caspian Sea. As a result, this project remained frozen<sup>446</sup>.

In 2007, pipeline modernization began, and at the end of 2009, a new gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the People's Republic of China was opened<sup>447</sup>. In this way, the Russian Federation began to slowly lose influence in Turkmenistan, which started to orient its economic policy towards China. In this context, we can talk about the beginning of the "Sinization" of Turkmenistan's economic policy alongside its simultaneous "de-Russification."

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<sup>444</sup> E. Kuźmina, *Reformy gospodarcze*, [w:] "Turkmenistan...", s. 654.

<sup>445</sup> R. Kłaczyński, E. Sadowska, *Postradzieckie państwa Azji Centralnej. Historia, polityka, gospodarka, społeczeństwo*, Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie, Kraków, 2013, s. 189.

<sup>446</sup> M. Falkowski, *Russia's policy in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia*, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw, 2006, s. 30 – 31.

<sup>447</sup> A. Piziak – Rapacz, *Problem surowcowo – energetyczny w dobie globalizacji na przykładzie gazu ziemnego*, [w:] M. Lasoń (red.) "Gospodarka światowa w dobie globalizacji", Kraków, 2022, s. 178.; M. Popławski, M. Bogusz, K. Strachota, *Turkmenistan's President visits Beijing: Chinese gas diplomacy*, za: Turkmenistan's President visits Beijing: Chinese gas diplomacy | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 01.06.2024.

The prolonged impasse in relations between Turkmenistan and the Russian Federation could also be evidenced by the decisions made on November 2, 2010, at the fifth meeting of the Russian-Turkmen economic commission. Both sides did not reach an agreement on the volume of gas supplies for 2011 and limited themselves to stating that they would operate within already agreed terms. The Russian-Turkmen economic commission meeting took place a few days after the visit of the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, to Ashgabat, and after a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, denying the remarks of one of Russia's deputy prime ministers, Viktor Sechin, about Russia's participation in the project promoted by Turkmenistan, the "TAPI" pipeline, running from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. Turkmenistan had resumed the implementation of this project, which, although conceived in the 1990s, had remained unfulfilled due to the political situation in Afghanistan. It was only after the death of Saparmurat Niyazov and the assumption of the presidency of Turkmenistan by Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow in 2006 that the country intensified its efforts to realize this undertaking. This is evidenced by the visits made by the Turkmen leader to India in 2010<sup>448</sup>.

As a result, on December 11, 2010, an intergovernmental agreement on the implementation of this project was signed. The signed agreements and the summit meeting are the result of Turkmenistan's intensive efforts to diversify its political partners and gas export routes. In this context, Turkmenistan's efforts at the time should also be seen as an attempt to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the Russian Federation, which was one of the largest importers of Turkmen gas. The intensification of work on the project also aimed to improve relations with Afghanistan<sup>449</sup>.

In the second decade of the 21st century, there was an increasing deepening of relations between Turkmenistan and the People's Republic of China at the expense of relations with the Russian Federation. On April 26, 2011, the China Development Bank and the state gas company "Turkmengaz" signed an agreement to provide a loan of 1.4 billion US dollars to the Turkmen company in exchange for gas transmission to the People's Republic of China. The new agreement indicated a strengthening of China's position in Turkmenistan's energy sector. This agreement was valid for ten years (until 2021). Its goal was to develop the largest gas fields in

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<sup>448</sup> *Turkmenistan tries to sell Russia more gas*, za: Turkmenistan tries to sell Russia more gas | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 11.05.2024.

<sup>449</sup> *Turkmenistan lobbuje gazociąg do Indii i Pakistanu*, za: Turkmenistan lobbuje gazociąg do Indii i Pakistanu | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 15.05.2024.

Turkmenistan – Yolotan. The signed agreements were a result of the deteriorating economic situation in Turkmenistan due to the reduction in gas transmission to the Russian Federation and a decline in export revenues. Turkmenistan's attempts to diversify raw material exports, which were to be manifested in the modernization of infrastructure to the Islamic Republic of Iran, were unsuccessful. In this situation, China became the main economic partner for the Turkmen authorities, who had been seeking a loan from them throughout the previous year (2010). Efforts were also made to sign another agreement on gas exports. Maintaining such a pace of economic development between the two countries resulted, on the one hand, in breaking the Russian Federation's monopoly and strengthening Turkmenistan's position, but on the other hand, in significant economic dependence on China<sup>450</sup>.

As previously mentioned, the Chairman of the People's Republic of China announced the creation of a strategic economic initiative, the "Belt and Road." This happened during his visit to the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, in September 2013. This idea is also called the "New Silk Road," and Turkmenistan was also involved in its implementation. One of the projects undertaken as part of the "Belt and Road" initiative was the inauguration of a railway route directly connecting Kazakhstan with Turkmenistan. This route is part of the "North-South" railway line connecting Central Asia with the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The cost of building the new railway section was borne by the participating countries, as well as the Asian Development Bank (as part of the CAREC project). The route was primarily intended for the export of Kazakh oil and wheat, as well as for the transit of goods to and from Afghanistan, including petroleum products, transported mainly through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This project and other planned initiatives, including the construction of the "Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan" and "China-Afghanistan" railway lines, integrate the Central Asian region with the People's Republic of China and the Middle East. This reflects changes concerning the diminishing importance of the Russian Federation and the Soviet legacy in favor of developing economic relations with other international players<sup>451</sup>.

The weakening of economic relations between the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan was influenced by the initiation on July 24, 2015, of proceedings before the Arbitration Tribunal in Stockholm by the Russian gas company "Gazprom" against the state company "Turkmengaz." Representatives of the Russian Federation demanded changes in the agreement

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<sup>450</sup> *Turkmenistan makes another big loan from China*, za: Turkmenistan makes another big loan from China | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 15.05.2024.

<sup>451</sup> A. Jarosiewicz, *The new iron Silk Route*, za: The new iron Silk Route | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies.

concerning the reduction of gas supply volumes and price reductions. In early July 2015, the Turkmen side accused the Russian side of insolvency and failing to fulfill contractual obligations. Filing the case with the Arbitration Tribunal was likely a pretext by the Russian side to avoid adhering to the 2003 agreement with Turkmenistan, which was unfavorable from a Russian perspective and burdensome for Gazprom. It was also possible that the proceedings initiated by Russia aimed to persuade the Turkmen side to reach a settlement favorable to the Russian Federation before the actual conclusion of the case by the Stockholm Tribunal.

Additionally, the Russian side lost interest in importing Turkmen gas due to changing external and internal conditions. This happened because part of the Turkmen raw material that supplied the southern regions of the Russian Federation was no longer needed due to the infrastructure developed by Gazprom, which enabled cheaper gas transmission from its own sources (the price of Turkmen gas was four times higher than that of Russian gas)<sup>452</sup>.

The clashes between Turkmenistan and Russia showed a shift in Russia's economic strategy towards Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries, involving a significant reduction in gas import volumes and, ultimately, even a complete cessation of purchasing this raw material. Although the process of "de-Russification" of Turkmenistan's economic policy, with particular emphasis on this country's energy policy, significantly deepened in the early years of the 21st century, this does not mean a complete lack of interest from the Russian Federation in economic cooperation with the Central Asian region. The invasion of this country in Ukraine in 2022 and its consequences will show attempts to reassert influence over the economy of Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries.

### **“De-Russification” of Economic Policy in Turkmenistan after Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in 2022**

G The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which resulted in the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia and the Western countries' decision to stop importing Russian energy carriers, caused Russia to "pivot" towards the East and seek new markets for its goods and services. This necessitates broader economic cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, as well as with Central Asian countries.

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<sup>452</sup> S. Kardaś, *Rosja rezygnuje z turkmeńskiego gazu*, za: *Rosja rezygnuje z turkmeńskiego gazu* (osw.waw.pl), dostęp: 22.05.2024.



In the context of Russian-Chinese economic cooperation after February 24, 2022, it is essential to consider the economic relations between China and Turkmenistan, as they have an impact on Russian-Turkmen relations.

The new leader of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedow, successor to his father Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow as president, made a state visit to Beijing from January 5 to 6, 2023. He met with the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping. The occasion for their discussions was the thirty-first anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkmenistan and China. During the visit, a joint stance on broad security issues was defined, and a series of preliminary sectoral agreements were signed, the most important (according to Chinese reports) being the agreement to intensify preparations for the construction of the fourth line of the gas pipeline (line "D"), running along the route: Turkmenistan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan – Kyrgyzstan – People's Republic of China. The intended and achieved goal of economic cooperation with China was to detach Turkmenistan from the Russian market and infrastructure, thus creating dependence on asymmetric relations with Beijing. For the Chinese authorities, the plans to build line "D" of the gas pipeline send a serious signal to Russia. Negotiations with the Turkmen authorities give Beijing a strong leverage over the Russian Federation regarding the project it wants to implement with it, namely the construction of the "Power of Siberia 2" pipeline system through Mongolia. Faced with the invasion of Ukraine, Russia is forced to cooperate with the People's Republic of China, and China, conducting intensified energy diplomacy with Turkmenistan, can expand its negotiating room regarding the volume and price of Russian gas<sup>453</sup>.

Due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Federation is trying to establish economic cooperation not only with China but also with other Central Asian countries on gas transmission issues, which is causing concern in Turkmenistan. Consequently, on August 12, 2023, the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on gas cooperation between the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. In this document, the deputy head of the state oil and gas company "Turkmengaz" criticized the emerging Russian information about the possibility of deepened gas cooperation between the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as Russia's pursuit of using the Central Asia-China pipeline for exporting

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<sup>453</sup> M. Popławski, M. Bogusz, K. Strachota, *Turkmenistan's President visits Beijing: Chinese gas diplomacy*, za: Turkmenistan's President visits Beijing: Chinese gas diplomacy | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 01.06.2024.

gas to the People's Republic of China. The communiqué indicated that the intensification of Russia's actions on gas transmission is perceived as a threat to Turkmenistan's national interests. Turkmenistan, in fact, favors maintaining the existing agreements regarding the transmission of only Turkmen, Kazakh, and Uzbek gas through the Central Asia-China pipeline.

The Turkmen diplomatic statement coincided with intensified efforts towards alternative directions of gas cooperation and new export markets, independent of Russia. In July and August 2023, Turkmenistan resumed talks with Azerbaijan, Turkey, and the European Union on the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline. Through this pipeline, Turkmenistan could send its gas across the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus to EU member states. According to the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs, up to 30 billion cubic meters of gas could be transmitted annually through this pipeline. The European Union's return to negotiations with Turkmenistan is favored by the interest in obtaining fuel supplies from sources other than Russia.

At the same time, Turkmenistan signed a contract in June 2023 to export gas to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The agreement with sanctioned Iran was reportedly consulted with representatives of the United States. According to the arrangements, Turkmenistan is to supply Iran with 10 million cubic meters of gas daily. However, details of the agreement concerning annual volumes, the contracted fuel prices, and the duration of the agreement were not disclosed<sup>454</sup>.

Turkmenistan has gradually "de-Russified" its economic policy, especially in the energy sector. Observing this process, it can be stated that as Turkmenistan moved away from the influence of the Russian Federation, it simultaneously drew closer to the People's Republic of China. Now, China buys, possibly bigger quantities of gas from Russia, but of greater value from Turkmenistan<sup>455</sup>. Turkmenistan has become China's "prize" and its most important partner among the Central Asian countries. The "de-Russification" of Turkmenistan's economic policy has simultaneously led to its "Sinicization," economically depending on the People's Republic of China, which is gaining significance not only in the Eurasian region but also on the international stage.

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<sup>454</sup> M. Popławski, *Turkmenistan: concerns over Russia's growing activity on the regional gas market*, za: Turkmenistan: concerns over Russia's growing activity on the regional gas market | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, dostęp: 04.06.2024.

<sup>455</sup> Eurasianet: *Turkmenistan wyprzedza Rosję w dostawach gazu do Chin*, za: Eurasianet: Turkmenistan wyprzedza Rosję w dostawach gazu do Chin - Studium Europy Wschodniej UW, dostęp: 22.06.2024.

### Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia gospodarczą „derusyfikację” Turkmenistanu od czasu uzyskania przez niego niepodległości w 1991 roku. Początkowo zależny od Rosji w zakresie eksportu gazu ziemnego, Turkmenistan zdywersyfikował swoje partnerstwa gospodarcze, nawiązując współpracę z Chinami, krajami islamskimi i organizacjami międzynarodowymi. Główne projekty energetyczne, w tym rurociągi do Iranu, Turcji i Chin, miały na celu ograniczenie wpływów Rosji, ale często napotykały na wyzwania geopolityczne i finansowe. W XXI wieku rosnące uzależnienie Turkmenistanu od Chin w zakresie eksportu energii oznaczało zmianę w kierunku „sinizacji”, a Chiny stały się jego kluczowym partnerem gospodarczym. Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę w 2022 roku dodatkowo zintensyfikowała wysiłki Turkmenistanu na rzecz dywersyfikacji powiązań gospodarczych, w tym nawiązania partnerstwa z UE i Iranem.

### Słowa kluczowe:

Polityka gospodarcza, polityka energetyczna, eksport gazu, Chińska Republika Ludowa, Federacja Rosyjska, Turkmenistan.

### Key words:

Economic policy, energy policy, gas exports, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan.

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  13. Turkmenistan tries to sell Russia more gas, za: Turkmenistan tries to sell Russia more gas | OSW Centre for Eastern Studies

## **Language policy in Kazakhstan. Course of actions over the last few years**

### **Introduction**

In the face of current global changes – both political and social – language policy is a crucial tool aimed at building (or maintaining) national identity and shaping cultural distinctiveness. The effective language policy serves as a bridge between the past and the present, between culture and politics as well as between the individual and society. It fulfills several functions: unifying (allowing individuals to identify with a particular national community), separating (by contrasting one national language with others), a prestige one (establishing the superiority of a national community that has developed its own communication code over those that have not), and a normative one (defining the rules of communication in a given national language)<sup>456</sup>.

Over the past two years, Kazakhstan has taken a series of steps aimed at promoting the Kazakh language and expanding its use – in politics, education, and the broader public sphere. Key factors accelerating these efforts include Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the growing skepticism towards Moscow's influence in the region<sup>457</sup>.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has become of catalyst for changes in the approach to learning the Kazakh language in Kazakh society. Learning and using the Kazakh language in everyday life has begun to be seen as a matter of national security – an expression of resistance against the imperialist ambitions of an aggressive neighbor with whom the land border stretches over 7,500 kilometers. Since the outbreak of the war, there has been a significant increase in interest in Kazakh language courses and social media channels conducted in Kazakh. Kazakh society – especially the younger generation – has started

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<sup>456</sup> A. Piotrowski; M. Ziółkowski, *Zróżnicowanie językowe a struktura społeczna*, Warszawa 1976, s. 120.

<sup>457</sup> *Kazakhstan Moves to Promote Its Language Over Russian*, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/06/kazakhstan-moves-to-promote-its-language-over-russian-a82689> [access: 30.06.2024].

to reconsider the issue of their national identity and the place of the Kazakh language within it<sup>458</sup>.

The purpose of this article is to analyze materials available on the Internet related to language issues in Kazakhstan after 2022. This will allow for an assessment of whether the Kazakhs' attitude towards the Kazakh language has changed recently and how the use of the Russian language is currently perceived in Kazakhstan.

### **Language as a Part of the National Identity**

To approach the issue of language policy in the most accurate, precise, and comprehensive manner, research should begin with an attempt to define the basic concepts related to the broader issues of nationality. This includes clarifying terms such as "nation" and "national identity".

There has not yet been a single, universal definition of "nation," which also has corresponding implications for defining the concept of "national identity." The undeniable influence on this includes the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon being studied, its interdisciplinarity, the cultural diversity of the communities studied, as well as the use of different defining criteria (e.g., common origin, language, religion, or traditions).

For the purposes of this article, the definition of a nation proposed by a sociologist Mark Weber will be used, who emphasized the importance of national consciousness as a determining factor in the existence of a nation. He stated that the concept of a "nation" means "in the understanding of those who use it, first and foremost, undoubtedly that certain groups of people can be expected to have a specific sense of solidarity towards other groups, and therefore it belongs to the realm of values"<sup>459</sup>. A nation, therefore, is a community of people that relates to a common origin, language, culture, and history, and has a sense of shared belonging (*I know who I am*). National consciousness, on the other hand, distinguishes a national community from an ethnic group, as the latter is characterized by negative self-identification (*I know who I am not*).

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<sup>458</sup> M. Dumoulin, *Steppe change: How Russia's war on Ukraine is reshaping Kazakhstan*, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/steppe-change-how-russias-war-on-ukraine-is-reshaping-kazakhstan/> [access: 30.06.2024].

<sup>459</sup> M. Weber, *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej*, transl. Dorota Lachowska, Warszawa 2002, p. 667.

In attempting to define national identity, one can refer to the definition proposed by Polish sociologist Zbigniew Bokszański. For him, national identity is a system containing the following components: a cognitive component (knowledge about “ourselves” and “others”, including the differences that separate “us” from “others”), an attitude towards one's own nation (the level of satisfaction with belonging to the nation), and an emotional area (determining the intensity of the bond with the nation)<sup>460</sup>. Bokszański emphasizes that national identity consists of a shared sense of belonging, national culture, national symbols, national history, and the national language – a fundamental element of culture that not only enables communication but also serves as a carrier of tradition, values, and cultural identity<sup>461</sup>. The concept of national identity was also aptly described by Tadeusz Paleczny, who characterized it as "a sense of community, similarity, and identical situation and fate of a certain finite number of people who constitute a nation or are part of it"<sup>462</sup>.

Language thus constitutes one of the determinants of national identity. It connects individuals into specific national social groups, which identify themselves not only through the traditions and culture of their ancestors but also through their speech.

### Language Policy in Kazakhstan

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Russian is not designated as an official language – it is “officially used on an equal footing with Kazakh language”<sup>463</sup> in state organizations and local governments. In the same article, the Kazakh language is designated as the only “state language”<sup>464</sup>.

The language policy is “the deliberate choices made by governments or other authorities with regard to the relationship between language and social life”<sup>465</sup> which “consists of processes both at the level of society and at the level of language”<sup>466</sup>.

<sup>460</sup> Z. Bokszański, *Tożsamości zbiorowe*, Warszawa 2007, p. 80–81.

<sup>461</sup> A. Popielarczyk-Pałęga, *Tożsamość narodowa, tożsamość etniczna, identyfikacja narodowa jednostki. Rozważania metodologiczne na przykładzie środowisk polonijnych*, [in:] „Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne” 2018, no. 27, p. 19.

<sup>462</sup> T. Paleczny, *Ewolucja ideologii i przemiany tożsamości narodowej Polonii w Stanach Zjednoczonych w latach 1870–1970*, Warszawa–Kraków 1994, p. 64.

<sup>463</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, <https://www.akorda.kz/en/constitution-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-50912> [access: 30.06.2024].

<sup>464</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>465</sup> P. Djité, *From Language Policy to Language Planning*, Canberra 1994, p. 63.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

In 2023, the Kazakh government adopted the Concept of Language Policy Development for 2023-2029, which includes the following goals: the requirement for higher government officials (ministers, vice-ministers, governors, and mayors, as well as deputy governors and deputy mayors) to know Kazakh language, the certificates for students confirming their knowledge of the Kazakh language, making Kazakh the language of science, and developing an appropriate system for learning the Kazakh language<sup>467</sup>.

Another way to promote the language is to follow the example of Kazakhstan's neighbor (Kyrgyzstan) by increasing the use of the Kazakh language in the media. The discussed project aims to raise the share of the titular language – both on television and radio – from the current 50% to 70% at a rate of 5% per year starting in 2025<sup>468</sup>.

In January 2024, around one hundred scientists and researchers associated with the most important Kazakh universities and other scientific institutes participated in a scientific seminar organized by the Kazakh Ministry of Science and Higher Education<sup>469</sup>. The meeting focused on the knowledge base available on Wikipedia – the multilingual online encyclopedia operating since 2001. Given that it is one of the most popular sources of information – not only for the academic community but also for other Internet users – the need to update the content available in the Kazakh language, as well as to implement new content, was recognized. As a result, the digital space available in the Kazakh language will be expanded and popularized.

In the same month, the Kazakh authorities' decision to change the names of some railway stations in Kazakhstan from Russian to Kazakh came under criticism from Tina Kandelaki, a Russian journalist. This change included stations such as "Uralsk" (new name: "Ural") and "Zhanaozen" ("Uzen"). Kandelaki, using the Telegram platform, published a post stating: "Kazakhstan is slowly but steadily displacing the Russian language at the state level", suggesting that the Russian language is being discriminated against in the biggest state of the Central Asia. Her words triggered a strong reaction on Kazakh social media, with many comments emphasizing Kazakhstan's independence and its right to make decisions regarding its internal policies, as well as the necessity to restore the Kazakh language, which has been

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<sup>467</sup> *Kazakhstan develops 2023-2029 Concept of Language Policy Development*, [https://en.inform.kz/news/kazakhstan-develops-2023-2029-concept-of-language-policy-development\\_a4111860/](https://en.inform.kz/news/kazakhstan-develops-2023-2029-concept-of-language-policy-development_a4111860/) [access: 30.06.2024].

<sup>468</sup> *Kazakhstan drafts media law to increase use of Kazakh language over Russian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/06/kazakhstan-drafts-media-law-to-increase-use-of-kazakh-language-over-russian> [access: 11.06.2024].

<sup>469</sup> *Scientists to Expand Kazakh-Language Content on Wikipedia*, <https://astanatimes.com/2024/02/scientists-to-expand-kazakh-language-content-on-wikipedia/> [access: 19.06.2024]



“lost” during the Soviet era. The response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also did not take long. Kazakh Foreign Ministry spokesman Aibek Smadiyarov announced that the Russian media director had been banned from entering the country, thus placing her on the list of persons not allowed into Kazakhstan. Until recently, the existence of such a list was speculative, but in October 2023, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed its existence. It is also said that pro-Russian propagandist Tigran Keosayan is on this list.

In May 2024, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a law amending the legislation on granting Kazakh citizenship, which places significant emphasis on the requirement for knowledge of the Kazakh language, as well as knowledge of the history and constitution of Kazakhstan. Russian bloggers commenting on this decision point to anti-Russian nationalism; however, Russian law in this regard is quite similar – candidates must obtain the status of “native Russian language speaker” from a commission operating under the Federal Migration Service. In both countries, it is also necessary to renounce the citizenship of another country<sup>470</sup>.

Moreover, interest in the Kazakh language is also growing abroad. In January 2024, the University of Oxford signed an agreement with the Kazakh Ministry of Science and Higher Education, resulting in the launch of the first Kazakh language teaching program at the university<sup>471</sup>.

### **After the Invasion**

According to statements made by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, changes related to the Kazakh language, aimed at strengthening its position and making it a language of interethnic communication, will be implemented gradually by the Kazakh authorities, avoiding any drastic measures. Not all actions are well-received by Kazakh society, and some of them even evoke very extreme emotions.

At the Astana summit in October 2022, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed the creation of an international organization to support and promote the Russian language under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Even though Tokayev's actions

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<sup>470</sup> Łatwiej o rosyjskie obywatelstwo, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-04-24/latwiej-o-rosyjski-e-obywatelstwo> [access: 19.06.2024].

<sup>471</sup> A. Yu, *New Kazakh language program to be offered at the University of Oxford*, <https://www.cherwell.org/2024/02/07/new-kazakh-language-program-to-be-offered-at-the-university-of-oxford/> [access: 30.06.2024].

involve maintaining a certain balance to avoid exacerbating the already difficult linguistic situation in the country, such proposals can be and are being used for entirely different purposes<sup>472</sup>, as – for example – they align with the broader concept of the "Russian World" ("Russkiy Mir").

A week later, during a meeting with the community of Almaty, Tokayev emphasized the "unacceptability of using the Kazakh language for political games"<sup>473</sup> and the necessity of pursuing a balanced language policy. In his speech, he highlighted that "the use of the Kazakh language is expanding year by year"<sup>474</sup> and that "the state is taking necessary actions to support the Kazakh language"<sup>475</sup>. Very quickly, political scientist Dimash Alzhanov provided his commentary on the matter, stating that "the Kazakh language will inevitably become politicized, as its further development and survival are directly linked to the liberalization of the society's political life"<sup>476</sup>. He also asserted that "the language of politics needs space to develop. Without freedom of action in politics, economy, science, and culture, without freedom of speech, the Kazakh language is doomed to isolation and lack of claims even in Kazakhstan. Therefore, society will instinctively politicize this issue until it is completely resolved. This is a source of mobilization against an authoritarian regime that has forgotten the national interests of the country"<sup>477</sup>.

In April 2022, during his speech at the session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, Tokayev described Kazakhstan as a multilingual state, which obliges him to take actions aimed at strengthening the status of the Kazakh language. However, he emphasized that this should be done "not to the detriment of, and especially not to discriminate against, any other languages and those citizens who speak other languages"<sup>478</sup>.

The outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict changed the Kazakh approach to the language issue. While until 2022 the majority of society considered the increase in the use of the Kazakh language in political and social life as a given, after the outbreak of the war –

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<sup>472</sup> А. Шеляпина, *Россия – Центральная Азия: на пути к Году русского языка*, <https://ruskiymir.ru/publications/306511/> [access: 15.06.2024].

<sup>473</sup> Глава государства провел встречу с общественностью Алматинской области, <https://akorda.kz/ru/glava-gosudarstva-provel-vstrechu-s-obshchestvennostyu-almatinskoy-oblasti-1992251> [access: 30.06.2024].

<sup>474</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>476</sup> Dimash Alzhanov's Telegram account, <https://t.me/alzhanovchannel/375> [access: 30.06.2014].

<sup>477</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>478</sup> Токаев после идеи о продвижении русского языка заявил о „недопустимости использования казахского языка для политических игр“, <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32091331.html> [access: 30.06.2024].

as a necessity. The learning of the national language began to be associated with the issue of national identity as, which in turn is linked to the nation itself – a sociocultural construct understood as a specific community of people connected by a common history, culture, language, and territory. Identifying with a given national group became important both through nurturing one's national (titular) language and rejecting the imposed language – in light of the events of 2022, used by the potential aggressor. This situation also led to an increased significance of the debate regarding the decolonization of Kazakhstan and the main obstacle standing in its way: "Decolonial debates are still conducted through the Russian language, but for decolonization to be successful, these debates will need to transition to national languages"<sup>479</sup>.

In the public sphere, voices like that of Maqsat Mälik, a linguistic activist and advocate for transforming Kazakh into an interethnic communication language, can currently be heard. She declares that "if the choice is between preserving our identity and reading Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in the original language, I would rather preserve my identity". Similarly, Botakozy Kassymbekova, an assistant professor in modern history at Basel University, has referred to the Russian language and Russian literature in the following way: "Russian literature teaches us to love Russia and despise ourselves"<sup>480</sup>. In light of such an approach, the reaction to Tokayev's decision – who appointed Aida Belayaeva, a specialist in Russian language and literature, as the Minister of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan – seems to be more understandable.

### Summary

The authorities of Kazakhstan, aiming to improve the status of the Kazakh language in the country, are opting for a gradual approach, which is not always met with favorable reception from the public. The situation is further exacerbated by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which began in February 2022.

The events of February 2022 led to an increased interest in the Kazakh language—both in language courses and in social media channels conducted in this language. The Kazakh language began to be seen as a key element of Kazakh national identity, significantly influencing the perception of the presence of the Russian language in the country.

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<sup>479</sup> J. Leydiker, *The War in Ukraine Is Catalyzing a Linguistic Awakening in Kazakhstan*, <https://thedi diplomat.com/2023/08/the-war-in-ukraine-is-catalyzing-a-linguistic-awakening-in-kazakhstan/> [access: 30.06.2024].

<sup>480</sup> *Ibidem*.

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**Streszczenie:**

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza postępów w realizacji obecnej polityki językowej w Kazachstanie poprzez analizę niedawnych działań rządu mających na celu poprawę statusu języka tytułarnego w tym kraju. Artykuł porusza również kwestię zmieniającego się stosunku społeczności kazachskiej do języka kazachskiego jako elementu tożsamości narodowej po inwazji Federacji Rosyjskiej na Ukrainę w lutym 2022 roku. Badania obejmowały analizę materiałów prasowych dostępnych online zarówno w języku angielskim, jak i rosyjskim. Biorąc pod uwagę, że język jest jednym z wyznaczników tożsamości narodowej i nośnikiem dziedzictwa kulturowego narodu, w artykule przedstawiono definicje „narodu” i „tożsamości narodowej”, aby zapewnić jak najdokładniejsze, najbardziej precyzyjne i kompleksowe zrozumienie tematu badań.

**Słowa kluczowe:**

Naród, tożsamość narodowa, język, polityka językowa, Kazachstan, Azja Środkowa

**Key words:**

Nation, national identity, language, language policy, Kazakhstan, Central Asia

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## Gastarbeiter as an impediment to sovereignization of Tajikistan

### Introduction

One of the five post-Soviet republics in Central Asia, Tajikistan remains among the poorest nations of the former USSR despite the significant socio-economic transformations the country has experienced over the past three decades. Since gaining independence in 1991 its population has doubled reaching 10 million<sup>481</sup>. Economically, Tajikistan has recorded an average annual growth rate of approximately 7% over the past decade<sup>482</sup>.

Following the dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s Tajikistan faced a severe crisis, triggered by the disruption of economic ties with former Soviet republics and a prolonged civil war (1992–1997). The challenges of the 1990s had a profound impact on all segments of society, reducing the country's standard of living to levels seen decades earlier. Although the civil war formally ended with the 1997 peace agreement, Tajikistan was soon affected by the 1998 financial crisis that originated in Russia. This exogenous economic shock exacerbated the country's ongoing crisis. Tajikistan's economy proved unable to generate sufficient employment opportunities for its rapidly expanding labor force. Economic instability and widespread unemployment compelled hundreds of thousands of Tajiks to seek work abroad. Between 1989 and 2001, nearly half a million Tajiks emigrated, primarily to Russia<sup>483</sup>. Consequently, Russia became a crucial stabilizing force, mitigating Tajikistan's political and economic decline.

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<sup>481</sup> *Population – Tajikistan*, World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TJ> ,  
dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>482</sup> *GDP – Tajikistan*, World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=TJ>, dostęp:  
12.12.2024

<sup>483</sup> *Migration, Remittances, and Living Standards in Tajikistan*, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Tajikistan, 2007.  
[https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/media/docs/reports/remittances\\_report\\_iom\\_tajikistan\\_2007.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/media/docs/reports/remittances_report_iom_tajikistan_2007.pdf), dostęp: 12.12.2024

Labor migrants, commonly referred to as *gastarbeiter*, are present in nearly every Tajik family<sup>484</sup>. The term “gastarbeiter” was adopted from German in the late 1990s and gained popularity in the media of the Russian Federation and other CIS countries, initially in cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg, before becoming a part of everyday language among Russians and citizens of the former USSR. Originally, the term carried no negative connotation and referred to workers who voluntarily went to Germany under government contracts at the invitation of the German government. In contrast, the migration of laborers to Russia did not occur through formal invitations, leading to the term “gastarbeiter” acquiring a negative connotation. In Russia, labor migrants often regard the term as offensive, as it underscores their role as a source of inexpensive, typically unskilled labor<sup>485</sup>.

Over the past three decades, Tajikistan and Russia have signed over 300 agreements, of which the Treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance and the Treaty on 21st century-focused allied cooperation have become central. Tajikistan is part of most post-Soviet integration unions involving Russia, except the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Few countries rival Tajikistan in terms of economic dependence on Russia, as numerous sectors of its economy rely heavily on Russian support. Russia provides employment opportunities for a substantial number of Tajik labor migrants whose remittances constitute a critical component of Tajikistan’s economy and underpin its banking sector. Since gaining independence, Tajikistan has remained under significant Russian influence in the economic sphere. This dependence became particularly evident following the Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. The unprecedented Western sanctions imposed on Russia following this triggered a cascade of economic challenges within Tajikistan<sup>486</sup>. The country’s reliance on Russian financial inflows, coupled with a low standard of living, leaves it highly vulnerable to geopolitical pressures. This dependence compels the Tajikistani leadership to navigate carefully in its relations with Russia, avoiding contentious issues to maintain stability.

The Tajikistan of today has largely been shaped, both economically and politically, by Russia’s Central Asian policy. The country’s dependence on Russia serves a dual role: on one hand, it prevents a complete collapse, while on the other, it hinders Tajikistan’s economic and

<sup>484</sup> А. Боярский, *Таджикский вопрос. Что ждет гастарбайтеров на родине*, Коммерсантъ, 13.06.2016, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3007249>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>485</sup> А. Баширова, *«Охота» к перемене мест*, Таджикиские Трудовые Мигранты, 06.11.2011, <https://tajmigrant.com/oxota-k-peremene-mest.html>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>486</sup> *Санкции против России: Нелегкие времена для таджикской экономики*, CABAR, 10.03.2022, <https://cabar.asia/ru/sanktsii-protiv-rossii-nelegkie-vremena-dlya-tadzhikskoj-ekonomiki>, dostep: 12.12.2024

political development<sup>487</sup>. This article seeks to demonstrate that gastarbeiter not only contribute to economic stability but also play a critical role in maintaining political stability under the authoritarian regime. Consequently, their role obstructs the process of Tajikistan achieving full sovereignty in the contemporary era.

### **Sovereignty of the state**

The concept of sovereignty, applied to both individuals and collective entities, is one of the foundational paradigms of modern political thought. When examining its interpretation in contemporary political discourse, it is essential to recognize its multidimensional character and potential ambiguities. Traditional definitions of sovereignty typically describe it as the capacity to exercise authority – most commonly in the context of the state – autonomously, free from external or internal influences<sup>488</sup>.

Sovereignty can be categorized as internal and external<sup>489</sup>. Internal sovereignty refers to the independent authority to determine the scope and functioning of the state, free from the influence of organizations operating within its territory. In contrast, external sovereignty involves the exercise of power without interference from other states, international organizations, or any formal or informal pressure groups<sup>490</sup>.

The sovereignty of states in the first quarter of the 21st century is characterized by a notable growth in multilateral and bilateral relations. State interactions are increasingly governed by international law, multilateral and bilateral agreements, and informal rules and customs. States willingly limit aspects of their sovereignty in exchange for the advantages of participating in the international community. These advantages span political, economic and social dimensions, as well as the synergy effect, which results in added value across all areas of international engagement<sup>491</sup>.

In discussing the current situation of states Winczorek argues that, considering the reality, it is challenging to acknowledge their full sovereignty. This is particularly true with regard to external sovereignty: states are so deeply interconnected and interdependent – politically,

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<sup>487</sup> J. Lang, *Tadżykistan: chroniczna stagnacja*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Komentarze OSW, Warszawa 2016 pp.1-2.

<sup>488</sup> S. Sowiński, *Suwerenność, ale jaka? Spór o suwerenność Rzeczypospolitej w polskiej eurodebacie*, „Studia Europejskie” 1/2004, [https://journalse.com/pliki/pw/1-2004\\_Sowinski.pdf](https://journalse.com/pliki/pw/1-2004_Sowinski.pdf), dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>489</sup> I. Wallerstein, *Koniec świata jaki znamy*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 87-106.

<sup>490</sup> J.Kostecki, *Suwerenność ekonomiczna państwa i jej uwarunkowania*, „National Security Studies”, 2016, no.1, vol.9, p.101.

<sup>491</sup> J.Kostecki, *Suwerenność ...* p.103.



economically, militarily and culturally – that none can claim complete independence from the others<sup>492</sup>.

In modern international law, a distinction is made between the subordination of one state to another and the subordination of a state to an international organization or international law, which differs from traditional definitions<sup>493</sup>. The former type of subordination is viewed as a violation of sovereignty and the fundamental legal principle of the equality of states in terms of sovereignty. In contrast, voluntary and lawful partial subordination to an international organization or to the rules of international law is not regarded as an infringement on legal sovereignty as it does not violate this principle of international law.

### Labor migration of Tajiks

The standard of living for Tajikistan's population, particularly in rural areas, has historically been and remains very low. "For the first time ever, the World Bank together with the Agency on Statistics identified the poverty rate in Tajikistan in 1999, it was 83%. Now, it is reduced to 29.5%"<sup>494</sup>. In 2018, Tajikistan was the poorest country in the CIS, with 47% of its population living on less than \$1.33 a day, and 17% on less than \$0.85<sup>495</sup>. According to independent Tajik experts, poverty levels in the country reach as high as 62%<sup>496</sup>. Malnutrition, particularly among children and women, remains a significant issue. Tajikistan has the highest stunting rate in Europe and Central Asia, with 18% of children under five affected<sup>497</sup>. Non-monetary poverty remains prevalent<sup>498</sup>, with Tajikistan having only 163 housing units per 1,000 residents, the lowest rate in the European and Central Asian region<sup>499</sup>. Many families live in difficult conditions due to limited access to housing financing, heating, sanitation and education<sup>500</sup>. The

<sup>492</sup> P. Winczorek, *Nauka o państwie*, Warszawa 2005, p. 70.

<sup>493</sup> A. Wasilkowski, *Uczestnictwo w strukturach europejskich a suwerenność państwowa*, „Państwo i Prawo”, no. 4-5/1996, p. 17.

<sup>494</sup> *Tajikistan: Below the Poverty Threshold*, CABAR, 30.06.2019: <https://cabar.asia/en/tajikistan-below-the-poverty-threshold>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>495</sup> *Tajikistan: Below the Poverty ...*

<sup>496</sup> *Tajikistan: Below the Poverty...*

<sup>497</sup> O. Sevimli, F. Jungbluth, *Поддержка усилий по улучшению продовольственной безопасности в Таджикистане*, World Bank, 22.12.2022, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ru/europeandcentralasia/podderzhka-usiliy-po-usileniyu-prodovolstvennoy-bezopasnosti-v-tadzhikistane>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>498</sup> *Повышение уровня жизни населения в Таджикистане*, Всемирный банк, 12.04.2016, <https://www.vsemirnyjbank.org/ru/results/2016/04/13/improving-peoples-lives-in-tajikistan>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>499</sup> *Housing Poverty in Tajikistan*, Habitat for Humanity, 2023, <https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/country/tajikistan/>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>500</sup> O. Sevimli, F. Jungbluth, *Поддержка ...*

average Tajik family consists of six to seven members. This challenging social situation since the 1990s has driven citizens to migrate for work. As a result, Tajikistan's economy has been increasingly reliant on external factors, particularly labor migration and remittances.

Russia remains the primary destination for labor migration among Tajik citizens. Factors such as shared history, geographic proximity, language familiarity and simplified administrative procedures have made Russia a destination particularly appealing to labor migrants from Central Asia. The regions and cities with the highest concentrations of Tajik migrants include Moscow and Moscow Oblast, St. Petersburg, the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region, and the Sverdlovsk, Kaluga, Samara, Novosibirsk, Tyumen and Volgograd oblasts<sup>501</sup>.

According to World Bank data, labor migrants constitute 10-12% of Tajikistan's total population and 20-25% of its working-age population (18 to 40 years old), meaning that labor migration impacts one in four citizens. Among those under the age of 30, approximately 40% of Tajik citizens – or one in two – seek employment abroad. Recent data indicate that one in eight Tajik citizens live and work in Russia<sup>502</sup>. Tajik labor migrants predominantly work in the service sector (around 40%) and the construction sector (30-40%)<sup>503</sup>, as well as in transportation and agriculture. Over the past decade, remittances from labor migrants have contributed significantly to Tajikistan's economy, accounting for a large part of GDP: from 50% in 2014<sup>504</sup> to about one-third in 2021. This places Tajikistan globally among the top four countries most dependent on financial inflows from labor migration<sup>505</sup>. However, some economists argue that these figures are substantially underrated, as official estimates rely solely on bank-recorded transfers which represent no more than one-third of all remittances. The majority of funds are transferred informally and remain unrecorded<sup>506</sup>.

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<sup>501</sup> С. Рязанцев, *Трудовая миграция из Центральной Азии в Россию в контексте экономического кризиса*, „Россия в глобальной политике”, 31.08.2016, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/trudovaya-migraciya-iz-czentralnoj-azii-v-rossiyu-v-kontekste-ekonomicheskogo-krizisa/>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>502</sup> Х. Хуррамов, *Трудовые мигранты - герои нашего времени*, Радио Озоди, 18.12.2021, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/31615122.html>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>503</sup> С. Рязанцев, *Трудовая миграция...*

<sup>504</sup> В. Козловский, *Денежные переводы мигрантов составляют почти половину ВВП Таджикистана*, RG, <https://rg.ru/2012/11/22/perevodi-site.html>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>505</sup> П. Чоршанбиев, Б. Надиров, *Денежные переводы мигрантов составляют треть ВВП Таджикистан*, Asia-Plus, 10.12.2019, <https://www.asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/economic/20191210/denezhnie-perevodi-migrantov-sostavlyayut-tret-vvp-tadzhikistana>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>506</sup> *Sanctions Against Russia: Uneasy Times for the Tajik Economy*, CABAR, 11.03.2022 <https://cabar.asia/en/sanctions-against-russia-uneasy-times-for-the-tajik-economy>, dostep: 12.12.2024

In Tajikistan 74% of households allocate remittances from labor migrants toward food expenses<sup>507</sup>, addressing the essential need to supply families with sustenance. These remittances constitute a key source of livelihood for Tajik society, helping alleviate potential social tensions amid ongoing demographic growth. However, the high dependence of Tajikistan's welfare on labor migrants' remittances makes the country particularly vulnerable to economic fluctuations in Russia. A weakening of the Russian economy directly correlates with a reduction in financial inflows from labor migrants, thereby increasing Tajikistan's economic challenges.

### **Labor migration relative to Tajikistan's political situation**

As Tajikistan's economic system is unable to generate sufficient employment opportunities, the remittances sent monthly by approximately one million labor migrants working abroad serve as a crucial lifeline for Tajik families. At the same time, these financial inflows are key to maintaining political stability under the country's authoritarian regime. According to its constitution, Tajikistan is a legal, secular and democratic state. However, since 1994 the country has been continuously governed by President Emomali Rahmon. A referendum in 2003 extended the presidential term from five to seven years, while another referendum in 2015 approved constitutional amendments allowing for the current president's unlimited re-election<sup>508</sup>. Power is expected to be transferred within the family, with Rustam Emomali, the president's son, widely regarded as the favoured successor. Maintaining political stability during this succession process will be a critical challenge for the state apparatus.

The authoritarian regime in Tajikistan has resulted in the president and his family exerting significant control over the national economy. President Rahmon's extensive network of relatives has monopolized most sectors of the economy, deriving substantial profits from companies under their influence. Controlling more than 80% of the country's economic resources, Rahmon's regime has also subordinated Tajikistan's law enforcement agencies to its authority. The involvement of the president's inner circle and security forces in the transit of narcotics from Afghanistan through Tajikistan, combined with pervasive corruption within the government, further inhibits efforts toward structural economic and political reform in the country<sup>509</sup>.

<sup>507</sup> С. Рязанцев, *Трудовая миграция...*

<sup>508</sup> В. Кара-Мурза, *Наследственные «демократии»*, Радио Свобода, 23.05.2016, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/27752812.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>509</sup> *Семейная империя наркотрафика Эмомали Рахмон и его окружения*, Kereez, 3.05.2021 <https://kereez.kg/uslugi/1481-semejnyaya-imperiya-narkotrafika-emomali-rakhmon-i-ego-okruzeniya.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

Independent media have effectively been eliminated in Tajikistan. Direct access to social media platforms such as Facebook, VKontakte, YouTube and others has been blocked since they are perceived by the authorities as potential tools for recruiting religious extremists<sup>510</sup>. In its report “Freedom in the World – 2023”, the international NGO, Freedom House, ranked Tajikistan as an enslaved country with an authoritarian political system. The country scored only 7 out of 100 points, reflecting severe restrictions imposed by the government on civil society, human rights defenders and journalists<sup>511</sup>. Similarly, the World Press Freedom Index compiled for 180 countries by Reporters Without Borders highlights the decline in press freedom in Tajikistan, with the country’s ranking falling from 115th place in 2014 to 155th in 2024<sup>512</sup>. At present, Asia-Plus remains the only relatively independent media outlet in Tajikistan, encompassing a website, news service, a radio station and a newspaper. However, it operates under constraints, including a degree of self-censorship<sup>513</sup>.

Furthermore, Tajikistan’s political system offers no room for political competition. Since 1992, the country has had neither a democratic opposition nor elections that meet the standards of democratic processes as understood in Europe. This absence of political competition has stifled the emergence of new leaders, innovative ideas and the political will necessary for reform. Consequently, over the past three decades, labor migration has grown significantly in scale and importance to Tajikistan’s fragile and unreformed economy.

As noted by a former Deputy Minister of the Economy, Karimjan Akhmedov, the humble Tajik migrant worker has actually become a recognizable brand of the country. (...) It shows, above all, that the government is unable to make qualitative changes in the economy. All the slogans about industrialization and modernization of the economy have turned out to be empty promises. Tajikistan in the 21st century retains the status of one of the poorest countries in the world. And in this situation, the simplest way out is to export cheap unskilled labor. Why reform and develop the economy, why create new jobs if relative social and economic stability can be ensured by labor migrants. The current state of the economy can be compared to drug addiction, and the role of the drug here belongs to remittances from migrants. If there are no remittances, the economy will collapse; if there is no economy, social instability will begin. If social

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<sup>510</sup> А. Боярский, *Таджикский вопрос...*

<sup>511</sup> Y. Gorokhovskaia, A. Shahbaz, A. Slipowitz, *Freedom in the World 2023. Marking 50 Years in the Struggle for Democracy*, Freedom House, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2023/marking-50-years>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>512</sup> *Tajikistan – Reporters without Borders*, <https://rsf.org/en/country/tajikistan>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>513</sup> *About Us*, Asia-Plus, <https://asiaplustj.info/en/info/about>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

instability starts, the existence of the state itself will be threatened. No one wants this, and that is why the government is trying to at least somehow manage migration processes<sup>514</sup>.

According to Akhmedov, this dynamic is characteristic of authoritarian states with a clan-based structure, where economic reforms aimed at job creation are absent due to the monopolization of key industries by the ruling clan.

To reduce reliance on remittances, it is essential to establish an economy grounded in free market principles. Achieving this would require the authorities to prioritize the development of a transparent tax system, foster a favorable investment climate, ensure the independence of the judiciary, dismantle existing market monopolies, invest in human capital, and minimize government interference in economic activities. Such reforms would necessitate a robust fight against corruption, including a resolute stance against those with close ties to power and privileged access to resources.

Similar challenges are present in Tajikistan's agricultural sector, preventing the creation of additional jobs. Over the years of independence, the sector has remained unreformed: credit sources tailored to agriculture have not been developed; no significant tax reforms have been implemented, which is a further burden on farmers; and local producers struggle to compete with large companies supplying imported goods. Consequently, the agricultural sector remains outdated and underfunded. Despite these challenges, agriculture is a cornerstone of Tajikistan's economy, contributing 22% to GDP and 19% to exports, while employing more than 60% of the population. However, the sector's inefficiency is starkly highlighted by the fact that 75% of the country's food needs are met through imports<sup>515</sup>. This dependency leaves Tajikistan highly vulnerable to disruptions and price increases in global agricultural markets. The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and income, the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, and the global rise in food prices have further affected the country's food insecurity, which had already been a significant concern.

Tajikistan's economic landscape lacks genuine competition. It is also very difficult to classify it as an economy since one of the main indicators of its development and success is a million-strong workforce of *gastarbeiter*.

Labor migration has also had detrimental effects on education in Tajikistan as it has caused a significant outflow of skilled professionals from this sector, thus undermining the quality of education across all levels. Additionally, the absence of fathers due to migration has negatively

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<sup>514</sup> X. Хуррамов, *Вклад мигрантов в экономику Таджикистана. Недооцененный труд?*, Радио Озоди, 30.12.2023, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/32753495.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>515</sup> O. Sevimli, F. Jungbluth, *Поддержка ...*

affected children's education, often deprioritizing it within households. At the beginning of the century, only 30% of migrants invested in their children's education. This period saw a marked decline in the number of pupils under the age of 15, which is the age by which compulsory nine-year schooling ends. The government's investment in education remains limited, reflecting broader systemic neglect. Since the early 1990s, Tajikistan has also faced significant challenges in sustaining a quality healthcare system. Insufficient government funding and the emigration of professionals have led to declining healthcare standards and a chronic shortage of medical equipment. Adequate medical infrastructure is primarily confined to the capital, Dushanbe, while healthcare facilities in other regions are rudimentary or absent<sup>516</sup>.

Tajikistan's economy experiences periodic disruptions when labor migrants return home, often to limited employment opportunities and an absence of social protection to assist and support them. The most recent instance occurred in March 2024 following a terrorist attack in Russia, during which armed assailants stormed the Crocus City Hall concert venue near Moscow, resulting in the deaths of 145 individuals. In the aftermath of the attack, 10 Tajiks were arrested, and four of them were charged with participating in the shootings. In the weeks following this tragic event, Tajiks in Russia faced increased intimidation, discrimination, detentions and bureaucratic hurdles in the migration process, and this has worsened their living conditions. Some employers began dismissing Tajik workers, and numerous Russian regions began restricting migrant labor in key sectors such as transportation, logistics, trade, housing and municipal services<sup>517</sup>.

According to Tajik authorities, there are currently over three million ethnic Tajiks residing in Russia<sup>518</sup>. Tajikistan also engages in labor migration cooperation with countries such as the United Kingdom, South Korea, Qatar and Kazakhstan. The mass return of Tajik migrants from Russia would trigger a crisis for President Emomali Rahmon and would place immense pressure on Tajikistan's social services and economic model, ill-equipped to accommodate them, as job opportunities remain scarce. The republic's limited arable land and the fact that approximately 70% of the population reside in rural areas exacerbate the situation. Over the past 35 years, the population has doubled from 5 to 10 million people, and it continues to grow.

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<sup>516</sup> *A Practical Guide to the Way of life in Tajikistan*, InterNations, <https://www.internations.org/tajikistan-expats/guide/living-short>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>517</sup> И. Родин, *От гастарбайтеров скоро закроется половина субъектов России*, 03.05.2024, [https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-05-03/100\\_03052024\\_migrants.html](https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-05-03/100_03052024_migrants.html), dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>518</sup> *Дилемма трудовых мигрантов из Таджикистана: почему на родине их не ждут*, 29.03.2024, <https://newizv.ru/news/2024-03-28/dilemma-rossiyskih-tadzhikov-pochemu-na-rodine-v-tadzhikistane-ih-ne-zhdut-428644>, dostep: 12.12.2024



In the first half of this year alone, 17,000 Tajik citizens were deported from Russia<sup>519</sup>. For Rahmon's government, the presence of 200,000 to 300,000 unemployed citizens who have been deported or have not left for work could already pose a significant threat<sup>520</sup>. Without sufficient educational institutions, social services and medical infrastructure, Tajikistan will struggle to manage such an influx as its current stability relies heavily on the migrant population being abroad, while the government faces substantial challenges in addressing the needs of those who remain. In this context, the mass deportation of labor migrants from Russia could destabilize the political regime in Tajikistan. Consequently, President Rahmon is likely to take all necessary measures to ensure that migrants remain in Russia<sup>521</sup>.

After the terrorist attack near Moscow and the subsequent pressure on labor migrants in Russia, Tajik authorities began to reassess Dushanbe's excessive economic dependence on Moscow. This concern was raised by President Rahmon during a visit to the Sughd region, where he emphasized the need for urgent efforts to reduce labor migration and improve the national economy: "In today's conditions, we need to work as hard as possible to build, create and improve our homeland, increase production, and create jobs and businesses; as much as possible to reduce the level of labor migration"<sup>522</sup>.

By 2030, the Tajik government aims to increase the share of industry in total GDP from 17% to 30%, transitioning the country into a more industrial-agricultural economy and creating additional job opportunities. However, the main challenge lies in overcoming the significant barriers to attracting investment and fostering the development of a free-market economy within Tajikistan.

Tajikistan and Russia continue to rely on the customary labor migration, a pattern that has persisted for over 25 years. In the near future, Tajikistan is unlikely to create one to three million new jobs across its economy. Meanwhile, Russia faces an urgent need for foreign labor. In 2023, Vasily Osmakov, Russian First Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, described the

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<sup>519</sup> А. Зарифи, За полгода из России были депортированы 17 тысяч граждан Таджикистана, Радио Озоди, 06.08.2024, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/za-polgoda-iz-rossii-byli-deportirovany-17-tys-grazhdan-tadzhikistana/33067338.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>520</sup> Ш. Турсаев, Почему Таджикистан не готов к массовой высылке мигрантов из России и сделает все, чтобы этого избежать. Объясняет экс-замминистра экономики, Настоящее время, 30.04.2024, <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/pochemu-tadzhikistan-ne-gotov-k-massovoy-vysylke-migrantov-iz-rossii-i-sdelat-vse-ctoby-etogo-izbezhaz-obyasnyat-zamministra-ekonomiki/32925460.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>521</sup> О. Болдырев, Залечь на дно в России. Мигранты ждут, чем закончатся призывы «усилить» и «ограничить», BBC News, 02.04.2024, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/cw4zz9n3dm8o>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

<sup>522</sup> Х. Хуррамов, Сможет ли Таджикистан снизить зависимость от денежных переводов мигрантов?, Радио Озоди, 25.04.2024, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/32920381.html>, dostęp: 12.12.2024

labor shortage as a “key problem” for the Russian economy. This issue was further highlighted by President Vladimir Putin in April of the same year, when he stated that the country “simply lacks hands in many areas”<sup>523</sup>.

### Conclusions

Tajikistan’s three-decade-long economic reliance on Russia a key obstacle on the country’s road to sovereignty. Despite years of independence, Tajikistan has remained under Russia’s economic influence, primarily through labor migration and remittances. Against a backdrop of widespread poverty and persistent unemployment, labor migration has provided a crucial solution to the citizens’ basic needs, particularly food security and employment. Russia’s support has been especially significant as Tajikistan continues to face numerous economic challenges, including an unfavorable investment climate, a severe shortage of capital and technology, control of the economy by the president’s family, widespread corruption and the prevalence of the gray market. Furthermore, labor migration to Russia helps mitigate potential social tensions linked to demographic growth, while also serving as a source of political stability for the country’s authoritarian regime.

The sovereignization of Tajikistan remains unfeasible as long as the country continues to depend economically on Russia. Tajik gastarbeiter will persist in seeking employment in Russia to improve their living conditions and support their families back home. While the Tajik migration to Europe is emerging and will certainly grow, it remains a relatively small trend compared to over one million Tajik migrants currently in Russia. According to official data from the Office for Foreigners in Poland, only approximately 1,200 Tajik citizens reside in Poland at present<sup>524</sup>.

Tajikistan is unlikely to embrace a multi-vector foreign policy or significantly reduce its reliance on Russian influence. The regime of President Rahmon has shown little interest in courting the West or garnering support from the broader international community. Tajikistan remains steadfast in its loyalty to Russia. Even if the country manages to diversify its international relationships and attract foreign direct investment, Russia is likely to remain Tajikistan’s principal strategic partner. This dynamic has been reinforced since the beginning

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<sup>523</sup> Таджикистан рекомендовал гражданам воздержаться от поездок в Россию, Радио Озоди, 28.04.2024, <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32923686.html>, dostep: 12.12.2024

<sup>524</sup> К. Ключевска, *Балансировать между Востоком и Западом Таджикистану становится все труднее*, ASIA-Plus, 04.01.2023, <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/opinion/20230104/ekspert-balansirovat-mezhdu-vostokom-i-zapadom-tadzhikistanu-stanovitsya-vse-trudnee>, dostep: 12.12.2024



of the war in Ukraine, with Russia demonstrating an increased interest in Tajikistan. The combination of authoritarian governance, economic fragility and a dysfunctional state apparatus compels Tajikistan to rely heavily on external assistance for its survival. Consequently, Russia's influence in the region is expected to persist, and Tajikistan will likely remain under tight Russian control.

### **Streszczenie**

Od czasu uzyskania niepodległości Tadżykistan, jeden z najbiedniejszych krajów Azji Środkowej, utrzymuje znaczną zależność polityczną i gospodarczą od Federacji Rosyjskiej. Zależność ta jest w dużej mierze kształtowana przez migrację zarobkową, w której Tadżycy wyjeżdżają do Rosji w poszukiwaniu pracy – proces ten rozpoczął się na przełomie wieków. Przekazy pieniężne wysyłane przez tadżyckich gastarbeiterów częściowo rozwiązują problemy powszechnego ubóstwa i bezrobocia w ich ojczyźnie. Celem artykułu jest wykazanie, że gastarbeiterzy odgrywają również kluczową rolę w utrzymaniu stabilności politycznej w okresie autorytarnego reżimu w kraju. W konsekwencji ich wkład hamuje proces uzyskiwania przez Tadżykistan pełnej suwerenności.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Tadżykistan, suwerenność, gastarbeiter, migracja, gospodarka

### **Key words:**

Tajikistan, sovereignty, gastarbeiter, migration, economy

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*Clearly, the Church exhibits her Truth when she upholds human rights and not when she goes along with nationalistic ideologies*<sup>525</sup>

## Orthodoxy in Ukraine: between the Second and Third Rome

### Introduction

Following the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Russia emerged as a significant Christian power. Ivan III was recognized as the de facto tsar, and Russia gained patriarchate status in 1589<sup>526</sup>. Despite Moscow asserting itself as the Third Rome and Russian Orthodoxy competing with Greek Orthodoxy, the Patriarch of Constantinople retained significant influence. The Ottomans permitted him to remain in his position and considered him the spiritual leader of all Orthodox Christians in their empire, encompassing Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Arabs and Albanians<sup>527</sup>.

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<sup>525</sup> Ecumenical Patriarch, *In the sphere of Orthodoxy, there is no uniform attitude towards human rights*, after [https://orthodoxtimes.com/ecumenical-patriarch-in-the-sphere-of-orthodoxy-there-is-no-uniform-attitude-towards-human-rights/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1uTx5tCfiQyCs6JL\\_DqBp38cTES4reNoieP9b07\\_U9TB9d76rcqRPBq2M\\_aem\\_AaMN14XQsYa2rxGmaqgVwfpPbHlmkvXZUJ3\\_u-rzltRIE2DB4L9dMSwiL1LaadTGDxQgyoKo0LvC93r202\\_NPrd1](https://orthodoxtimes.com/ecumenical-patriarch-in-the-sphere-of-orthodoxy-there-is-no-uniform-attitude-towards-human-rights/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1uTx5tCfiQyCs6JL_DqBp38cTES4reNoieP9b07_U9TB9d76rcqRPBq2M_aem_AaMN14XQsYa2rxGmaqgVwfpPbHlmkvXZUJ3_u-rzltRIE2DB4L9dMSwiL1LaadTGDxQgyoKo0LvC93r202_NPrd1) (15.05.2024)

<sup>526</sup> Compare: *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, ed. by M.B. Cunningham and E. Theokritoff, Cambridge University Press 2008, pp. 476-481; *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Volume I *From Early Rus to 1689*, ed. by Maureen Perrie, University of Birmingham, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 387-409, 338-360, 618-640.

*The Cambridge History of Russia*, Volume II *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917*, ed. by Dominic Lieven, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 284-306; *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Volume III *The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny, Cambridge University Press 2006 pp. 316-352-383.

<sup>527</sup> Historical divergences hindered the establishment of a coherent, centralized administrative framework. In the early Byzantine Empire, prominence was accorded to five dioceses located in key urban hubs—Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem—forming the renowned pentarchy. Interestingly, the patriarch's supremacy faced less opposition during the Ottoman Empire's zenith, but encountered challenges post the empire's 19th-century dissolution when Greeks were displaced from Turkey. Presently, the Patriarch of Constantinople upholds the revered title of 'Ecumenical Patriarch,' signifying primacy in the Orthodox sphere, with a reduced congregation primarily comprising Greeks residing in regions like Crete, the USA, Western Europe and Australia (Cf.: Linda Woodhead, *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction*, New York 2004 pp. 112-116).

In the modern era, the Orthodox Church faced challenges in upholding its autonomy amidst growing secular influence, a predicament mirrored in the Western world. Patriarch Nikon's efforts to fortify ecclesiastical authority in 17th-century Russia not only incited a schism within the Church by the 'Old Believers' seeking to maintain traditional Russian customs, but also resulted in heightened state dominance. Tsar Peter the Great's reforms aimed at modernizing Russia included the dissolution of the patriarchal office and the subjugation of the Church to state control. The resurgence of conservative factions in the 19th century coincided with the Church's revival under the principles of 'orthodoxy, self-governance and populism,' triggering widespread opposition toward both the Church and the ruling elite during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Due to the prevailing antipathy towards religion and the Communist regime's pursuit of absolute societal control, the treatment of the Church under Communism frequently manifested itself as ruthless hostility. Nonetheless, the state exhibited flexibility in its approach when politically advantageous, exemplified by Stalin's utilization of Churches during the Second World War to mobilize patriotic fervour among Russians. Orthodoxy's historical reliance on political backing and its inclination towards obedience to authority seemed to leave it with limited means to counter state dominance.

In the twilight of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev endeavoured to democratize and revamp the system. However, instead of fortifying and revitalizing it, the reforms yielded precisely the opposite outcome. Democratization, in particular, dealt a severe blow to the communist hegemony, paving the way for the emergence of new political and national entities that hastened the Union's dissolution. The regime faltered in reproducing the essential material and moral foundations required for its survival, ultimately succumbing to unbridled capitalism, the exuberant growth of plebiscitary democracy, and the resurgence of nationalism, often in radical forms.

During the early 1990s, a resurgence of danger surrounding Christianity emerged, albeit with a shifting nature. The peril now stemmed from being associated with the incorrect Christian denomination. In various regions of central and eastern Europe, ethnic and national identities had long been intertwined with specific branches of Christianity. The Soviet Union and other multinational states faced heightened tension from nationalist movements during this period, where distinct religious identities often held significant sway.

Nationalist movements mostly attained their objectives through nonviolent means; however, the disintegration of Yugoslavia witnessed horrifying violence. The desecration of adversaries' sacred sites by different armies underscored the significance of religious symbols

and locations in the conflict. Despite the apparent dominance of rationalist, scientific and modernizing views along with the global market economy, religion persevered as a relevant force in societal discourse and personal practice, shaping the trajectory of the forthcoming century.

### **The Church and post-communism**

Churches' experience with communism revealed conflicting beliefs, which have become more evident in the post-communist era. These contradictions now shape Churches' efforts to establish their position in a diverse and pluralistic society<sup>528</sup>.

The first set of conflicting assumptions concerned two very different ways of understanding communism. Firstly, some viewed it as an offspring of the Enlightenment, perceiving its downfall as a triumph for the Church over modernity. This viewpoint was embraced by the Catholic Church in Poland and certain Eastern European Orthodox Churches. Secondly, communism was regarded as an unsuccessful endeavour to establish a surrogate religion in a secular era, aiming for the 'new sacralization' of politics. This stance was probably more prevalent in the Protestant Church in the GDR and various other Protestant communities in Eastern Europe.

At the individual level, a critical question arose for believers who opposed the communist regime: Was their resistance due to the system's atheistic nature or its totalitarian control? Those leaning towards the former in the post-communist era might be viewed as conservative, resistant to spiritual advancements, and defensive towards modernity. Conversely, those supporting the latter option would likely align with advocates of democratization, pluralism and freedom of conscience for all.

From a socio-political perspective, the initial interpretation of communism led to an attempt to repurpose religion for socio-political objectives. Conversely, the second interpretation emphasized that during the shift from communism, religion should reinforce politics to 'desacralise' itself and operate within its appropriate domain. This approach aimed to foster the growth of a diverse political landscape and civil society.

The second set of conflicting assumptions stemmed from the fact that in resisting communism, the Churches in Eastern Europe were in many cases actually doing something different from what they thought they were doing. Even if they opposed their own conception

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<sup>528</sup> *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Volume IX *World Christianities c.1914–c.2000*, ed. by Hugh McLeod, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 348–366.

of wholeness to that which the official system was trying to impose, they were in fact promoting pluralism. This is particularly evident in Churches that strongly associate with specific national identities and advocate for national self-determination. Some struggle to grasp that in the post-communist era, self-determination involves recognizing other national and religious groups alongside their own. In this new landscape, it became uncertain if Christian values could align with the human rights principles embraced by secular advocates in post-communist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In the more than four decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly established states have undergone a myriad of political and economic transformations. Although their involvement in the political sphere has been relatively limited, Churches have had to adapt to the shifting realities of the region. In the aftermath of the collapse of communism, Churches in Eastern Europe experienced a dual process of both strengthening and weakening. While they were afforded opportunities to engage in various aspects of public life, accompanied by heightened expectations, they simultaneously experienced a loss of the distinctive identity that characterized their role during the communist era. Consequently, they began to be perceived primarily as entities safeguarding the interests of their adherents, rather than serving the broader interests of society as a whole.

The emerging autocratic regimes frequently grappled with ethnic and regional conflicts, and in some cases, civil wars. A crucial factor influencing these struggles was the overall economic situation, coupled with widespread disillusionment regarding the slow pace of change and the underdeveloped state of civil society. These elements created a complex environment that exacerbated tensions and hindered progress in the region.

In the late 1990s, the initial wave of democratic transition proved short-lived. The emergence of new regimes ushered in a period of sweeping neoliberal reforms, marked by trade liberalization, privatization, and reduced social welfare programs. While these policies yielded certain advantages, they failed to foster local entrepreneurship, resulting in escalating unemployment rates and heightened levels of poverty, crime and violence. Compounded by the rise of 'born-again' politicians from the previous era, the transition to democracy appeared superficial with the newly elected leaders closely mirroring their predecessors. Over time, they resorted to authoritarian tactics, such as suppressing opposition parties, manipulating elections and amending constitutions to maintain their grip on power, effectively establishing *de facto* one-party regimes.

The new states required a more profound reform to establish a lasting democratic culture. Despite the significant resources and influence of the Church, it faced challenges. The

newfound power that initially seemed advantageous also hindered the genuine promotion of democratic principles. Additionally, the Church hierarchy became entangled in patronage, clientism and corporatism, compromising its stance similar to secular politicians.

### **Traditionalism and conservatism**

In communist Eastern Europe, Church members, including lay people, clergy and the hierarchy, tended to be more traditional and conservative compared to those in Western Europe, although liberal individuals and groups were also present. This trend persisted in the post-communist era, especially in Churches identifying as ‘traditional’ or ‘historic’. It is true that in the post-communist period, there were concerns about the influence of liberal ideas in former communist countries. Many people attending a church in these countries viewed these ideas as being similar to Western secularism, which was seen as a threat akin to the previous communist secularism<sup>529</sup>.

It is true that some Christians in Eastern Europe started to question certain concepts that had been associated with communism, such as ‘peace’ and ‘democracy’. Additionally, ecclesiastical concepts like ‘ecumenism’ were viewed with suspicion as they were seen as tools used by Church leaders to show religious freedom under communism.

Under communist rule, authorities enforced repressive policies that led to the preservation of authoritarian structures in many Churches. This was done to prevent internal division and protect the congregation. It is worth noting that in the post-communist era, some of these practices persisted, with lower clergy being restricted in their actions and the laity being excluded from participating in the rebuilding of churches and communities.

In the 1970s and 1980s, nationalism was perceived more positively than in the 1990s, serving as a means to articulate aspirations for individual and collective autonomy. In the waning years of Soviet dominance in Russia, the Orthodox Church emerged as a prominent guardian of national heritage and was respected for its resistance to Soviet oppression.

Following the collapse of communism, Churches were increasingly recognized, particularly by the new governments in Eastern Europe, as crucial agents for fostering social unity and moral revival. They were anticipated to assume a central role in this transitional period. The utilization of religious themes and rhetoric to rationalize societal circumstances not only elevated the influence of religion in public affairs but also led to a notable convergence of

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<sup>529</sup> *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Volume 5 *Eastern Christianity*, ed. by Michael Angold, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 558-580; Olivier Clément, *Prawda was wyzwoli. Rozmowy z Patriarchą ekumenicznym Bartłomiejem I*, Verbiem, Warszawa 1998.



religious, ethnic and political dimensions. In the post-communist era, Orthodoxy has sought to reclaim its influence in former communist regions by aligning with the emerging political authorities. This inclination towards endorsing neo-nationalism has been particularly noticeable in Russia, but it is also evident in several other countries, including Serbia<sup>530</sup>. The evolving role of Churches from state institutions, navigating through the challenges of secularism and 20th-century persecution, towards establishing a position within nationalistic ideologies, was a predictable trajectory.

### Around Ukraine

The Orthodox Church encountered tangible challenges related to nationalism following the post-communist era, especially as newly established states gained independence. Orthodox Christians often describe independent national Churches as local to underscore their connection to specific regions, showcasing the adaptability of Orthodox spirituality across diverse cultures and settings. This flexibility allows for growth and outreach to new communities; however, Orthodox Churches also have a tendency to conform to the existing political structures within their surroundings.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, political shifts have led to significant challenges in organizational and identity aspects within Orthodox communities. Historically, the territorial boundaries of national Churches often aligned with those of the state, portraying the Orthodox Church as inherently national. Thus, a Church's pastoral responsibilities extended to preserving national identity and cultural heritage among the faithful, fostering a sense of unity with national ideals. Notably, the resurgence of ethnophyletism, a heretical notion emphasizing the ethnic dimension over universal dogma within a Church, poses a threat by limiting a Church's scope to ethnic affiliation rather than encompassing diverse populations within a region. This deviation undermines the catholicity of a Church, which is inclusive of individuals from various races and nations. The adverse impact of ethnic nationalism, witnessed in numerous countries

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<sup>530</sup> According to Jürgen Moltmann, the true Church of Christ aligns with humanity and stands in opposition to nationalism. Moreover, the Christian Church embodies democratic principles rather than being anti-democratic. In the church, all individuals have the opportunity to participate and are regarded as equals in the eyes of God. Democracy is founded on human rights, transcending national or cultural boundaries. Therefore, the Christian belief in God as the Creator affirms our responsibility to live in harmony and peace on Earth. In contrast to divisive new nationalism that preys on self-interest, we are urged to act from a place of faith in God's divine plan. Our actions should not only promote our own well-being but also contribute to the welfare of all individuals worldwide through a sense of universal solidarity.

(Compare: J. Moltmann, *Christianity, Humanity and the New Nationalism*, after Theos, <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2020/01/06/christianity-humanity-and-the-new-nationalism> (09.09.2023)).

post-1990, highlights the divisive potential and challenges to the universal nature of the Church<sup>531</sup>.

The emergence of a new nation presented a challenge to the existing Church structure, sparking debates on the necessity of establishing a new Church entity for the ‘new’ nation. In Ukraine, the second-largest European country, this dilemma is exemplified by the coexistence of two major Orthodox Churches - the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Following the collapse of communism, Ukraine underwent a tumultuous 30-year period, during which Orthodox religious communities navigated their roles within the rejuvenated nation. This transformation also led to a significant restructuring of local Church entities. The establishment of an independent state in Ukraine had profound and enduring effects on the Church, notably altering the canonical landscape by reducing the administrative influence wielded by the Moscow Patriarchate over the clergy and hierarchy in the newly independent nation.

Before the annexation of Crimea, Kyiv maintained a restrained stance on the distinctive status of Ukrainian Churches, leading to a notable decline in administrative ties with the Moscow Patriarchate. The spiritual influence of the Moscow Patriarch, however, remained unchallenged. The outbreak of unprecedented warfare in Europe, however, brought about notable changes. The issue of whether the clergy in the previously autonomous regions of Ukraine were obligated to acknowledge the Patriarch of Moscow as their ecclesiastical superior was rekindled, particularly in light of the Patriarch’s perceived collaboration with the Moscow regime.

Criticism of the Russian state has evolved into criticism of the Moscow Church, a shift motivated by discernible reasons. Russian Orthodox institutions found themselves unable to firmly oppose the looming conflict, prompting Ukrainian Orthodox Christians to contemplate the essence of the gospel and the Church amidst the backdrop of armed aggression. Advocates for Ukrainian autocephaly viewed this as necessitating a profound critique of Russian Orthodoxy. Orthodox Christians in Ukraine grappled with a challenging dilemma: Can existing ties with Moscow be sustained in a new Ukrainian state striving for European standards of political governance, freedom and legal principles? Conversely, breaking ties with Moscow’s patriarch and imperial legacy carried the potential for subjecting the Church to the demands and agendas of the secular realm. Despite the Churches’ intentions to uphold and promote genuine

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<sup>531</sup> The situation reached its most tragic culmination in the Balkans; however, it is noteworthy that even in this region, the churches served as valiant proponents of peace and reconciliation.

Christian principles, there was a possibility of their being influenced by the nationalistic ideals that define the essence of the emerging political landscape in contemporary Ukraine.

Paradoxically, the establishment of the new autocephaly was to be facilitated, at least partially and not always for truly Christian reasons, by politicians who, regrettably, occasionally feigned liberal and democratic beliefs. They viewed the drive for the independence of the Ukrainian Church as mainly a supplement to the sentiment of national sovereignty.

Regrettably too, the political struggle concerning the Church has been perceived as an essential component of national sovereignty and the quest for independence from Moscow's imperial customs. A lingering question pertains to whether the endeavour to emancipate the Church is merely a surrogate for the pursuit of political liberation. This protracted struggle has been predominantly steered by political rationale rather than ecclesiastical principles, leading to a divisive scenario where the two main factions have, until recently, alluded to distinct Churches, thereby hindering the prospect of Christian unity. The intervention of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, however, played a crucial role in mitigating the escalating religious tensions. The conferral of autocephaly upon the Church of Ukraine not only offered millions of Ukrainian believers the opportunity for reintegration into Orthodox unity but also granted them the autonomy to govern the affairs of the local Church independently of external dependencies<sup>532</sup>.

### **Ukraine at the crossroads**

After the conclusion of the Cold War, as highlighted by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, a significant transformation in global dynamics was observed. Noteworthy transitions included the disintegration of established borders, the removal of barriers, and the swift escalation of transnational flows of commodities, individuals and finances. These phenomena epitomize the essence of globalization, characterized by the progression towards a cohesive global community. Nonetheless, the patriarch indicates that this convergence has predominantly revolved around materialistic facets, where economic considerations and technological advancements have taken precedence. Concurrently, the emergence or exacerbation of additional global challenges has come to the forefront. The climate crisis, financial crisis, health pandemic and energy crisis are global issues demanding international collaboration. Instead of advancing cooperation, there is a stagnation and even a reversal of

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<sup>532</sup> *Ecumenical Patriarch: The most important moment for the Patriarchate in 2019 was the granting of the Autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine*, after: <https://orthodoxtimes.com/ecumenical-patriarch-the-most-important-moment-for-the-patriarchate-in-2019-was-the-granting-of-the-autocephaly-to-the-church-of-ukraine/> (14.02.2023).

globalization, exemplified by Russian aggression in Ukraine. The patriarch stresses the essentiality of recognizing the imperative for spiritual unity alongside political and economic unity. Regrettably, rather than progress in this realm, there is continual regression<sup>533</sup>.

In recent decades, there was a prevalent belief that economic globalization would bring about cultural and spiritual unity leading to global harmony, as noted by Patriarch Bartholomew and reflected in Francis Fukuyama's writings on the end of history. However, the paradigm is shifting towards Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, indicating a growing spiritual divide among the world's diverse communities after over three decades of globalization. The current phase of globalization is actually fostering new conflicts and divisions. Can global economic cooperation alone counter these developments? Despite the extensive economic and technological connections worldwide, there is a noticeable trend towards deglobalization and an increase in protectionism. As Bartholomew emphasizes, unlike the prevailing notions of the past, the spiritual element influences the realms of politics and economics significantly, with the crisis in the spiritual domain being far from trivial. This critical matter is often not fully grasped by political leaders who aim to use religion for immediate political objectives, leading to the instrumentalization of religious factors in present political and geopolitical strategies.

As highlighted by Bartholomew, the world is undergoing a process of fragmentation, with the regions between the two emerging blocs facing significant pressures. The strip of land between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, including Ukraine as a central component, is one such area. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine, triggered by Russian aggression, stands as the focal point of a geopolitical upheaval. Europe is awakening from the illusion that warfare on its soil is a thing of the past. The repercussions of this conflict extend far beyond a localized crisis, inevitably shaping the future landscape of both Europe and the global arena.

The Ukrainian crisis, as articulated by the patriarch, stands as the most fundamental challenge confronting the Orthodox Christian world: 'Will Orthodoxy continue to be spiritually guided by its source and defender, its traditional and historical centre, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople? This is an essential question for the character, identity and existence of Orthodoxy. It is also an issue with serious consequences for the whole of Europe,

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<sup>533</sup> Address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Seminar "Reaction of Churches and Religious Communities to War and Conflict" (Lithuania, March 22, 2023) after: <https://ec-patr.org/address-by-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-at-the-seminar-reaction-of-churches-and-religious-communities-to-war-and-conflict-lit/> (09.09.2023).

as well as for Africa, the Middle East and the diaspora Orthodox communities all over the world’<sup>534</sup>.

In the initial days of the Russian Federation’s military intervention, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew strongly voiced his support for Ukraine, expressing profound sorrow over the blatant breaches of international law and human rights violations. The Patriarch not only denounced Russia’s unwarranted aggression but also urged leaders of all nations, European bodies, and international institutions to pursue a peaceful resolution to this critical scenario through genuine dialogue, emphasizing this as the sole path to addressing any issue and overcoming any challenge. He called upon Local Orthodox Churches, as well as all Christians and individuals of goodwill, to steadfastly pray for peace and justice in Ukraine<sup>535</sup>.

‘Indeed, during the last few days, a tragic humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in Ukraine. A war, which, like any war, is an abominable and reprehensible situation. It is the domination of irrationality over reason, hatred over love, darkness over light, death over life. Again, from this position, we address another plea to end the war now! To immediately stop any act of violence, anything that spreads pain and death. Let reason prevail, love for fellow human beings, reconciliation and solidarity, the light of the Risen Christ, the gift of life’.<sup>536</sup>

The Patriarch emphasized that according to Christian beliefs, all conflicts are seen as fratricide, with wars being perceived as civil wars. This perspective aligns with the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which attributes conflicts to the prevalence of evil and sin in society. Referring to the situation in Ukraine, the hierarch drew parallels with the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas on the tragic discord among Orthodox Christians in Thessaloniki: ‘For their common nurturing mother is the holy Church and devotion, whose chief and perfecter is Christ, the genuine Son, who is not only our God, but who also deigned it appropriate to be our brother and Father’<sup>537</sup>.

<sup>534</sup> *Address by His All-Holiness op.cit.*

<sup>535</sup> *The Ecumenical Patriarch condemns the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and expresses His solidarity with the suffering Ukrainian people*, after <https://ec-patr.org/the-ecumenical-patriarch-condemns-the-unprovoked-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-and-expresses-his-solidarity-to-the-suffering-ukrainian-people/> (09.09.2023).

<sup>536</sup> *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: End the war now!* after <https://ec-patr.org/ecumenical-patriarch-end-the-war-now/> (09.09.2023).

<sup>537</sup> *Patriarchal Encyclical for Christmas 2022*, after <https://ec-patr.org/patriarchal-encyclical-for-christmas-2022/> (09.09.2023).

### Ukraine versus Russkiy Mir

Patriarch Bartholomew highlights that crises often arise when the Church forges a close relationship with the state, leading to special privileges within the nation-state. History has demonstrated that such privileges come with inherent costs<sup>538</sup>. According to Patriarch Bartholomew, the religious framework centred on the Kyiv-Moscow axis originated from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire. The Kyiv Metropolis was established in 988 under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Subsequently, in 1654, following Russia's occupation of Ukraine, the Russian Church attempted to assert control over the Kyiv Metropolis, challenging the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This action was met with strong opposition from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Eastern Patriarchates. Following the non-canonical ordination of the Metropolitan of Kyiv by Russian Patriarch Joachim, he was dismissed by the local bishops. In 1685-1686, Moscow authorities intervened by sending an ambassador to the Ecumenical Patriarch stationed in Adrianople at that time. Despite this, Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysius did not transfer the metropolis to the Russian Church but granted permission for the Metropolitan of Kyiv to be ordained by the Patriarch of Moscow. However, the appointment of such a Metropolitan would necessitate election by a local council and approval by the Ecumenical Patriarch. Following subsequent changes in the political landscape, Ukraine and Ukrainian identity have evolved. Despite this, the Russian Church extended its authority beyond its borders, assimilating Churches such as the Apostolic Church of Georgia in 1811. When Ukraine briefly attained independence, the issue of its ecclesiastical autonomy from the Russian Church swiftly became a prominent topic of official deliberations<sup>539</sup>.

Bartholomew highlights the significant contribution of the Orthodox Church in shaping the distinct yet interconnected identities of Russia and Ukraine. In the 9th century, the Ecumenical Patriarchate from Constantinople introduced Christianity and Byzantine culture to the region, laying the foundation for the development of religious communities centred around the Kyiv metropolis and later the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1589, the Moscow Church, also stemming

<sup>538</sup> 'The power of the Great Church is not secular. The logic of power prevails in the secular institutions, but the Church is governed by non-negotiable divinely written and given spiritual laws' (*Ecumenical Patriarch's strong message: No effort can cancel the Ukrainian Autocephaly*, after <https://orthodoxtimes.com/ecumenical-patriarchs-strong-message-no-effort-can-cancel-the-ukrainian-autocephaly-upd/> (14.02.2023))

<sup>539</sup> *The Metropolis of Kyiv was never ceded to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church*, after <https://orthodoxtimes.com/the-metropolis-of-kyiv-was-never-ceded-to-the-jurisdiction-of-the-russian-church/> (02.23.2023).

from Constantinople, was granted the status of a patriarchate. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, an unsupported notion arose that Moscow could supplant Constantinople as the Orthodox world's spiritual hub. Advocates of this idea proposed that Moscow should be the Third Rome. However, as the patriarch notes, there have only been a Rome and a New Rome - Constantinople - thus, there can be no Third Rome.

Patriarch Bartholomew highlighted that the religious tradition passed from Constantinople to Moscow was quickly met by Russian political authority. The imperial authority sought to subordinate the Church to its will, aiming to exploit religious sentiment for political and military objectives. Consequently, following the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, Moscow has endeavoured to supplant the Ecumenical Patriarchate, asserting its claim as the 'Third Rome'. This enduring policy of Moscow constitutes a pivotal factor in the fragmentation of the Orthodox world<sup>540</sup>.

Historical tsars exerted control over the Church, transforming it into a tool of the growing Empire. In contemporary times, as noted by Bartholomew, the Kremlin has perpetuated this regrettable practice. Following the Soviet Union's dissolution and the failure of communist ideology, new political ideologies surfaced. The former imperial tactics were fused with cynical methods inherited from the Soviet era. The neo-imperial regime, in its quest for consolidation, capitalized on the resurging religious fervour among the Russian populace<sup>541</sup>.

Russian political and religious figures viewed religion as a crucial political and geostrategic asset, prompting them to resist any alternative centre of Orthodoxy. Moscow employed a numerical argument, asserting that the Russian Orthodox Church held sway over the majority

<sup>540</sup> Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew referred to the granting of the Autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine via a message, on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of his enthronement as Ecumenical Patriarch (Ecumenical Patriarch, *The Ukrainian Autocephaly is a finalized ecclesiastical*, after <https://orthodoxtimes.com/ecumenical-patriarch-the-ukrainian-autocephaly-is-a-finalized-ecclesiastical-event/> (14.02.2023).

<sup>541</sup> This aspect of Orthodoxy in Russia is evident in the history of modern Russian ideologies. James Gregor observed that as the Soviet state weakened, Marxist ideologies gave way to an ethnic nationalist agenda. Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, a proponent of ethnogenesis theory, played a key role in this shift, gathering Soviet intellectuals who supported nationalism and statism in the 1970s and 1980s. He discussed how ethnic groups emerge and take on historical roles influenced by cosmic forces. Ethnogenesis revealed a latent nationalist and anti-Semitic aspect that subtly impacted Moscow's policies. Soviet intellectuals, while rejecting nationalism and racism, embraced a patriotic sentiment tied to the country. Looking back, Gregor noted that Russians, including Russian Marxist-Leninists, have always held nationalist leanings. Before World War II, anti-nationalism was not a priority, and the war reignited a defence of 'Mother Russia'. In the 1980s, as the Soviet system faced collapse, nationalism and 'ethnicity' emerged as vital forces. In retrospect, it seems that nationalism and hints of racism were embedded in the beliefs of many Russians and remained implicit in Soviet ideology. The Bolshevik era was a departure from this trend, with Stalin's anti-Semitism and mass deportations underscoring this shift. The collapse of the Soviet Union ushered in new political ideologies, blending old imperial strategies with inherited Soviet mechanisms (J.A. Gregor, *Totalitarianism and political religion: an intellectual history*. Stanford 2012, p. 624).

of Orthodox faithful, in a bid to assert its dominance within the Orthodox Church. Consequently, the Ukrainian Orthodox community's shift away from Moscow's authority provoked an aggressive and unjustified reaction from the Moscow Patriarchate.

### Symphonia

As Andrey Shirin observes, the concept of 'symphony' was deeply embedded in the political practices of the Byzantine monarchy and appears to have faded into obscurity centuries ago. Even Stanley Harakas, a prominent Orthodox ethicist, contended that there is no justification for applying the symphony as a paradigm of Church-state relations in contemporary society, considering it merely an antiquated construct<sup>542</sup>. However, Shirin argues that Harakas is mistaken. In one of his earlier addresses following his election as Patriarch of Moscow in 2009, Kirill proclaimed the symphony as the ideal model for Church-state relations, albeit noting that this model could not be directly replicated in modern Russia. The separation of Church and state remains enshrined in the Russian constitution. Nevertheless, Kirill suggested that the spirit of the symphony should guide Church-state relations, emphasizing cooperation over mutual interference. Consequently, not only in Russia, but also elsewhere, efforts are being made to restore cooperation between national Orthodox Churches and state authorities. This often results in alliances between the Orthodox Churches and nationalist or anti-liberal political forces<sup>543</sup>.

<sup>542</sup> A. Shirin, *The Russian-Ukrainian War is now a Theological Crisis*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2023/04/20/the-russian-ukrainian-war-is-now-a-theological-crisis/> (09.09.2023).

R. M. Arida, *A reflection on The Church in the political arena*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2018/12/06/church-in-the-political-arena/#more-4863> (19.02.2023).

<sup>543</sup>As Jürgen Moltmann aptly points out, the Christological crisis has led the Church into a political crisis. Grounded in the Christological discourse, the inquiry about Jesus ultimately raises a fundamental question about God: Which God underpins the Christian faith—the crucified God or the gods of religion, race, and class? (J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 201). According to Moltmann, insights into fundamental human rights emerged in various civilizations alongside the recognition of universal human dignity. In contexts where a universal concept of humanity was developed, the idea of human rights emerged as well, moving beyond notions of 'friend and foe' or 'us and others'. Even after the World Council of Churches General Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, religious freedom was prioritized until it became clear that true freedom of religion could only be realized within the broader framework of other individual human rights (J. Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, Minneapolis 2012, p. 218). Orthodox political theology largely developed within Christian empires, such as Byzantium and Russia. As Rodríguez notes, this context imparted a monarchical orientation to Orthodox political thought, perpetuating the ideal of a Christian empire as the sole 'Orthodox' polity and excluding the possibility of a Church existing outside the Empire. Nevertheless, one virtue of this imperial political theology was its recognition of a profound harmony between the mystical and the political: divinization is incomplete without the redemption of the social order and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. In practice, the close relationship between the Church and imperial power may have involved holding imperial authority accountable to the standards of divine justice. Nevertheless,



As noted by Shirin, in January 2019 the Patriarch of Constantinople granted autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, a newly established ecclesiastical entity. This decision has precipitated a significant conflict between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow. The Moscow Patriarchate contends that Constantinople lacked jurisdiction to undertake this action, asserting that modern Ukraine has been regarded as part of the Russian Church's territory for centuries, and that the ecclesiastical bodies involved in the formation of the new Church are schismatic. By denying the legitimacy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Moscow Patriarchate adopts a symphonic stance, aligning with and bolstering the Kremlin's

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Orthodoxy has often faced the enduring temptation to conflate the existing political order with the eschatological realization of the Kingdom. This conflation permits the Church's social mission to become intertwined with the maintenance of political power, allowing a conservative defence of the regime to take precedence over prophetic social critique and the essential considerations of human freedom and social justice (R. Rodríguez, *The T&T Clark Handbook of Political Theology*, London 2020, p. 340). Orthodox responses to democratic reforms were hindered by nostalgia for lost Christian empires, and this continues to shape the Orthodox political imagination. Many reactions were uncritically reactionary and theologically superficial, based on a fixed, fundamentalist interpretation of tradition. Moltmann argues that these tendencies stem from the theocratic doctrine of an 'eternal city': ancient Rome, Constantinople – which fell due to a compromise with Western heretics – and Moscow, seen as the final Rome. The monarchy of the Roman emperor guaranteed the empire's unity and required religious legitimacy. When imperial theologians connected apocalyptic promises to the rising Christian superpower, they instilled a messianic mission that shaped Christianity's political role in preventing the end of the world. This meant acting as a catechon of the end times. The Imperial Church shifted its prayer from 'May your kingdom come and may this world pass away' to *pro mora finis*, seeking to delay the end. This autocratic absolutism defined Byzantium's political system and continued in Moscow after Constantinople's fall (Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, London 1996, 164-167). The doctrine of the symphony is best expressed in Emperor Justinian's Sixth Novella from the sixth century. Its central idea – the fusion of imperial and ecclesiastical power – has influenced Eastern Christian political thought since Constantine's conversion and shaped the political theology of post-Byzantine Orthodox states. Arida observes that in the Byzantine and Russian empires, Christian political philosophy developed a 'symphonic' relationship where the Church provided the moral foundations for society, while the Emperor ensured the dominance of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. In this ideal relationship, the emperor's role became crucial, especially during the early years of the Christian empire and its political philosophy. The Basileus embodied genuine devotion, caring for his subjects' social well-being and maintaining harmony between the political and religious institutions. Thus, he was viewed not just as a ruler but also as a unique priest and intermediary. In Eusebius of Caesarea's 'Life of Constantine', a political philosophy emerges that sees the emperor as the head of the Church, the 'bishop of bishops' chosen by God to govern the Christian world. Arida notes that Eusebius laid the groundwork for a Christian theocratic political philosophy based on the Gospel, viewing the Christian empire as a reflection of God's kingdom meant to spread globally. Both church and state were responsible for enacting these principles, but as the philosophy evolved and their relationship tightened, the symphonic ideal was not always realized. The state often dominated the Church, reaching its peak in Russia under Peter the Great, who abolished the Moscow Patriarchate and made the Church a department of the empire, with the monarch as its head (R.M. Arida, *A reflection on The Church in the political arena*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2018/12/06/church-in-the-political-arena/#more-4863> (19.02.2023) The hierarchical Church's reduced powers were justified by the belief in a mystical link between imperial and divine authority, seeing the empire as a reflection of the heavenly kingdom, with the emperor as God's governor. While the symphonic doctrine has had some positive impacts on Orthodox political thought, it often supports autocracy over democracy. Most Orthodox recognize that a literal return to the symphony is impossible, but there is hope for a 'cultural symphony' through the restoration of a 'Christian society' influenced by the church and supported by the state.

position. In the lead-up to the war, the Russian government asserted that Ukraine lacked historical legitimacy as a state. Concurrently, the Russian Orthodox Church argued that Ukraine possessed no valid apostolic succession. The Moscow Patriarchate claimed that the only legitimate ecclesiastical authority was the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under its jurisdiction. In a speech shortly before the war commenced, Putin referenced the shared Orthodox faith as evidence that Russians and Ukrainians are fundamentally one people<sup>544</sup>.

### Human rights

The situation is further complicated by the fact that responses to liberal democracy within Orthodox circles are often intertwined with a distrust of Western culture. Historically, there has been a tendency in Orthodoxy to position Orthodox identity in opposition to a collectively perceived West. Since at least the 1830s, Slavophiles advocating for a return to the ethos of Orthodox Rus have criticized the West, citing not only the heresies of Catholicism and Protestantism but also their purported consequences, such as the erosion of Christian Europe. In efforts to reconstruct religious and cultural identity in Russia after decades of communist oppression, these proponents increasingly adopted an anti-Western stance, expressing scepticism toward liberal democracy and liberal notions of human rights, which they regarded as godless imports and antithetical to the traditional Orthodox ethos.

As Rodríguez illustrates, similar to the anti-Western ideology of the Slavophiles, Patriarch Kirill asserts that certain Western concepts of individual rights constitute heresy. This resistance to the liberal interpretation of law is also evident in official documents of the Moscow Patriarchate, such as the 2008 message outlining the Church's fundamental teachings on human dignity, freedom and rights. While this document does not entirely dismiss the language of human rights, it reframes these rights outside the individualistic liberal context, aligning them with Orthodox principles and subordinating individual rights to the 'traditional values' of the community. The Moscow Patriarchate's rejection of a liberal-democratic understanding of human rights has been co-opted by the Kremlin to create a new East-West geopolitical divide, positioning Russia as a champion of 'traditional values' in opposition to the perceived godlessness and immorality of Western liberalism.

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<sup>544</sup> A. Shirin, *The Russian-Ukrainian War* op.cit.; Cf. J. Diec, *Ideologiczne i doktrynalne podstawy rosyjskiej agresji na Ukrainę* [in:] *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę 2022. Źródła, przebieg, konsekwencje*, Kraków 2023, pp. 15-19.

### Ethnophyletism

A crucial element in the formation of the new political religion was the doctrine of Panslavism, an ideology advocating for the unification of all Slavic people under the leadership of Moscow. This 19th-century doctrine, as noted by Patriarch Bartholomew, found its religious manifestation in ethnophilism, which was condemned as heretical by the Great Council of Constantinople in 1872. Arida questions whether the current institutional framework of local Churches permits their leaders to navigate away from political ideologies and focus solely on the Gospel. Similar concerns were articulated by John Meyendorff, who argued that the emergence of modern nationalism has transformed legitimate regionalism within the Church into a guise for ethnic sectarianism. Consequently, the new nationalist ideology reframes the nation – understood in both linguistic and racial terms – as the primary object of social and cultural allegiance, rather than viewing it as a sacramental community founded upon baptismal metanoia, as prescribed by the Gospel and Christian Tradition<sup>545</sup>.

Currently, as noted by Bartholomew, the manifestation of ethnophyletism is encapsulated in the fundamentalist ideology of *Russkiy mir*, or ‘Russian World’. This concept delineates a purported sphere of civilization that includes Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and ethnic Russians globally, all politically and religiously oriented toward the Moscow centre. The *Russkiy mir* is framed as a counter to the ‘corrupt West’, serving as a primary instrument of ‘spiritual’ legitimacy for the invasion of Ukraine. Within Kirill’s narrative, the modern nation-states of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are portrayed as belonging to the same Church and civilization for a fundamental reason: they all originated from the same ‘baptismal font of Kyiv’ at the conclusion of the 10th century.

According to both the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate, there exists a transnational Russian sphere or civilization known as Holy Russia or Holy Rus. This entity encompasses Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as to a lesser extent, Moldova and Kazakhstan, along with ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking populations worldwide. This Russian world is characterized by a unified political centre (Moscow), a spiritual centre (Kyiv, regarded as the mother of all Rus), a common language (Russian), a singular Church (the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate), and a central patriarch (the Patriarch of Moscow) who

<sup>545</sup> R.M. Arida, *Russia, Ukraine, and the Orthodox Church: The Aftermath?* after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2023/05/05/russia-ukraine-orthodox-aftermath/> (09.09.2023).

acts in symphony with the president or national leader (the president of the Russian Federation) to rule this Russian world, promoting a distinct spirituality, morality and culture<sup>546</sup>.

### Catechon

As George Persh contends, the impetus behind the new eschatological rhetoric is Patriarch Kirill, who seeks validation and support for his anti-globalist and anti-Western perspectives. According to Kirill, globalism represents a project of world unity that disregards the Creator's true design for humanity. He characterizes Europe and the United States as fundamentally anti-Christian territories. Kirill posits that the end of the world is imminent, and in response to these forces, the concept of the Catechon serves to counteract apocalyptic doom. He asserts that only the Russian people, Russia, and the Russian Orthodox Church can postpone the arrival of the Last Judgment. Consequently, it is not surprising that the forces of the Antichrist are portrayed as striving to dismantle this unity, to divide the Russian homeland, and to incite conflict among brethren<sup>547</sup>.

Maureen Perrie astutely observes that during Kirill's birthday celebration on November 20, 2022, at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, the patriarch issued apocalyptic warnings regarding the perils confronting Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church. While refraining from explicitly referencing the war in Ukraine, Kirill urged the Church to assume an active role in combating global evil, particularly the Antichrist movement, which he suggested threatens both the world at large and Russia specifically. He asserted that all forces associated with the Antichrist will be directed against Russia, identifying it as the restraining force referenced in Scripture concerning the emergence of such an Antichrist. However, in addressing his audience at the birthday celebration, Kirill did not elucidate the biblical concept of a restraining force<sup>548</sup>.

In a sermon delivered at the Moscow Cathedral on April 7, 2022, Patriarch Kirill called for prayers for peace in Ukraine and for the preservation of the unity of the Orthodox Church. He posed the question of why external forces would assault Russian territory. In his response, he

<sup>546</sup> *A Declaration on the "Russian world" (Russkii mir) teaching*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/03/13/a-declaration-on-the-russian-world-russkii-mir-teaching/#more-10842> (14.02.2023). Cf. S. Griffin, *Russian world or holy world war? The real ideology of the invasion of Ukraine*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/04/12/russian-world-or-holy-world-war/> (dostęp: 14.02.2023).

<sup>547</sup> G. Persh, *War and Eschatology*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2023/01/27/war-and-eschatology/> (09.09.2023).

<sup>548</sup> M. Perrie, *Apocalypse Delayed: Patriarch Kirill on Restraining the Antichrist in Ukraine*, after <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2023/01/23/apocalypse-delayed-restraining-antichrist/> (09.09.2023).

referenced a biblical notion concerning a particular force that mitigates the emergence of the Antichrist. This force, he articulated, is not only the Church itself but also encompasses the pious faithful across all eras and nations, representing the Orthodox faith that exists and thrives within the Church. Consequently, he asserted that the enemies of the Church seek to undermine its unity.

In doing so, Perrie effectively highlights that the notion of Russia as a Catechon gained traction in various far-right nationalist and ultra-Orthodox circles prior to the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. This is exemplified by the neo-Eurasianism of Alexander Dugin, who has consistently published apocalyptic articles on the Catechon think-tank website ([katehon.com](http://katehon.com)) for many years. While the extent to which the concept of Russia as a Catechon has permeated mainstream Russian political thought remains ambiguous, Kirill's transition from associating the 'restraining force' with the Church and its followers in April to identifying it with Russia itself in his November birthday address indicates a shift towards a more nationalist position. It is reasonable to assume that the patriarch is cognizant of the ideological ramifications of this concept<sup>549</sup>.

### **Traditional values**

A The struggle against the forces of the Antichrist is intricately connected to the defence of traditional values. According to Patriarch Bartholomew, contemporary Christianity is experiencing a notable phenomenon: a new ecumenism centred on the unity of Christian Churches around what are termed 'traditional values'. Interestingly, Christians who previously resisted any form of ecumenical dialogue are now eager to engage in this new ecumenism, which advocates for the preservation of those traditional values. Moscow holds a significant position within this new doctrine; however, the new ecumenism is inherently 'deconstructed', making it at best non-ecumenical and potentially anti-ecumenical. This movement positions itself against other Christians who do not align with its exclusive emphasis on a 'traditional' set of values. Ultimately, this new ecumenism fosters a polarizing ethos rooted in a dualistic understanding of God's relationship with the world, rather than an incarnational one.

Thus, according to the patriarch: 'As Christian communities, we must first adopt a sense of humility and accept that we are also to blame for this reduction of ecumenism. Instead of imitating Christ's example, we have too often expected to be served, rather than to serve; we

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<sup>549</sup> Ibidem.

have too often demanded privileges, rather than ministered to the underprivileged; we have too often associated with the elite and powerful, with nationalism and nation-states, rather than identifying with and ministering to the vulnerable and discriminated – to Christ Himself in the least of His and our brothers and sisters’<sup>550</sup>.

In the 20th century, ecumenism was perceived, as emphasized by the patriarch, as a means of fostering a vision of shared humanity and promoting the common good. In contrast, the emerging ecumenism of the 21st century appears to function as a catalyst for division and destruction. The ramifications of this divisive and destructive ideology are evident in Russia’s ongoing aggressive actions against Ukraine, as well as in the Church’s rationale for this conflict, which is framed as a necessary measure to prevent Ukraine from succumbing to the perceived threats posed by a godless, secular and liberal West: ‘Today, the rhetoric of the so-called ‘culture wars’ has grievously compromised any potential for dialogue, damaging the very core of ecumenism, as Orthodox are pitted against Orthodox, Catholics against Catholics, Protestants against Protestants—sometimes united only in their disagreement and denunciation’<sup>551</sup>.

From the patriarch’s viewpoint, the idea of a Christian Europe evokes visions of an idealized history and a celebrated Christian culture. For many centuries, Christianity has been a significant force in Europe, positively influencing various elements of life, such as law, culture and traditions. However, it is crucial to recognize that the concept of a Christian Europe has also led to conflicts among different Christian denominations, as they competed for dominance in establishing the prevailing interpretation of Christianity on the continent: ‘In our ecumenical movement – where differences are recognized and respected, where distinct voices are articulated and heard – one question we must consistently discuss is: what do we mean by a Christian Europe within a democratic European Union? At the same time, how do we realize a Christian Europe within the current political landscape, where many Western nations have separated religious and national identities, some Eastern countries have reconnected religious and national identities, while others even see a rise in authoritarianism? Is the only option for us as Christian Churches to assert our convictions by force over and against other beliefs and

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<sup>550</sup> *Keynote Address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the 16th General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (Tallinn, June 18, 2023)*, after <https://ec-patr.org/keynote-address-by-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-at-the-16th-general-assembly-of-the-conference-of-european-churches-tallinn-june-18-2023/> (20.03.2024).

<sup>551</sup> *Ibidem*

principles? Is it not possible for a Christian Europe to mirror the openness and respect that we expect of one another in ecumenical circles – one that accepts diversity in its midst?”<sup>552</sup>

The ecumenical patriarch raises an important question about whether Christian Europe can truly allow all voices to be heard, including those that disagree or express disbelief. He suggests that Christian Europe should be more open to non-Christian faiths and communities. As Christian Churches in Europe face decline, there is a perception that Christianity is diminishing and that Christian communities are under threat. This fear may lead some Churches to support authoritarian political measures in an attempt to restore their significance in society. However, the patriarch emphasizes the need to witness the communion that Christ calls for, reminding us that we are created not just for ourselves, but for the well-being of all fellows. Bartholomew discusses rebuilding Ukraine after the war, emphasizing that alongside material reconstruction, there is a crucial need for ‘spiritual revival’ in both Ukraine and Russia. He advocates for a return to the core tenets of the Orthodox faith. The Mother-Church of Constantinople is prepared to assist its faithful in both nations, as it has historically done. The patriarch conveys that a mother’s love is limitless and knows no boundaries, which reflects the spirit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He points out that the focus should not only be on opposing the Moscow Patriarchate or criticizing its ‘theology of war’, but also on nurturing a deeper spiritual renewal<sup>553</sup>.

### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł odnosi się do problematyki prawosławia w kontekście wpływów Bizancjum i Rosji na kształtowanie się tej czynnika w Ukrainie..

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Prawosławie, Ukraina, Drugi Rzym, Trzeci Rzym

### **Key words:**

Orthodoxy, Ukraine, Second Rome, Third Rome

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<sup>552</sup> Ibidem

<sup>553</sup> Ibidem

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## **“State control of the Muslim ummah in the Volga-Ural region with a particular focus on Tatarstan**

### **Introduction**

The object of research of this article is the Muslim ummah of the Volga-Ural region, specifically Tatarstan<sup>555</sup>. The aim of the article is to explain the circumstances bringing the organizational structures of the Tatar Muslims of Russia under the control of the state administration. The author poses a number of research questions. How did the first official, state-recognized structures representing the interests of the Muslim community in Russia come to be established? How did they function and what objectives did they have to fulfil during the Tsarist and Soviet periods? How did the transformation of these structures proceed on Tatarstan territory after the fall of the USSR in the early 1990s? How did the republican authorities of modern Tatarstan view religion and why did they decide to break the principle of the separation of religion and state? What are the reasons for the subordination of Muslim organizational structures to state authorities in Tatarstan, which is now a subject of the Russian Federation? How do the current Tatar clergy manifest their support for the policies of the federal center in Moscow? Answering the above question will help explain why the Tatarstan Muslim ummah's relationship with the authorities has taken the shape it has.

Commenting on the current state of research, it is necessary to name the following Tatar researchers: Rinat Nabiev, Aidar Khabutdinov, Rafik Mukhametshin, Azat Akhunov, Ildus Zagidullin and Renat Bekkin. They have made significant contributions to the deepening of research on the development of the Tatarstan ummah and its relations with the Russian state,

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<sup>554</sup> Mgr Yevhenii Portnyi – a graduate of International Relations and Eurasian Studies from the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. As of 2024, a PhD student in the Doctoral School in the Social Sciences at the same university.

<sup>555</sup> According to the Collins dictionary, “ummah” or “umma” means the Muslim community throughout the world. The word originally comes from Arabic and means “community”. *Definition of ‘Ummah’*, URL: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/umma> (05.07.2024).

both present and past. Naturally, it is impossible to mention all the scientists who have advanced the study of the Tatarstan ummah, but it should be noted that many of them are affiliated with such academic institutions as the Kazan Federal University, the Tatarstan Academy of Science and the Russian Islamic Institute in Kazan. Also noteworthy are the works of Albina Mikhaleva, Roman Lunkin and Sergey Filatov, who do not focus exclusively on the Volga-Ural region, but examine various aspects of the life of the Russian Muslim community in different parts of the country, including Tatarstan. This gives us an important comparative perspective. When it comes to foreign authors who have tackled the present topic, the publishing output of Kimitaka Matsuzato, a well-known Japanese scholar of the Russian regions, cannot be overlooked.

The desirability of writing this article stems from the need for a comprehensive review of the functioning of Muslim (Tatar) representative bodies through the decades, focusing on the aspect of state control over the life of the ummah. The article will show the characteristics of Islam-state relations from the Tsarist and Soviet times until Tatarstan gained real autonomy (or sovereignty) in the 1990s. Current conditions, such as the mobilization of religion to legitimize the authorities in waging war against Ukraine, will also be addressed. The research material used by the author of the article consists of monographs, academic articles, encyclopedic materials and internet sources. Research methods that appeared in the article include content analysis and historical approach.

### **Emergence of Islam in the Volga-Ural region**

The year 922 is considered to be the symbolic date of the adoption of Islam as the state religion by Volga Bulgaria<sup>556</sup>. At that time, a delegation from Baghdad representing the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir arrived in Volga Bulgaria at the invitation of the Bulgarian Ruler Almış, son of Şilka. The latter received the title of emir and proclaimed his loyalty to the Baghdad Caliph in an attempt to gain a powerful ally in the fight against the Khazar Khaganate. However, it is important to emphasize that the gradual Islamization of the Bulgars, the ancestors of the modern Tatars, began as early as the late 9th century, i.e. long before contact with the Abbasid Caliphate was established. For example, there is strong evidence Almış and his entourage converted to Islam during the first decade of the 10th century while Baghdad was under the previous Caliph's rule<sup>557</sup>. Therefore, the year 992 should be treated as a symbolic date

<sup>556</sup> Today, the Tatars see Volga Bulgaria as one of the first forms of their proto-statehood.

<sup>557</sup> И.А. Гагин, *Об обстоятельствах принятия ислама Волжской Болгарией*, "Исторический формат" 2021, no. 2, pp. 114, 116-118; И. Измайлов, *Ислам и мусульманская культура в Волжской Булгарии*, [in:] *История*

when the ruler of Volga Bulgaria achieved international recognition of his status of a Muslim monarch<sup>558</sup>.

### Muslim ummah of the Volga-Ural region in the Tsarist period

In the second half of the 16th century, the Principality of Moscow conquers the territories inhabited by the Tatar people. A number of successor khanates of the Golden Horde – Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia – disappear from the political map of the world. Since then, a long period of intensive, violence-based Christianization of the territories that include today’s Tatarstan begins. Such a policy had a rather limited effect, as only a small proportion of the Tatars was permanently converted to Christianity<sup>559</sup>.

The situation began to change in the second half of the 18th century under the reign of Tsarina Catherine II (1762-1796). In 1773, Islam was granted the official status of a tolerated religion in the Russian Empire<sup>560</sup>. 15 years later, Catherine II issued a decree establishing the Muslim Spiritual Assembly, the first institution in the Russian/Moscow state empowered to represent Muslims living on its territory<sup>561</sup>.

Previously, there was no structured hierarchy of Muslim clergy in Russia. The role of intermediary between the Tsarist administration and the Muslim community was performed by akhunds, Muslim clerics who translated from Persian as “mentors”. They oversaw the activities of the lower-ranking clergy, exercised the authority to treat the norms of Muslim law, acted as judges in matrimonial matters and property disputes, and resolved other conflicts within local communities. The akhunds were informal leaders and their influence on the ummah came from

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*татар с древнейших времен в 7 томах. Том II. Волжская Булгария и Великая Степь*, eds. М. Усманов, Р. Хакимов, Kazan 2006, pp. 550-552.

<sup>558</sup> The anniversary of this date is celebrated today both at the local level in the Republic of Tatarstan and at the federal level in Russia as an important moment that “largely determined the emergence of a unique Russian civilization, combining Western and Eastern traditions”. *Состоялось заседание республиканского оргкомитета по подготовке и проведению празднования 1100-летия принятия Ислама Волжской Булгарией*, URL: <https://mincult.tatarstan.ru/index.htm/news/2047483.htm> (06.07.2024).

<sup>559</sup> Р. Лункин, С. Филатов, *Ислам в Татарстане: основные черты процесса самоопределения*, “Научно-аналитический вестник ИЕ РАН” 2018, no. 1, pp. 236-237; M. Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*, Bloomington 2004, pp. 100-115, 147.

<sup>560</sup> Н.К. Гарипов, *Ислам и Российская власть: функционирование религиозных институтов мусульман*, [in:] *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание и духовное развитие татарского народа в последней четверти XVIII – начале XX вв.*, eds. И.К. Загидуллин, Kazan 2011, p. 34.

<sup>561</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии» Оренбургского магометанского духовного собрания к духовным управлениям постсоветского периода*, [in:] *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание и духовное развитие татарского народа в последней четверти XVIII – начале XX вв.*, eds. И.К. Загидуллин, Kazan 2011, p. 118; A. Khalid, *Islam after Communism. Religion and Politics in Central Asia*, Berkeley & Los Angeles & London 2014, pp. 36-37.

the personal authority of particular individuals. With the centralization of the state and the consolidation of absolutism in Russia, the authorities realized the need to centralize the life of the Muslim community and to include its loyal representatives in the hierarchical structure of the state administration, as this would facilitate the control of the entire Muslim population<sup>562</sup>.

The Ufa Spiritual Assembly of the Mohammedan Law (rus. *Уфимское духовное магометанского закона собрание*) began to operate in 1789 with headquarter in the city of Ufa, which served as the administrative center of the Ufa Viceroyalty until 1796, and then became the center of the Orenburg Governorate from 1802. In the short period 1796-1802 the center of Orenburg Governorate was the city of Orenburg, to which the Spiritual Assembly moved. During that period, it was given a name that would remain until the end of the Romanov Empire – the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (OMSA; rus. *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание*). In 1802/1803 the OMSA as well as other government bodies returned to the city of Ufa<sup>563</sup>. Today, Ufa is the capital of Bashkortostan, another national republic that is a part of the Russian Federation and located in the Volga-Ural region east of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The OMSA was headed by a mufti, who was appointed to the office personally by the Tsar on the proposal of the interior minister of Russia. In practice, however, until 1889, the prerogative of nominating candidates for the Tsar's appointment belonged to local governors and viceroys<sup>564</sup>. In addition, three qadis served on the board of the Spiritual Assembly<sup>565</sup>. For them, the principle of election was guaranteed. Under Catherine II's decree, only the imams of the Kazan Governorate were entitled to hold elections of qadis, and representatives of the Kazan Tatars were the only ones who could be elected to these posts. The qadis' term of office lasted 3 years. Meanwhile, the mufti (chairman of the OMSA) held his position for life. The process of electing qadis was monitored by representatives of the local state administration, such as the police chief or mayor. In 1889/1890, the election of qadis was abolished: according to the new

<sup>562</sup> Д.Н. Денисов, *О роли ахунов до учреждения Оренбургского магометанского духовного собрания (на примере Южного Урала)*, [in:] *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание и духовное развитие татарского народа в последней четверти XVIII – начале XX вв.*, eds. И.К. Загидуллин, Kazan 2011, pp. 43, 46, 48.

<sup>563</sup> Н.К. Гарипов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36; Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии»...*, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>564</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание*, URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/orenburgskoe-magometanskoe-dukhovnoe-sobranie-df0cb4> (08.07.2024).

<sup>565</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “qadi” means a Muslim judge who interprets and administers the religious law of Islam. *Definition of ‘qadi’*, URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/qadi> (16.07.2024).

procedure, qadis were appointed directly by the interior minister of Russia on the proposal of the OMSA mufti<sup>566</sup>.

Attention should also be paid to the nature of decision-making process on the OMSA board (mufti and qadis). A simple majority was required for a decision to be passed, with the mufti's vote being decisive only in cases of a tie. The Tsarist authorities were interested in preventing the mufti's influence from becoming too strong, so his freedom of action was limited by the principle of collegiality and the need to agree his plans with qadis<sup>567</sup>. From the Tsarist administration's point of view, the loyalty of both the OMSA leadership and the lower-ranking Islamic clergy was of crucial importance. For example, candidates for imams and akhunds were obliged to obtain a document from local officials certifying their loyalty, only later could they take examinations conducted by the OMSA with the supervision of the gubernatorial authorities<sup>568</sup>. From an organizational point of view, the Ufa Spiritual Assembly was under the dual oversight of the Tsarist representatives in the region, as well as a special cell in the Russian interior ministry. Moreover, Tsarist officials had widespread power to interfere in the internal affairs of the OMSA<sup>569</sup>.

The creation of the OMSA had also an external dimension, serving to achieve the foreign policy objectives of the Tsarist government towards its neighbors. After the government recognized certain religious freedoms for Muslims and allowed them to establish their own spiritual management, it engaged Muslims, mainly the Volga Tatars, in working with the Central Asian and North Caucasian tribes and nations to encourage them to come under the rule of the Russian Tsar<sup>570</sup>.

All subjects of the Russian Tsar adhering to Islam came under the administration of the OMSA, with the exception of those living on the territory of the Taurida Governorate<sup>571</sup>, the

<sup>566</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии»...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-119, 125-126; А.Ю. Хабутдинов, *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание как основополагающий общенациональный институт в 1788–1917 гг.*, „Pax Islamica” 2010, vol. 1, no. 4, p. 97.

<sup>567</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии»...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-119, 125.

<sup>568</sup> А.Ю. Хабутдинов, *Оренбургское...*, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>569</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *Оренбургское...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>570</sup> S. Zapaśnik, „Walczący islam” w Azji Centralnej. Problem społecznej genezy zjawiska, Toruń 2014, pp. 25-26; A. Khalid, *Islam...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 36-37; Н.К. Гарипов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>571</sup> There was a separate spiritual administration in the Crimea with its own mufti at the head, which followed a tradition dating back to the Crimean Khanate. И.К. Загидуллин, *Проект «Устава управления духовными делами магометан» оренбургского муфтия С. Тевкелева 1867 г. как правовая основа для реформирования организации религиозно-обрядовой жизни мусульман*, [in:] *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание и духовное развитие татарского народа в последней четверти XVIII – начале XX вв.*, eds. idem, Kazan 2011, p. 50.

western governorates of the Russian Empire, the North and South Caucasus<sup>572</sup>, the Kazakh steppes and the lands of Turkestan<sup>573</sup>. Thus, the competence of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly spread primarily to the Bashkir and Tatar population (not to be confused with the Crimean Tatars). Interestingly, even if the Tatars settled in areas not formally under the jurisdiction of the OMSA, they could still count on the OMSA to take them under its protection<sup>574</sup>.

### **The Spiritual Authority of Russian Muslims from the February Revolution to the fall of the USSR**

In 1915 Muhammad-Safa Bayazitov, who lacked popularity among the progressive Muslim clergy, was elected mufti. His rule was short-lived, as he was forced to resign by the nationally-oriented clergy as early as 1917. Mufti did not support the February Revolution and announced that the OMSA remained loyal to the monarchy. Then, Muhammad-Safa Bayazitov found himself under house arrest and the Russian – mainly Tatar as the most numerous and active – Muslim clergy were given the chance to elect an independent mufti for the first time in their history within the Russian state. This happened in May 1917, when the Kazan mullah Ğalimcan Barudi was freely elected as the new mufti of the OMSA at the First All-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow<sup>575</sup>. In July of the same year, the Second All-Russian Muslim Congress in Kazan converted the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly into the Diniya Nazaraty (tat. *Диния нэзараты*), i.e. a religious ministry within the government of the national and cultural autonomy of the Muslims of the Turkic-Tatars of Inner Russia and Siberia (tat. *Милли Идарә*)<sup>576</sup>. Under the adopted law of the Autonomy, the clerical authorities were subordinated to the secular ones<sup>577</sup>.

<sup>572</sup> Autonomous Spiritual Assemblies were also established in the Caucasus by a decree of the Tsar from 1872, with a division of Sunnis and Shiites. И.К. Загидуллин, *Предисловие*, [in:] *Оренбургское магометанское духовное собрание и духовное развитие татарского народа в последней четверти XVIII – начале XX вв.*, eds. idem, Kazan 2011, p. 3.

<sup>573</sup> This may have been due to the fact that the Central Asian states (Bukhara, Kokand, Khiva) were conquered by Russia only in the latter half of the 19th century. They had developed their own institutions to regulate religious life long before coming under Russian influence. These institutions retained their autonomy even after the states lost their sovereignty in favor of Russia.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>575</sup> А.Р. Файзуллин, *Положение и деятельность татар-мусульман после февральской революции в Казанской губернии (февраль–октябрь 1917 года)*, „Ислам в современном мире” 2019, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 138-140. The term “Turkic-Tatars” should be primarily understood as a reference to the Tatar and Bashkir populations.

<sup>576</sup> А.Ю. Хабутдинов, *Оренбургское...*, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>577</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии»...*, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

The Turko-Tatar Muslim government did not survive the turmoil of the Russian Civil War and was ultimately abolished with the establishment of Soviet rule over the Volga-Ural region. The Bolsheviks introduce a new territorial division of Russia, creating a few republics and autonomous *oblasts* (provinces) in the Volga-Ural region. In 1920, the Tatars were given their own territorial unit – the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) with its center in the city of Kazan<sup>578</sup>. On the other hand, Ufa, the city where the Muslim organizational structures of the Volga-Ural region were traditionally located, became the administrative center of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Soviet authorities decided to keep the centralized structure of the Muslim clergy alive. This is why they did not prevent the establishment in 1920 of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia (CSAM; rus. *Центральное духовное управление мусульман Внутренней России и Сибири*), which was the legal successor to the OMSA and the Diniya Nazaraty. The CSAM was headed by mufti Ğalimcan Barudi, previously serving as chairman of the OMSA and the Diniya Nazaraty. Barudi was opposed to the rule of the Bolsheviks, but the latter refrained from repression against him because of mufti's status and authority among Muslims<sup>579</sup>. The Ğalimcan Barudi died a natural death in 1921<sup>580</sup>.

In the first years of their rule and until the late 1920s, the Bolsheviks did not opt for massive repression against followers of Islam. They fought mainly against individual representatives of the Muslim clergy, who they considered to be staunch enemies of the revolution. The Soviet authorities remained open to cooperating with the loyal faction of the spiritual leadership, which was closely monitored by the secret police. From the perspective of the Bolsheviks, it was not worthwhile to completely dismantle the vertical organizational structures of the Muslims established back in the time of the Tsar. They were interested in creating divisions among the Muslims, depriving the CSAM of any autonomy and turning it into an obedient tool for the implementation of their policy goals<sup>581</sup>. In this respect, their strategy towards the Muslims was basically no different from that of the Tsarist administration.

<sup>578</sup> It should be underlined that only about one-third of all Russian Tatars of the time lived in the territory of the TASSR, which shows the rather artificial nature of the borders of Soviet Tatarstan drawn by the Bolsheviks. W. Zajęzkowski, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości społecznej. Inteligencja baszkirska, buriacka i tatarska wobec kwestii narodowej w Cesarstwie Rosyjskim i ZSRR*, Lublin 2001, pp. 106-107.

<sup>579</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *The Muftiates and the State in the Soviet Time: the Evolution of Relationship*, [in:] *Российский ислам в трансформационных процессах современности: новые вызовы и тенденции развития в XXI веке*, eds. З.Р. Хабибуллина, Ufa 2017, pp. 55-56.

<sup>580</sup> *Седьмой российский муфтий Галимджан Баруди*, URL: <https://www.cdum.ru/rdum/mufti/d/6200/> (10.07.2024).

<sup>581</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *The Muftiates...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 55, 57-59.



The best opportunity to completely subjugate the muftiate came in 1936 after the death of Rizaeddin Fakhretdin, the successor of Ğalimcan Barudi as mufti of the CSAM. At that time, a fierce struggle began between the two main candidates for the position of mufti. The first of them, Gabdrahman Rasulev, represented that part of the clergy which was prepared to make even far-reaching concessions in order to keep the CSAM within the legitimate field of the Soviet state. Another candidate, Kashshaf Tarjemanov (Kashshaf ad-din Tarjemani), was a close associate of the previous mufti<sup>582</sup>, Rizaeddin Fakhretdin, who accepted the necessity of cooperating and making compromises with the Bolsheviks to ensure the interests of the Muslims, but at the same time was not afraid to raise his grievances against the religious policies of the Soviet authorities in open text<sup>583</sup>. At this point it should be mentioned that the Bolsheviks' policy towards Islam became far more severe in the late 1920s – early 1930s. Statistics bear this out: by 1930, the majority (5/6) of Russian mosques had been closed. Only 2,000 out of 12,000 continued to function. Moreover, an estimated 10,000 Muslims were jailed on charges of anti-revolutionary activity. It even came to the point that Fakhretdin, in correspondence with Tarjemanov, discussed the possibility of dissolving the CSAM due to the dysfunctionality of the muftiate in the face of restrictions imposed by the government. Should this scenario be realized, the Muslim ummah of Russia would return to the horizontal nature of the relationship between the clergy for the first time since 1788/1789, when the OMSA was established<sup>584</sup>.

This plan failed to be implemented primarily due to the death of Fakhretdin. Meanwhile, Tarjemanov lost in the mufti election of 1936. This happened because most of the clergy turned away from him while his rival gained favor of the authorities. After the election, Tarjemanov, as well as many of his associates, were arrested and then some of them were sent to forced labor camps. In this way, the authorities sealed Rasulev's victory. Since Rasulev's assumption of the most important post in the Muslim ummah of the European part of the Soviet Union, the institution of the mufti has come under the full subordination of the state<sup>585</sup>.

At the Ufa Congress in 1948, the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia was renamed with the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the European Part of the USSR and Siberia (SAMES; rus. *Духовное управление мусульман Европейской части СССР и Сибири*). During the Soviet period, the Ufim muftiate was stripped of many of the functions it had previously performed, such as keeping records of births, marriages, and

<sup>582</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

<sup>583</sup> W. Zajączkowski, *W poszukiwaniu...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>584</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *The Muftiates...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 60-61.

deaths of Muslims attending particular mosques, opening of new communities, establishment of educational institutions for staff training, etc. The authority of the CSAM/SAMES was restricted to overseeing the activities of both formal and informal Islamic servants and monitoring the number of mosques and worship houses<sup>586</sup>.

It is important to add that the jurisdiction of the CSAM in the USSR, like that of the OMSA in Tsarist times, did not cover the entire territory of the state. It continued to spread to areas where the Muslim community was represented mostly by Tatars and Bashkirs. From 1943 to 1944, three other Muslim Spiritual Administrations – fully independent of each other and of the CSAM – were established: one for the five Central Asian republics of the USSR; one for the North Caucasus entities of the RSFSR; one for the three Transcaucasian republics of the USSR. Their emergence occurred during the war, when the Soviet authorities decided to loosen the restrictions imposed on religious activities to secure greater support among believers, and this applied not only to followers of Islam. None of the three muftiates mentioned above survived the collapse of the USSR. The Central Asian muftiate was transformed into the Uzbek muftiate, and in the rest of the Central Asian republics their own organisations were established to manage Islamic affairs. The North Caucasus muftiate ceased to exist in its entirety, and in all the entities previously under its jurisdiction, their own muftiates were formed. Meanwhile, the territory now under the successor of the Transcaucasian muftiate is almost completely confined to the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, although it formerly covered the whole of the South Caucasus<sup>587</sup>. In 1944, the Council for Affairs of Religious Cults was created under the Soviet government, which, among other things, was tasked with keeping an eye on whether the activities of all four muftiates were in breach of USSR law<sup>588</sup>.

### **Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan and the nature of its relationship with state authorities**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the SAMES, like the rest of the Soviet muftiates, experienced considerable turbulence and centrifugal tendencies. In modern Russia, there are

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<sup>586</sup> Idem, *Центральное духовное управление мусульман России*, URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/tsentral-noe-dukhovnoe-upravlenie-musul-man-rossii-a30f42> (12.07.2024).

<sup>587</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *Духовное управление мусульман Закавказья*, URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/dukhovnoe-upravlenie-musul-man-zakavkaz-ia-f70949> (13.07.2024); Idem, *Духовное управление мусульман Северного Кавказа*, URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/dukhovnoe-upravlenie-musul-man-severnogo-kavkaza-0937eb> (13.07.2024); Idem, *Среднеазиатское духовное управление мусульман*, URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/sredneaziatskoe-dukhovnoe-upravlenie-musul-man-228acf> (13.07.2024).

<sup>588</sup> Д.Н. Никитин, *Совет по делам религий*, URL: [https://old.bigenc.ru/religious\\_studies/text/3589089](https://old.bigenc.ru/religious_studies/text/3589089) (14.07.2024).

more than 80 (sic!) central, inter-regional and local muftiates and each of them is committed to its autonomy. Such fragmentation has led to a situation where several (even up to six) muftiates could operate simultaneously in the same entity of the Russian Federation<sup>589</sup>. The SAMES, under a different name, has been kept alive, although it has lost its monopoly on the management of the religious life of Muslim communities on most of Russia's territory. In 1992, the SAMES was renamed with the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia and the European CIS countries, but in 2000 "the European CIS countries" was removed from the name (CSAMR; rus. *Центральное духовное управление мусульман России / России и Европейских стран СНГ*)<sup>590</sup>.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, ideas of moving the SAMES/CSAMR headquarters from Ufa to Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, appeared in public discourse. It is worth noting that they had arisen in the previous decades as well, but neither then nor now have been put into practice<sup>591</sup>. In the 1990s, this was due to the resistance of Talgat Tadzhuddin, the mufti of the SAMES/CSAMR. Therefore, in 1992, at a congress in Naberezhnye Chelny, the local clergy and representatives of the Tatar national movement proclaimed the establishment of Tatarstan independent muftiate, which did not submit to the Ufa center. The congress was not held in Kazan, as the republic's capital was still heavily influenced by the Ufim muftiate. Gabdulla Galiullin headed the newly established muftiate called the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan (SAM RT; rus. *Духовное управление мусульман Республики Татарстан*). At the same time, the CSAMR branch continued to operate in Tatarstan. In 1994, by a decision of Tadzhuddin, it was reorganized into the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Tatarstan (SAMT; rus. *Духовное управление мусульман Татарстана*) under the jurisdiction of the CSAMR. The mufti of the SAMT CSAMR became Gabdelkhamid Zinnatullin, who was succeeded by Farid Salman in 1997. So, for the first six years of the post-Soviet period, the Muslim ummah of Tatarstan was characterized by a constant rivalry between these two structures (SAM RT and SAMT CSAMR)<sup>592</sup>.

At this point, it should be noted that in the early 1990s, Kazan enjoyed a very wide autonomy from the federal center in Moscow. The ethnocratic regime of Tatarstan President

<sup>589</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *От «автономии»...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 137-138; *Топ-10 муфтиев России*, URL: <https://reltoday.com/news/top-10-muftiev-rossii/> (14.07.2024).

<sup>590</sup> Р.И. Беккин, *Центральное...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>591</sup> K. Matsuzato, *Muslim leaders in Russia's Volga-Urals: Self-Perceptions and Relationship with regional authorities*, „Europe-Asia Studies” 2007, vol. 59, no. 5, pp. 786-787.

<sup>592</sup> М. Тульский, *Духовные управления мусульман РФ: история возникновения, расколы и объединения (часть 2)*, URL: <https://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2003/10/d1074/> (16.07.2024); L. Hayrapetyan, *Radical Islam in Russia: the case of Tatarstan*, „Contemporary Eurasia” 2018, vol. 7, no. 1-2, p. 67.

Mintimer Shaimiev was very quickly consolidated. Ethnocratism consisted in the fact that ethnic Tatars, who made up about half of the total population of the republic, took up the majority of positions in the state authorities of Tatarstan, while ethnic Russians remained significantly underrepresented<sup>593</sup>. The Tatarstan authorities realized the importance of religion, which in many parts of the former Soviet Union filled the ideological gap left by the collapse of communism. It was the reason why Mintimer Shaimiev kept a close eye on the ongoing process of Islamic revival in Tatarstan and the relations between the two local muftiates. In the beginning, the president took a wait-and-see position, observing which structure would prove more effective in the competition for the support of the local ummah. However, it soon became clear that Gabdulla Galiullin carried out more active work and the scales of victory were tipping in his favor. It is enough to look at the figures: between 1993 and 1994, the number of congregations subordinated to the SAM RT doubled, while the number of those under the SAMT CSAMR did not change significantly. This prompted the Tatarstan authorities to establish closer cooperation with the SAM RT and provide support to Gabdulla Galiullin. By the end of 1997, the SAM RT was already in control of more than 3/4 of all Tatarstan congregations (the rest were under the jurisdiction of the SAMT CSAMR or had formally independent status)<sup>594</sup>.

Although President Shaimiev clearly decided to back the SAM RT, relations between mufti Gabdulla Galiullin and the civil authorities of Tatarstan began to deteriorate after a while. Tatarstan political elite didn't applaud the mufti's self-reliance, unpredictability and ambitions<sup>595</sup>. There have even been open conflicts with mutual accusations, as for example in cases of the transfer of religious building property to the SAM RT, which was nationalized back in the days of the USSR<sup>596</sup>. In 1997, Shaimiev became convinced of the need to hold a congress

<sup>593</sup> T. Bodio, P. Zuzankiewicz, *Przywództwo i polityka etnokratyczna w Tatarstanie (część I: Etnizacja regionalnego przywództwa politycznego)*, “Nowa Polityka Wschodnia” 2016, vol. 10, no 1, pp. 23-24.

<sup>594</sup> М. Тульский, *Духовные...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>595</sup> Р. Лункин, С. Филатов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>596</sup> The most prominent was the dispute over the handover of the Mukhammadiya madrasah to the SAM RT. After the fall of communism, the Tatarstan government promised to pass the building of historical importance for the Tatars into the hands of the clergy, but according to Galiullin, the authorities delayed completing the process. Thus, in the autumn of 1995, the SAM RT mufti initiated an arbitrary takeover of the building, which almost led to clashes with representatives of a local newspaper located there. It got to the point where, after three days of occupation, the police had to intervene and escorted the clerics out of the building. President Shaimiev came out with strong criticism of the mufti's actions. Meanwhile, the law enforcement authorities initiated a number of criminal proceedings against Galiullin (these cases were later hushed up). The mufti defended himself by saying that he had been forced into such measures by the government's passivity in fulfilling its promise. In the end, the authorities confirmed their earlier commitment to hand over the Mukhammadiya madrasah building to the SAM

to elect a new leadership of Tatarstan Islam and thus get rid of the disobedient mufti. The state authorities decided to support Gusman Iskhakov, Galiullin's deputy, who had already tried his hand in 1992 but lost in the elections. Iskhakov was regarded as a more temperate, cooperative, and loyal person. In addition, his family had close ties with the chief of staff of the president of Tatarstan. Formally, the main purpose of the congress was to overcome internal divisions within the Tatarstan ummah, and that is why it was given the name of a Unification Congress<sup>597</sup>.

The years 1997-1998 were a watershed moment when the secular authorities allowed themselves for the first time to interfere so blatantly in the affairs of the Muslim republic's ummah. In December 1997, an organizing committee was formed and the preparations for the Unification Congress began. Committee consisted of an equal number of representatives of the two competing muftiates and one representative of the authorities, Rinat Nabiev, who at the time held the position of Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of Tatarstan. President Shaimiev personally met with the leaders of the two rival structures, Galiullin and Tadzhuddin<sup>598</sup>. The former had taken the initiative to hold a rally even earlier, but, lacking the approval of the authorities, was unable to organise it on his own<sup>599</sup>.

Shaimiev mobilized the entire administrative resource in his hands to ensure Iskhakov's victory. The authorities provided the imam delegates, who supported Iskhakov, with free travel to the congress on state buses and subsidies for accommodation in Kazan<sup>600</sup>. Additionally, representatives of local state administrations held "explanatory talks" with the particular imams before their departure to the congress<sup>601</sup>. At the end of January 1998, Gabdulla Galiullin sent a letter to Shaimiev proposing to postpone the congress for a year, otherwise he threatened to withdraw from the election, potentially putting the unifying nature of the congress in question. Nevertheless, the authorities took a firm stance and replied that the congress would take place as planned<sup>602</sup>. The congress, opened with a speech delivered by President Mintimer Shaimiev, began its work in February 1998. It resulted in the unification of the SAM RT and the SAMT CSAMR into one organization under the same name as the Galiullin muftiate (1992-1998),

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RT. A video report on this subject is available on YouTube. *Мусульмане захватывают медресе «Мухаммадия» в Казани (октябрь 1995 г.)*, URL: <https://youtu.be/PLUwTIVNpNs?si=4dSj-jMqJvAJUKju> (18.07.2024).

<sup>597</sup> М. Тульский, *Духовные...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>598</sup> А. Ахунов, *Роль государства в становлении Духовного управления мусульман Республики Татарстан*, [in:] *Ислам в мультикультурном мире. Мусульманские движения и механизмы воспроизводства идеологии ислама в современном информационном пространстве*, eds. Д.В. Брилев, Kazan 2014, pp. 410-411.

<sup>599</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *Власть и религиозное возрождение*, Kazan 2014, pp. 187-188.

<sup>600</sup> Р. Лункин, С. Филатов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>601</sup> М. Тульский, *Духовные...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>602</sup> А. Ахунов, *Роль...*, *op.cit.*, p. 412.

i.e. the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan (SAM RT / Kazan muftiate). The first mufti of the unified muftiate was elected Gusman Iskhakov, who received the vote of around 70% of all congress delegates. Gabdulla Galiullin took second place, while Farid Salman, supported by Talgat Tadzhuiddin, came in third<sup>603</sup>. Both men (Galiullin and Salman) eventually had to accept that they were deprived of their previous status from that point onward. Interestingly, they were even given posts in the new muftiate and worked within its ranks for some time<sup>604</sup>. In this way, with the active involvement of the republican authorities, the division of the Muslim ummah of Tatarstan was overcome and the influence of the Ufa-based CSAMR was eliminated from the republic.

A year later, the law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” was adopted by the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan. According to it, all mosques and congregations active on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan had to be registered under the SAM RT. Thus, the law sealed the SAM RT monopoly in Tatarstan<sup>605</sup>.

### **Relations between the state authorities of Tatarstan and the clergy after the Unification Congress**

It is important to be aware of how the Tatarstan authorities perceived Islam. Firstly, from their perspective, Islam is a distinctive feature of the republic proving its uniqueness against the mostly Orthodox regions of Russia. The factor of Islamic mobilization was treated as another bargaining chip in disputes with the federal center over the scope of autonomy. The intervention of the state resulting in the creation of a unified and centralized muftiate, independent of other Russian Muslims administrations, should be understood as a further stage in the sovereignization of Tatarstan.

Secondly, the involvement of government representatives in the process of religious revival, e.g. by opening old mosques or financing the construction of new ones, strengthened the legitimacy of the ruling regime. As Roman Lunkin and Sergei Filatov write, starting in 1998 Shaimiev began to talk about his personal responsibility in the issue of the Islamic development<sup>606</sup>. Nevertheless, the Tatarstan authorities have also consistently emphasized the relevance of Orthodoxy, whose adherents make up a large part of the republic’s population. In this respect, the government’s policy is very measured, as it does not wish to give the impression

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<sup>603</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *Власть...*, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>604</sup> А. Ахунов, *Роль...*, *op.cit.*, p. 415.

<sup>605</sup> М. Тульский, *Духовные...*, *op.cit.*

<sup>606</sup> Р. Лункин, С. Филатов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, p. 239.

of favoring only one denomination (Islam) at the expense of another (Orthodoxy), which could potentially cause inter-ethnic tensions in Tatarstan<sup>607</sup>.

Thirdly, the authorities are also aware that a lack of control over Islam could lead to the radicalization of some followers. In the 1990s, the entire Muslim ummah of Russia faced the challenge of a shortage of educated Muslim leaders, a consequence of the destructive policies implemented by the Bolsheviks. As a result, there was a real threat of foreign missionaries infiltrating the Volga-Ural region, including Tatarstan, and promoting non-traditional interpretations of Islam<sup>608</sup>. Such fears are not unfounded, as evidenced by the most notorious terrorist attacks in Tatarstan's modern history, which occurred on July 19, 2012. Then, extremists committed an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Ildus Faizov, the SAM RT's mufti in 2011-2013, and gunned down his deputy Valiulla Yakupov<sup>609</sup>. Both men were considered staunch opponents of the radical strands of Islam infiltrating the Volga-Ural region from the North Caucasus and third countries. On the same day, a video was published in which a group of people declared that they were mujahideen, and their leader, Muhammad, proclaimed himself the Emir of Tatarstan and pledged his loyalty to the Caucasus Emirate chief Dokka Umarova. The months and even years following this terrorist acts marked an intense period of combating supporters of Islamic fundamentalism in the republic. In general, the situation in Tatarstan remained under control, with the police forces working actively to pacify extremist groups, which remained mainly underground all the time<sup>610</sup>. By 2017, this objective had been fully achieved<sup>611</sup>.

Fourthly, the fact that the Tatars belong to Islam has consistently been leveraged by the republic's authorities to foster cooperation with Muslim-majority countries, such as those in Central Asia and the Middle East<sup>612</sup>.

The subordination of the Muslim community to the authorities of Tatarstan is conditioned by a number of objective considerations, among which the most important are financial and

<sup>607</sup> Р.А. Набиев, *Власть...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>608</sup> L. Hayrapetyan, *Radical...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>609</sup> Interestingly, in 1997, while serving as imam of one of Kazan's mosques and chairman of a youth center for Muslim culture, Valiulla Yakupov published a statement referring to President Shaimiev as "the spiritual superior" of Tatarstan and stating that he, as "the highest spiritual authority" in the republic, should elect the mufti instead of the congress. Such proposals were not accepted by Shaimiev and his entourage, even though they were welcomed by some of the clergy. А. Ахунов, *Роль...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 411-412.

<sup>610</sup> L. Hayrapetyan, *Radical...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 68, 73, 75.

<sup>611</sup> Р. Лункин, С. Филатов, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>612</sup> Л.В. Сагитова, *Ислам в конструировании регионального политического дизайна современного Татарстана*, "RUDN Journal of Political Science" 2018, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 314-315; L. Hayrapetyan, *Radical...*, *op.cit.*, p. 76.

administrative ones. The authorities are providing substantial funds for the building of new and renovation of old mosques and madrassas throughout the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan. In addition, the local state administration issues decisions on the allocation of land for the construction of various buildings of worship<sup>613</sup>. The organization of major religious events and anniversaries did not take place without the involvement of the authorities at various stages of preparation. Meanwhile, the attendance of top state officials, such as the president of the republic, the prime minister, or the speaker of the Tatarstan parliament, at religious ceremonies has become a well-established tradition<sup>614</sup>. The Tatarstan government has also contributed to the establishment of the highest level of Muslim education in the republic. The first Islamic university in post-Soviet Russia, known as the Russian Islamic University, was established in Kazan in 1998 with the support of the Tatarstan authorities<sup>615</sup>. The republican ummah also got assistance from both local and federal authorities for the opening of the Bulgarian Islamic Academy in 2017<sup>616</sup>. In summary, the Tatar clergy must seek ways to cooperate with the authorities to ensure the effective development of Islam in the republic.

The other side of the coin is that in practice the authorities do not respect the principle of non-interference of the state in religious affairs. The tradition of politicizing the election of the mufti, which began in 1998, persists to this day. While state authorities formally have no influence over the election process, in reality the election of the mufti or his resignation from office is not decided without the approval of the highest authorities of the republic. One example is mufti Gusman Iskhakov, who in his last years in office was accused by a large part of the clergy of being passive in opposing strands of Islam that were not traditional for the Tatars. Some of Iskhakov's entourage demanded his resignation, but President Shaimiev's favor allowed him to win a third consecutive re-election in 2010 during the 4th Congress of the SAM RT (the previous two took place in 2002 and 2006). However, in November of the same year, the authorities recognized that the situation regarding fundamentalism was deteriorating and could spiral out of control, particularly after clashes between troops and three armed religious radicals in one of Tatarstan's municipalities. A few weeks later, the mufti announced his resignation 'for health reasons,' though experts and political observers generally believed that

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<sup>613</sup> К. Matsuzato, *Muslim...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 788-789.

<sup>614</sup> А.Ю. Хабутдинов, *Развитие мусульманской общины Татарстана в 2022 г.*, “Ислам в современном мире” 2022, vol. 18, no 4, p. 124.

<sup>615</sup> А. Мухаметрахимов, *Гусман Исхаков: «Минниханов спросил, где взял деньги. Я ответил, что в Исламском банке»*, URL: <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/405245> (21.07.2024).

<sup>616</sup> Л.В. Сагитова, *Ислам...*, *op.cit.*, p. 318.



Iskhakov, who had just begun his fourth term, made the decision under pressure from the authorities<sup>617</sup>.

The nature of the authorities' relationship with the Spiritual Administration survived without major modification even after the change in the position of president of the republic, when Rustam Minnikhanov replaced Mintimer Shaimiev in 2010. Thus, for example, Minnikhanov openly called on the delegates of the SAM RT's 7th Congress in 2017 to support the candidacy of Kamil Samigullin as mufti of Tatarstan<sup>618</sup>. At the time, Samigullin was running for re-election, being the only candidate for the post. He took over as mufti for the first time in 2013 after Faisov's resignation<sup>619</sup>.

Finally, the authorities have a strong influence on the appointment of not only muftis, but also lower-level clerics, such as imams. The mufti and the relevant Muslim community consider the opinion of the local state administration when selecting candidates<sup>620</sup>.

In exchange for support from the state authorities, the SAM RT is expected to promote among the faithful those narratives that are favorable to the government. This is most clearly exemplified by the muftiate's engagement in legitimizing the Russian invasion of Ukraine beginning in 2022<sup>621</sup>. After Russia launched a full-scale war (in Russian newspeak – special

<sup>617</sup> А. Минвалеев, Р. Билалов, М. Арсланов, *В Татарстане готовится, похоже, очередная смена власти. Теперь духовной*, URL: <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/34320> (28.07.2024).

<sup>618</sup> Г.Я. Гузельбаева, *Взаимоотношения исламских структур и государства: случай Татарстана*, "RUDN Journal of Political Science" 2020, vol. 22, no. 4, p. 682.

<sup>619</sup> К. Антонов, *Муфтий един*, URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3220803> (29.08.2024).

<sup>620</sup> К. Matsuzato, *Muslim...*, *op.cit.*, p. 789.

<sup>621</sup> Another spectacular example of the Tatar clergy's involvement in the implementation of the Moscow and Kazan policy took place in 2014. Kamil Samigullin, the SAM RT's mufti, was the first among Russia's Muslim leaders to visit Crimea in March 2014. During his stay on the peninsula, Samigullin met with Emirali Ablayev, the longtime mufti of Crimea, and Refat Chubarov, the chairman of the national self-government of the Crimean Tatar people (Mejlis). The mufti of Tatarstan appealed to the Crimean Tatars "to prevent the political conflict from turning into an inter-confessional and inter-ethnic one". Request for de-escalation addressed to the Crimean Tatar minority, which was clearly opposed to the ongoing annexation of Crimea by Russia, played into the hands of the Russian authorities. It was in their interest, if not to gain the favor of the Crimean Tatars, then at least to secure their neutrality during the preparatory period leading up to the referendum. *Муфтий РТ Камиль Самигуллин пригласил духовных лидеров крымских татар в Татарстан*, URL: [https://rt.rbc.ru/tatarstan/03/03/2014/55928f189a794751dc833389?from=materials\\_on\\_subject](https://rt.rbc.ru/tatarstan/03/03/2014/55928f189a794751dc833389?from=materials_on_subject) (24.11.2024). The chairman of the Russian Council of Muftis, Rawil Gaynetdin (March), and the mufti of the CSAMR, Talgat Tadzhuddin (June), also visited Crimea, where they met with Emirali Ablayev and representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people. In addition, Tatarstan's President Rustam Minnikhanov also appeared twice in Crimea in the first half of March. At the time, Tatarstan politicians and Russia's Muslim leaders tried to mediate between the religious and political leadership of the Crimean Tatars on the one hand and the Moscow Kremlin on the other. *Рефат Чубаров: "Не знаю, как можно интегрироваться в новую жизнь, если в ее основе лежит несправедливость..."*, URL: <https://www.golosameriki.com/a/ukraine-jemilev/1958647.html> (24.11.2024). Nevertheless, the Mejlis has not abandoned its previous approach of calling on Crimean Tatars to boycott the March 16, 2014 referendum on Crimea's annexation to Russia. The Mejlis's hostile stance toward the Russian

military operation) in February 2022, the federal authorities in Moscow began to demand its unconditional support from all regions, not only at the declaration level, but also in terms of real commitment. For the Kremlin, this was a test of loyalty and a check on the effectiveness of the so-called *vertikal vlasti* (vertical hierarchy of power / vertical power structure) built up since the early 2000s. Even Tatarstan, which back in the 1990s was not afraid to openly criticize Moscow’s foreign policy, e.g. towards the Kosovo crisis (1998-1999), now has no room for manoeuvre to avoid involvement in Russian actions on the international stage<sup>622</sup>.

In this situation, the SAM RT has become a helping hand for the Tatarstan authorities, making an important contribution to the legitimacy of the war, which has been particularly noticeable since September 2022, when Vladimir Putin proclaimed “partial mobilization”. Firstly, the muftiate announces regular fundraising for soldiers coming from Tatarstan. Particular attention is paid to providing halal food for practicing Muslim soldiers. Secondly, the SAM RT provided mobilized Muslims with the opportunity for Shariah consultation on keeping religious practices in military and field conditions. Thirdly, the DUM RT’s publishing house has released tens of thousands of pocket prayer books intended for soldiers, and the muftiate’s website featured the “Prayer for the Defenders of the Homeland”. Fourthly, a decision was taken to allocate permanent imams to soldiers’ gathering points in Kazan for additional consultations with Muslims. Fifthly, the head of the SAM RT, mufti Kamil Samigullin, publicly meets with mobilized Muslims of Tatarstan, makes regular visits to the Russian annexed areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* and participates in the worship services of local Muslim communities in these territories. It is also worth noting that, since 2022, the muftiate has consistently emphasized the presence of federal dignitaries at its events<sup>623</sup>.

### Summary

From the very beginning, i.e. the 1880s, the Muslim Spiritual Assembly was conceived by the authorities as an instrument of more effective control over the Muslim subjects of the

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presence on the peninsula persisted in the following years as well. The Russian authorities’ response was not long in coming. In 2016, the activities of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people were banned in the territory of the Russian Federation, including the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula. Meanwhile, mufti Emirali Ablayev chose to cooperate with Russia, which allowed him to retain his position and maintain the functioning of his muftiate in Crimea to this day. P. Kościński, *Banning the Majlis: Another Manifestation of Russian Repression of the Crimean Tatars*, “Bulletin. The Polish Institute of International Affairs” 2016, no. 32 (882), pp. 1-2.

<sup>622</sup> G. Sharafutdinova, *Opportunities and Limits of Self-Creation and Identity Politics: Tatarstan’s Paradiplomatic Project*, [in:] *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist Countries*, eds. K. Matsuzato, Sapporo 2005, pp. 396-397.

<sup>623</sup> А.Ю. Хабутдинов, *Развитие мусульманской общины Татарстана в 2023 г.*, pp. 105-106; Idem, *Развитие мусульманской общины Татарстана в 2022 г.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 122-126.

Empire. The establishment of the muftiate was meant to reduce the danger of rebellion among Muslims. On the other hand, it was used as a way of demonstrating tolerance towards Islam, which was intended to attract neighboring Muslim peoples to the Empire. At the same time, Tsarist officials kept a close watch to ensure that disloyal clerics were not placed on the muftiate's board. It is notable that the Bolsheviks, once in power, did not close the Ufim muftiate, as their approach to Muslim organizational structures mirrored that of the Tsarist administration. As soon as the opportunity arose, they ensured that a candidate fully loyal to them assumed the position of mufti (Gabdrahman Rasulev in 1936).

During the Soviet period, the muftiate was stripped of many of the competences it had under the Tsar. As a result of the far-reaching weakening, it was not prepared to quickly adapt to the new realities that came with the dissolution of the USSR. The CSAMR proved unable to retain its monopoly over the management of all Russian ummah and today the muftiates in Russia are counted in dozens.

In the 1990s, there were discussions about moving the CSAMR headquarters to Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan. As these ideas failed to come to life, the Tatar intelligentsia and some of the clergy established an independent muftiate, which began to compete for influence with the local branch of the CSAMR. All the time, the Tatarstan authorities were closely observing what was happening in the republican ummah. In 1998, they openly intervened in its internal affairs, imposing a loyal candidate for the post of mufti and leading to the overcoming of a division among Tatarstan Muslims. This kind of government policy towards Islam should be seen as part of President Shaimiev's formation of the *vertikal vlasti* in Tatarstan. State authorities control the centralized Muslim organization (SAM RT), which in turn exercises monopolistic supervision over the functioning of the entire Muslim ummah in the republic.

Control of the umma was crucial to the republican authorities, as it allowed them to: increase their own legitimacy in the eyes of the population; obtain another trump card in disputes with the federal center; ensure the fight against Islamic fundamentalism (not fully successful as it later turned out); facilitate cooperation with foreign partners from the Muslim world. Since 1998, the Kazan muftiate has found itself in a strongly subordinate position towards the authorities. This is because the latter have considerable financial and administrative influence over it. To gain support from the authorities, the Kazan muftiate promotes an agenda aligned with elite interests. In recent years, it has become clear that the Tatar clergy is used not only to

fulfill tasks assigned by the republican authorities but also to serve broader Russian interests, such as legitimizing the war against Ukraine.

### **Streszczenie**

Niniejszy artykuł charakteryzuje relacje między wspólnotą muzułmańską Powołża i Uralu a władzą państwową w Rosji. Na początku omówiona zostaje specyfika funkcjonowania muftiatu ufimskiego w okresie carskim i radzieckim. W dalszej części artykułu autor skupia się na analizie sytuacji ummy w Republice Tatarstanu, która była jednym z głównych centrów odrodzenia islamskiego w Rosji w latach 90. XX wieku. Opisuje też przykłady ingerencji władz republikańskich w sprawy wewnętrzne ummy i ich relacje z kazańskim muftiatem, który powstał jako przeciwwaga muftiatowi ufimskiemu. Autor wyjaśnia również z czego wynika podporządkowanie muftiatu władzom i w jaki sposób ta instytucja przejawia swoją lojalność zarówno wobec Kazania, jak i Moskwy. Artykuł kończy się przedstawieniem wkładu, który duchowieństwo Tatarstanu wnosi obecnie w legitymizację rosyjskiej wojny przeciwko Ukrainie. Autor artykułu korzysta z różnorodnych materiałów badawczych, w tym monografii, artykułów naukowych, źródeł encyklopedycznych i zasobów internetowych. Metody badawcze zastosowane w artykule obejmują analizę treści i podejście historyczne.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

*Region Powołża i Uralu, Tatarstan, umma, Duchowny Zarząd Muzułmanów Republiki Tatarstanu, muftiat ufimski, Mintimer Szajmijew.*

### **Key words:**

*Volga-Ural region, Tatarstan, Muslim ummah, Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ufim muftiate, Mintimer Shaimiev.*

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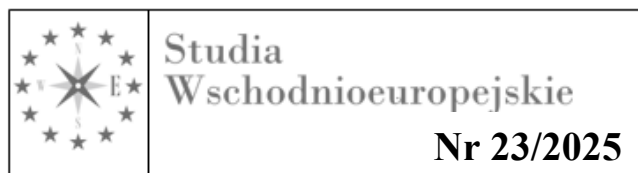
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## **Zjawisko oporu społecznego w odniesieniu do formacji Obrony Terytorialnej**

### **Znowuż wojna**

**S**tary Kontynent od końca II wojny światowej miał poczucie nastania ery pokoju. Okazało się to ułudą, ponieważ w 1956 roku doszło do konfliktu węgiersko – sowieckiego, kolejno w trakcie rozpadu Jugosławii doświadczyliśmy wojny na Bałkanach. Kiedy Bałkany okrzyknięto końcem wojen w Nowoczesnej Europie to wczesnym, lutowym porankiem 2014 roku przywitały nas strzały na Ukrainie w trakcie secesji prorosyjskich separatystów na jej wschodzie. Rozpoczęta w 2014 roku wojna, której koncentracja użycia kinetycznych środków walki nastąpiła w 2022 roku zburzyła poczucie bezpieczeństwa w Europie z kilku względów. Po pierwsze toczy je mocarstwo, grożące użyciem środków nuklearnych innym krajom, po drugie konflikt prowadzą dwa największe terytorialnie państwa Europy. Po trzecie skala tej wojny jest dużo większa niż wspomnianych wyżej konfliktów, a po czwarte emigracja wojenna osiągnęła niespotykaną po II wojnie światowej skalę w Europie. Opinia publiczna ponownie wskazuje zaskoczenie, a rzesze ekspertów przewartościowują swoje analizy, tezy i wnioski. Sytuacja ta dotyczy również systemu bezpieczeństwa Polski w zakresie m.in. zdolności do obrony granic.

Kiedy 25 lutego 2022 r. prezydent Ukrainy podpisał „Dekret o powszechnej mobilizacji”, który objął osoby w wieku od 18 do 55 lat, także te przebywające poza granicami państwa to w największych miastach Ukrainy zaczęto formowanie oddziałów Obrony Terytorialnej.



Jak wskazują różne źródła informacji wzorem dla ukraińskiej Obrony Terytorialnej była formacja, która od kilku lat działa w Polsce<sup>624</sup>. Przyjmując Plan Obrony Ukrainy i definiując pojęcie „narodowego oporu” jako elementu przedsięwzięć na rzecz wzmocnienia systemu bezpieczeństwa państwa, władze tego kraju opowiedziały się za realizacją koncepcji obrony totalnej<sup>625</sup>. Ukraińska wiceminister obrony Anna Malar poinformowała, że od początku rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę do oddziałów obrony terytorialnej przystąpiło około 100 tysięcy Ukraińców. Formacja jest wsparciem dla sił zbrojnych walczących z rosyjskim agresorem<sup>626</sup>. Podstawą przygotowania „narodowego oporu” były zakrojone na dużą skalę podstawowe szkolenia wojskowe dla ludności cywilnej, poprzedzone naborem kandydatów pod kątem ich postawy patriotycznej i predyspozycji do udziału w walce. W przygotowaniu do decydującej fazy wojny zdecydowano się na wprowadzenie szkoleń wojskowych do szkół średnich, w ramach, których nastąpiła wstępna selekcja potencjalnych uczestników „narodowego oporu”<sup>627</sup>.

Powodzenie tych przedsięwzięć sprawiło, że ukraiński potencjał oporu znacząco wzrósł. Obecnie jego skuteczność zależy już nie tylko od rozwiązań w kwestiach organizacyjnych, logistycznych czy przekazania uzbrojenia i wyposażenia. Równie ważnym czynnikiem jest podtrzymanie wysokiego morale wśród społeczeństwa gotowego do przeciwstawienia się rosyjskiej agresji. Według badań socjologicznych z grudnia 2021 r. ponad 50% respondentów zadeklarowało gotowość do czynnej obrony Ukrainy w takiej sytuacji<sup>628</sup>. Wyniki te pozwalają postawić tezę, że rosyjska aktywność zbrojna na terytorium Ukrainy jest znacząco utrudniana

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<sup>624</sup> *Polacy wzorem dla ukraińskiej obrony terytorialnej*, <https://www.rp.pl/konflikty-zbrojne/art35777271-polacy-wzorem-dla-ukraińskiej-obrony-terytorialnej>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>625</sup> Jednym ze sposobów na zrównoważenie zdolności potencjalnego przeciwnika jest przyjęcie strategii obrony totalnej (ang. total force lub total defence). Zakłada ona, że do obrony suwerenności państwa angażuje się całe państwo i społeczeństwo, a siły zbrojne są tylko jednym z elementów systemu obronnego. Strategia obrony totalnej uwzględnia między innymi odpowiednie ukształtowanie sił zbrojnych, tak aby były one w stanie jak najskuteczniej przeciwstawiać się agresji na własne terytorium, ale też: przeszkolenie społeczeństwa, przygotowanie obrony cywilnej oraz dostosowanie poszczególnych instytucji do funkcjonowania w sytuacji konfliktu zbrojnego. Koncepcja obrony totalnej nie jest niczym nowym. Od lat jest z powodzeniem wdrażana i rozwijana przez państwa skandynawskie czy np. Singapur. Od kilku lat pewne jej elementy wdrażane są również w państwach bałtyckich na Litwie, Łotwie czy Estonii. Jej zaawansowane formy są niemalże podstawową ogniskową bezpieczeństwa Izraela, jak również organizacji Konfederacji Szwajcarskiej – Źródło: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/obrona-totalna-jak-zbudowac-spoleczenstwo-odporne-na-kryzys-opinia>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>626</sup> <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/atak-rosji-na-ukraine-ministerstwo-obrony-w-kijowie-sto-tysiecy-ukraincow-w-obronie-terytorialnej-5624493>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>627</sup> P. Żochowski, *Ukraina przygotowania do wojny totalnej*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-12-21/ukraina-przygotowania-do-obrony-totalnej>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>628</sup> Tamże.

przez działania o charakterze nieregularnym, partyzanckim, przeciwdywersyjnym, realizowanym przez przeszkolone ad hoc formacje ochotnicze.

### Co z Polską?

Doniesienia korespondentów wojennych pracujących na Ukrainie dowodzą, często poddawanych w wątpliwość w naszym medialnym dyskursie, kwestiom konieczności budowania potencjału Obrony Terytorialnej w Polsce. Jak przedstawił w komunikacie rzecznik Wojsk Obrony Terytorialnej – „Od czasu inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę odnotowujemy siedmiokrotnie większe zainteresowanie ze strony ochotników” – prawdopodobnie wynika to między innymi ze wzrostu świadomości społecznej, dotyczącej skuteczności w walce z agresorem pododdziałów lekkiej piechoty<sup>629</sup>.

Biorąc pod uwagę zwyczajowy koncept obrony Polski przez obywateli, to prowadzenie militarnych działań szarpanych, urywczych można uznać za część genomu polskiego obywatela. Zdolność Polaków do prowadzenia takich działań jest pewnym atawizmem, która jako czasowo uśpiona odnosi się do umiejętności samoorganizacji obywatelskiej w przypadku agresji zewnętrznej. Opór w formie np. działań nieregularnych, które obcesowo określane są jako taktyka, broń biednych, w polskiej sztuce wojennej od setek lat zajmują ważne miejsce. Przyczyną tego faktu jest położenie geograficzne kraju oraz związana z tym historia wielu lat konfliktów zbrojnych. Czynniki, które generowały rozwój naszej sztuki wojennej spowodowały wykształcenie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, zdolnego do obrony swojej własności, które (używając kolokwializmu) *w genach posiada umiejętność walki nieregularnej*. Kunszt militarny Stefana Czarnieckiego, umiejętności Lisowczyków, czy też tradycje Powstania Styczniowego ugruntowały w polskich obywatelach postawę oporu oraz umiejętność walki z silniejszym przeciwnikiem za pomocą fortelu<sup>630</sup>. Warsztat tych umiejętności Polacy zaprezentowali w trakcie II wojny światowej, kiedy zdradzeni przez sojuszników, skazani przez Niemcy i Związek Sowiecki na masową eksterminację, organizując Państwo Podziemne podjęli walkę o wolność.

Dziś działania polskich powstańców, podziemia okresu drugiej wojny światowej czy tzw. drugiej konspiracji (walka z okupantem sowieckim na ziemiach polskich po zakończeniu II WŚ) nazywamy niekonwencjonalnymi, a przyjęty sposób walki z przeciwnikiem taktyką działań nieregularnych.

<sup>629</sup> <https://businessinsider.com.pl/wiadomosci/gigantyczne-zainteresowanie-terytorialsami/xjdb2yl>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>630</sup> Fortel – podstęp

Współcześnie koncept podjęcia walki z silniejszym przeciwnikiem w sposób nieregularny nie jest spychany na margines myśli taktycznej Polskich Sił Zbrojnych. Zapisy zawarte w Strategii Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego zakładają wzmacnianie zdolności operacyjnych Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej poprzez uzupełnienie ich stanów osobowych i sprzętowych do zakładanych poziomów, a także dostosowanie programów szkolenia uwzględniając w szczególności wyzwania współczesnego wielodomenowego środowiska operacyjnego, zdolności do asymetrycznego prowadzenia działań, budowania systemów antydostępowych (izolacji pola walki) oraz manewrowy charakter działań i zdolność do długotrwałego przebywania poza miejscem stałej dyslokacji<sup>631</sup>.

W uzupełnieniu powyższego należy wskazać, iż zawarty jest w niej również zapis dotyczący realizacji programu budowy Wojsk Obrony Terytorialnej, które mają stać się filarem procesu tworzenia warunków do rozbudowy powszechnej, obywatelskiej gotowości obronnej na całym terytorium kraju<sup>632</sup>.

Konflikt zbrojny to zjawisko społeczno-polityczne i ma naturę przejściową. Czyn zbrojny, który jest identyfikowanym czynnikiem walki, jest praktyką człowieka. Czym jest walka i dlaczego człowiek jej się podejmuje? Jak podaje Jarosław Rudniański „...w prakseologii klasycznej wyrażenie *walka* zarezerwowane jest dla grupy tylko takich działań, w których działający znajduje się niejednokrotnie w sytuacji przymusowej z powodu czyjegoś przeciwdziałania”<sup>633</sup>. Zatem walkę należy rozumieć jako działanie przynajmniej dwupodmiotowe, gdzie jeden podmiot świadomie przeszkadza drugiemu. Praktyka ta, wymaga od ludzi celowo działających świadomości, że realizują ją najlepiej. Rozważając o czynnikach wpływających na skuteczność prowadzenia oporu należy zadać pytanie, dlaczego człowiek jest zdolny do czynu zbrojnego w warunkach walki? Odpowiedź na to pytanie może ukierunkować dalsze rozważania dotyczące czynników wpływających na obywatelskie podejmowanie działań obronnych.

Proces przygotowywania ludności do samoobrony nie może być optymalnie przeprowadzany, gdy nie uzyska się jego akceptacji i zaangażowania społeczeństwa. Zatem co stanowi istotę zbrojnej i niezbrojnej zdolności ludności do samoorganizacji w celu ochrony własnej i dóbr społecznych? Jaki potencjał stanowią formy samopomocy sąsiedzkiej w walce z agresorem?

<sup>631</sup> *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego 2020*, Warszawa 2020, s. 18.

<sup>632</sup> Tamże, s. 19.

<sup>633</sup> J. Rudniański, *Kompromis i walka*, Warszawa 1989, s. 16.

Poddając pod dyskusję powyższe i szukając przedmiotowych czynników uważamy, że wszelkie rozważania na temat skuteczności prowadzenia działań samoobrony społecznej należy zacząć od próby sprecyzowania, na potrzeby dociekań, dwóch pojęć:

- opór społeczny (zdolność do rezystancji społecznej);
- morale.

### **Opór społeczny (zdolność do rezystancji społecznej)**

Opór w Słowniku Języka Polskiego definiowany jest jako „...przeciwstawianie się czyjeś woli lub przemocy, nieuleganie jakiejś sile”<sup>634</sup>. Biorąc pod uwagę tę definicję można postawić tezę, że jedną z metod oporu jest samoobrona za pomocą zróżnicowanych form. W odniesieniu do rezystancji społecznej będzie to samoobrona ludności, czyli „działania w jej obronie w czasie wojny oraz przygotowania się do niej podczas pokoju”<sup>635</sup>. Chcąc rozwinąć obszar rozważań można stwierdzić, że „...samoobrona ludności jest działaniem uzupełniającym poczynania władz państwa, często ściśle powiązane z przedsięwzięciami obrony cywilnej”<sup>636</sup>. Należy zaznaczyć, że samoobrona rozumiana jako forma samoorganizacji społeczeństw lokalnych nie może być zasadniczą częścią obrony cywilnej<sup>637</sup>.

Niepodważalnie „Opór społeczny” jest fundamentalnym mechanizmem obronnym społeczeństw w obliczu zagrożeń zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych. Zdolność do rezystancji społecznej może przejawiać się w różnych formach, od biernego sprzeciwu po aktywną obronę. W kontekście formacji Obrony Terytorialnej (OT) opór społeczny odgrywa kluczową rolę w budowaniu zdolności obronnych państwa i wzmacnianiu świadomości obywatelskiej.

Jak wskazują Ryszard Jakubczak i Artur Jagnieża „terytorium jest pierwszym elementem jedności, to drugim, bardzo ważnym, jest moralność i zwyczaje, które stanowią podstawę ustanowienia narodu”<sup>638</sup>. Zaś „rodzina i naród to nie są instytucje, to są organizmy żywe, mające własną dynamikę i przejawy biologicznego bytowania. Poza nimi — wszystkie inne formy społeczne, takie jak: państwo, rząd, partia — mają wymiary instytucji. Naród i rodzina istnieć muszą. (...) Nie można tworzyć państwowości i instytucji z nią związanych bez rodzin i

<sup>634</sup> <https://sjp.pl/op%C3%B3r>, (dostęp 17.03.2022 r.).

<sup>635</sup> *Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, Warszawa 1977, s. 340.

<sup>636</sup> J. Deja, *Zbrojna samoobrona ludności*, Wrocław 1999, s. 7.

<sup>637</sup> Tamże.

<sup>638</sup> <https://defence24.pl/geopolityka/ukraina-czyli-renesans-obrony-powszechnej-wnioski-dla-polski-batalion-ot-w-powiecie-i-ponad-800-tys-zolnierzy-tej-formacji-opinia>, (dostęp 19.04.2022 r.).

narodu (...). Społeczność polityczna, która zlikwidowałaby rodzinę i naród, pozbawiając je praw, a więc i obowiązków, byłaby instytucją samobójczą"<sup>639</sup>.

Zatem należałoby stwierdzić, że zdolność do obrony rodziny jest właściwością pierwotną, pozostającym atawizmem genetyczno-psychologicznym, który jak wiele cech pierwotnych naszych organizmów uaktywniany jest wraz z zidentyfikowanym zagrożeniem. Gdzie w pierwszej kolejności bronimy własnego zdrowia, życia i kolejno wszystkich tych, którzy razem zasiadają przy tzw. *wspólnym ognisku*. Proces ten uaktywniony wśród większości tych, którzy zasiadają przy domowym ognisku sprawia, że określonej, związanej ze sobą grupie społecznej, zaczyna przyświecać wspólny cel, czyli ochrona życia i mienia własnego, rodziny i sąsiadów, od których będzie zależała szansa powodzenia działania, przetrwania.

Im bliżej związana grupa społeczna, broniąca przykładowego „ogniska”, tym lepiej, precyzyjniej będzie wyznaczać cel jakim jest wspólne przetrwanie i z większą determinacją starać się go osiągnąć. Zachowanie zdolności do oporu wymaga zdecydowanego wsparcia społeczeństwa<sup>640</sup>. Ta powstająca spontanicznie, żywiołowo i kierująca się prawami niezależnymi od (władzy i woli politycznej) władzy politycznej i woli, forma organizacji ludzi, której zasadniczą cechą jest zorganizowana umownie całość, wyznaczająca wszystkie zjawiska życia zbiorowego przyjmuje formę *cybernetycznego autonomu*. Czyli zbioru ludzi o zdolności do samosterowania się i mogących przeciwdziałać utracie tej zdolności<sup>641</sup>.

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<sup>639</sup> Tamże.

<sup>640</sup> Społeczeństwo - jedna z podstawowych i najszerza z kategorii socjologicznych pozbawiona wszakże jednolitego i ściśle określonego znaczenia; termin używany w publicystyce i mowie potocznej najczęściej w znaczeniu ogółu mieszkańców danego kraju lub jego wyróżnionego obszaru. Termin społeczeństwo pojawił się w filozofii społecznej XVIII w., gdy uświadomiono sobie, że obok zorganizowanych form życia zbiorowego, takich jak państwo, istnieją formy powstające spontanicznie, żywiołowo i kierujące się prawami, niezależnymi od władzy politycznej i woli, oraz, że formy te tworzą całość wyznaczającą wszystkie zjawiska życia zbiorowego; całość tę, w przeciwieństwie do form zorganizowanych celowo (państwo), zaczęto nazywać społeczeństwem cywilnym. Współcześnie w naukach społecznych brak jednolitej definicji społeczeństwa. Cechą każdego społeczeństwa jest pewien stopień trwałej odrębności od innych zbiorowości tego rodzaju i względna intensywność wzajemnych oddziaływań pomiędzy jego członkami, połączonymi przez wspólne terytorium, instytucje, ustalone sposoby komunikowania się, podobieństwo warunków życia, podział pracy, normy i wzorce postępowania itd. Społeczeństwo to zbiorowość zorganizowana, o stosunkowo wysokim stopniu złożoności. Mówiąc o społeczeństwie abstrahuje się od jego organizacji politycznej, a nawet przeciwstawia się je państwu, biorąc pod uwagę tylko takie powiązania między członkami społeczeństwa, które nie są bezpośrednio zależne od faktu ich podlegania tej samej władzy politycznej (społeczeństwo obywatelskie przeciwstawne państwu). Istniały i/lub istnieją różne typy społeczeństw, dlatego często dodaje się określenie, wskazujące na cechę społeczeństwa szczególnie w danym kontekście istotną (np. plemienne, klasowe, feudalne, narodowe, przemysłowe, nowoczesne, tradycyjne, masowe, otwarte, globalne).

Źródło: <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/spoleczenstwo;3978364.html>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

<sup>641</sup> *Mały słownik cybernetyczny*, Warszawa 1973, s. 36.

Inaczej mówiąc to swoisty organizm, sterujący się zgodnie z własnymi celami, układ o złożonej strukturze, którego elementy tworzą całość zharmonizowaną pod względem funkcjonalnym i wykazującą istotne cechy, a w szczególności zdolność do samoorganizacji<sup>642</sup>.

W związku z powyższym, jak wskazuje Józef Kossecki społeczeństwo można zdefiniować jako taki system, który ma zdolność do sterowania się i może przeciwdziałać utracie tej zdolności. Działaniem systemu, we własnym interesie, jest dążenie do zachowania przypisanej równowagi funkcjonalnej przez jak najdłuższy okres czasu.

Jest to równoznaczne z przeciwdziałaniem zniszczeniu systemu, a zadanie to może być osiągnięte tylko poprzez:

- likwidowanie zakłóceń systemu w razie ich powstania;
- zapobieganie zmianom w otoczeniu systemu, które mogą spowodować zakłócenia jego równowagi funkcjonalnej<sup>643</sup>.

W zakresie zdolności społeczeństwa jako autonu do przeciwdziałania zniszczeniu, czyli np. potrzeby obrony własnego terytorium, zasobów, a nawet bytu pojęcie rezystancji społecznej (oporu) należy rozpatrywać w dwóch płaszczyznach:

- informacyjnej;
- energetycznej (kinetycznej).

Zjawisko oporu w płaszczyźnie informacyjnej może przyjąć następujące formy:

- totalną, czyli taką aktywność informacyjną, która przejawia się brakiem podporządkowania lub przeciwstawianiem się woli agresora informacyjnego we wszystkich kwestiach, obszarach, to oponowanie informacyjne wobec metod, środków i celów działania przeciwnika;
- jawną, czyli informacyjny koncept wyeksponowania zjawiska oporu, zaznaczenia determinacji w niepodporządkowaniu się, nadania mu charakteru demonstracyjnego;
- zawołowaną, czyli informacyjne działania prewencyjne, podejmowane z zachowaniem pozorności subordynacji, poparcia lub przychyłnej neutralności albo obojętności, jednak o znaczeniu dwuznacznym, dyskusyjnym (subtelna - klarowna, lecz trudna do udowodnienia sygnalizacja nieprzychyłności lub sprzeciwu zapewniająca bezkarność i asekurację na wypadek nieskuteczności aktów oporu;

<sup>642</sup> Tamże, s. 291.

<sup>643</sup> J. Kossecki, *Metacybernetyka*, Warszawa 2018, s. 96.

- symboliczną, czyli informacyjne oddziaływanie na płaszczyźnie moralnej. Okazywanie własnej tożsamości, godności, suwerenności, odwagi, determinacji w obronie zasad lub naruszanych własnych praw;
- konstruktywną, czyli aktywność informacyjna podyktowana poczuciem nadrzędnej wspólnoty, troską o uniknięcie lub zminimalizowanie szkód społecznych związanych z kosztami stawianego oporu. Działania informacyjne polegające na utrzymaniu bądź wykształcaniu postaw patriotycznych w społeczności pod okupacją.

Zjawisko oporu w płaszczyźnie energetycznej (kinetycznej) może przyjąć następujące formy:

- selektywną, czyli próba przeciwdziałania w konkretnych sprawach lub kierunkach działania, precyzowanie celów. Forma ta nie wyklucza współdziałania w innych kwestiach, w innych dziedzinach, płaszczyznach;
- skrytą i zakspirowaną czyli głównym determinantem tej formy jest intencja ukrycia oporu, podyktowana z jednej strony asekuracją, chęcią uniknięcia kosztów (kar, represji) w sytuacji przewagi agresora, a z drugiej strony – uzależnieniem efektywności oporu od jego zamaskowania i osiągnięcia efektów zaskoczenia lub nieprzewidywalności. A także zachowania i działania praktyczne o charakterze profilaktycznym (próba zapobieżenia, udaremnienia), obstrukcyjnym (stwarzanie przeszkód, utrudnień powodowanie strat) lub destrukcyjnym (psucie, niszczenie) oparte na zakspirowanym sprawstwie (planowaniu i wykonawstwie). Charakterystyczne sposoby działania: akty sabotażu, dywersji;
- praktyczną, czyli realne, praktyczne udaremnianie, utrudnianie lub niweczenie wysiłków agresora;
- destrukcyjną to oddziaływanie w intencjach konsekwentnie destruktywne. Podjęte i podtrzymywane z myślą o fizycznym osłabieniu lub zniszczeniu wrogiego układu. To gotowość do narażenia wspólnoty na straty w imię własnego celu (świadoma destrukcja).

Powyższe ujęcie rezystancji społecznej (powszechnej) pozwala na ukazanie jej celu jakim jest uzyskanie dużego stopnia naturalnej samoorganizacji społeczności lokalnych do zapewnienia w swoim środowisku ochrony i obrony porządku publicznego, życia mienia przed zdefiniowanymi zagrożeniami<sup>644</sup>.

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<sup>644</sup> J. Deja, *Zbrojna...*, dz. cyt., Wrocław 1999, s. 8.

Zatem istotę oporu społecznego możemy opisać jako proces wyzwiania naturalnych, instynktownych działań ludzi (społeczności) w swoim środowisku bezpieczeństwa. Biorąc pod uwagę właściwości systemów autonomicznych można stwierdzić, że przeciwdziałanie zniszczeniu systemu, czyli opór jest zakodowaną zdolnością, właściwością takiego systemu wynikającą z autonomicznych właściwości zbioru ludzi jakim jest społeczeństwo.

### Morale

„Kiedy wojska izraelskie i wojska filistyńskie stanęły naprzeciwko siebie, wyszedł z szeregów filistyńskich ogromny wojownik. Był umięśnionym olbrzymem w zbroi tak ciężkiej, że żaden inny człowiek nie zdołałby jej założyć. Miał straszny miecz, wielki jak drzewo, a obracał nim lekko jak piórkiem. Olbrzym miał na imię Goliat. Zaczął on wyzywać Izraelitów i naśmiewać się z nich. Jednak nikt nie ośmielił się mu przeszkodzić, ponieważ wszyscy Izraelici się go bali. Wtedy wystąpił Dawid, bez żadnej zbroi, bez miecza i bez włóczni. Nie był przecież wojownikiem, tylko pasterzem. Miał ze sobą tylko swoją procę. Goliat mało nie pękł ze śmiechu na jego widok! Dawid jednak zakręcił procą ponad głową z taką prędkością, że aż powietrze zafurczało i błyskawicznie wypuścił kamień. Kamień uderzył Goliata z wielkim impetem, przebił się przez hełm i rozbił Goliatowi głowę. Goliat runął z nóg, a wojska izraelskie wzniosły potężny okrzyk radości na cześć Dawida, Filistyni zaś uciekli w popłochu.<sup>645</sup>”

Powyższy przykład, klasyczny, prosty, ze swoim przekazem zrozumiały dla wielu ludzi jest odniesieniem do wojny dwóch armii. Poddając analizie historię walki Dawida z Goliatem przyjmujemy, że obaj mężczyźni nie są jednostkami, lecz personifikacją sił walczących.

Gdy Dawid stał naprzeciw Goliata musiał zwyciężyć. Musiał, czuł się w obowiązku, był zobowiązany zwyciężyć, ponieważ od jego postawy, triumfu zależał los całego ludu. Wielu odmówiło walki z Goliatem, jeden który stanął naprzeciw niemalże oczywistej porażki dał nadzieję pozostałym. Goliat chciał zwyciężyć, lecz nie musiał, w tym sensie, w jakim musiał uczynić to Dawid. Jest to różnica delikatna, ale bardzo ważna. Dawid miał bardzo silną motywację, przekonał racjonalnie i emocjonalnie siebie samego o konieczności zwycięstwa, uświadamiając sobie wyraźnie niepożądany stan rzeczy jaki mógłby nastąpić w wyniku jego porażki. Dawid zwyciężył nie dlatego, że umiał dobrze władać swoją procą. Odnosił

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<sup>645</sup> <https://biblia.deon.pl/rozdzial.php?id=1170>, (dostęp 22.04.2022 r.).



zwycięstwo dlatego, że nie stracił odwagi i jasności myśli wobec nieprzyjaciela i jego przewagi fizycznej<sup>646</sup>.

Analizując powyższe można stwierdzić, iż Dawid wykazywał duży stopień determinacji, morale do wykonania swojego zadania. Czym jest morale i jak identyfikować jego istotę? Nad tym problemem badawczym głowią się specjaliści z całego świata np. psychologii społecznej i innych dziedzin nauk w tym szkolnictwa wojskowego.

W odniesieniu do wojska i psychologii pola walki Regulamin Działań Wojsk Lądowych przedstawia morale żołnierzy, jako „wolę walki, gotowość do wypełniania obowiązków w każdej sytuacji. Wyzwała ono ducha bojowego. Wysokie morale jest wartością, która pozwala żołnierzom działać w najtrudniejszych warunkach lub wykazywać niebotyczną odwagę w sytuacjach zmęczenia i niebezpieczeństwa. Opiera się ono na zaufaniu, szacunku, dyscyplinie, zawodowych umiejętnościach i uwarunkowaniach fizycznych. Cechy te mogą być realizowane przez realistyczne i twórcze szkolenie oraz właściwe dowodzenie, a wyzwalane przez koleżeństwo i poczucie lojalności wobec zespołu. Najpewniejszym sposobem uzyskania wysokiego morale jest sukces na polu walki”<sup>647</sup>.

Stopień zaangażowania w wykonywane zadania, poziom wyszkolenia, umiejętności dowodzenia przełożonych oraz wyposażenie techniczne bezpośrednio wpływa na chęć, zapał do walki. Mówi się o wykorzystaniu powyższych czynników do budowania morale, czyli gotowości do wypełniania obowiązków, znoszenia trudów i niebezpieczeństw oraz poczucia odpowiedzialności i wiary w sukces<sup>648</sup>.

Nie ma uniwersalnej metody najskuteczniejszego rozwijania morale u podwładnych. Cytując Niccolo Machiavelli „...popołniają ten sam błąd i żyją w takim samym chaosie, nie biorąc pod uwagę tego, że jeśli w starożytności ktoś chciał utrzymać władzę w państwie, robił i kazał robić wszystko to by przygotować ciało na trudy i ducha na to, by się nie ugiął przed niebezpieczeństwami. Dlatego właśnie Cezar, Aleksander i wszyscy inni znakomici mężowie byli pierwszymi pośród walczących, uzbrojeni maszerowali jako piechurzy, a jeśli tracili władzę, gotowi byli oddać życie. Dlatego żyli i umierali mężnie. Nie okaże się, że możemy w nich zganić jakąś miękkość lub inną cechę czyniącą mężów zniewieściałymi i niewojowniczymi”<sup>649</sup>. A także odnosząc się do słów Carla von Clausewitz morale „...jest to duch, który przenika cały żywioł wojenny i sprzymierza się tym wcześniej i tym silniej z wolą,

<sup>646</sup> J. Rudniański, *Kompromis...*, dz. cyt., s. 142.

<sup>647</sup> *Regulamin Działań Wojsk Lądowych* (DD/3.2), Warszawa 2006.

<sup>648</sup> <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/morale.html>, (dostęp 22.04.2022 r.).

<sup>649</sup> N. Machiavelli, *O sztuce wojny*, Warszawa 2008, s. 265.

poruszającą i kierującą całą masą sił, że dąży razem z nią do jednego celu i że sama wola jest wielkością moralną. Niestety wielkości moralne wymykają się wszelkiej mądrości książkowej, gdyż nie można ich ani ująć w liczby, ani sklasyfikować. Ale trzeba je dostrzec i odczuć.<sup>650</sup>

Można wysnuć wniosek, że morale to chęć przetrwania żołnierza, pododdziału, społeczeństwa zbudowana na zaufaniu do grupy, przywódcy grupy, wiary w cel i dużej determinacji w jego osiągnięcie. I tak jak zdolność do oporu, jest cechą atawistyczną człowieka, którą można modelować przy doborze odpowiednich metod wychowawczych, jak również innych stymulantów np. stopnia zagrożenia społeczności.

W odniesieniu do zdolności do pojęcia walki przez żołnierzy, członków Obrony Terytorialnej morale ma niebagatelne znaczenie. Obrona Terytorialna to Dawid, który musi stawić czoła Goliatowi, czyli wojskom potencjalnego agresora. Bez woli przetrwania i idei ochrony wspólnoty jakiegokolwiek projekt formowania Obrony Terytorialnej pozbawiony jest sensu. Chcąc budować zdolności lokalnych społeczności do obrony, przeciwdziałania zidentyfikowanym zagrożeniom należy wzmacniać więzi społeczne oraz modelować atawistyczne cechy człowieka takie jak wola przetrwania i walka w obronie życia i zdrowia.

Kolejnym kluczowym elementem mającym wpływ na morale oraz budowanie woli walki są wszechobecne media społecznościowe, które jak wskazuje Sean Childs<sup>651</sup>, w wielu sytuacjach mogą być decydującym determinantem wpływającym na prowadzenie działań bojowych. Dostarczanie odpowiednich informacji jest swego rodzaju wzmacniaczem postaw walczących żołnierzy. Niejednokrotnie publikowane materiały sukcesów wojennych lub ukazanie obrazu barbarzyńskich działań strony przeciwnej konfliktu, zagrzewało do walki osłabione i rozbite pododdziały.

Jak wielki wpływ na kolektywną obronę i powszechny opór społeczny mają media społecznościowe możemy obserwować codziennie, śledząc informacje dotyczące obecnego konfliktu na Ukrainie. To właśnie dzięki rozpowszechnianiu informacji dotyczących wojny, szeregi Obrony Terytorialnej oraz innych formacji wojskowych, medycznych i innych są zasilane personelem każdego dnia z całego świata. Obywatele wracają do swojej ojczyzny pozostawiając strefę komfortu, aby bronić swoich ziem<sup>652</sup>.

<sup>650</sup> C. von Clausewitz, *O wojnie*, Warszawa 2010, s. 131.

<sup>651</sup> S. Childs, (2016). *Soldier Morale: Defending a Core Military Capability. Security Challenges*, 12(2), s. 43–52.

<sup>652</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-04-15/voices-from-ukraine-how-russias-invasion-turned-everyday-people-into-heroes>, (dostęp 21.04.2022 r.).

Morale odegrało główną rolę w amerykańskich zmaganiach w Afganistanie i Iraku. Choć po atakach z 11 września nastroje patriotyczne były powszechne, morale żołnierzy i opinii publicznej USA z czasem osłabło. Zostało nadszarpięte improwizowanymi ładunkami wybuchowymi, atakami snajperów i świadomością, że krew i pot przelane w konfliktach na Bliskim Wschodzie i w południowej Azji nie przyniosły żadnych strategicznych rezultatów. Jeden z przywódców bojowników talibskich podobno powiedział: "Wy macie zegarki. My mamy czas". To właśnie czas w kwestii morale i motywacji do walki jest bardzo istotnym czynnikiem, jak pokazały wcześniejsze doświadczenia w wojnie afgańsko-rosyjskiej<sup>653</sup>.

Jeżeli cele militarne zakładają osiągnięcie szybkiego i łatwego sukcesu ze względu na zestawienie ilości sprzętu bojowego oraz poziomu potencjału technologicznego, nie biorąc jednocześnie morale pod uwagę, może się to skończyć porażką strony silniejszej. Zarówno powstańcy, jak i kontrrebelianci w Iraku i Afganistanie doskonale zdawali sobie sprawę z jednej ze złotych zasad walki partyzanckiej, zgrabnie podsumowanej kiedyś w kontekście Wietnamu przez Henry'ego Kissingera: "Partyzant wygrywa, jeśli nie przegrywa. Konwencjonalna armia przegrywa, jeśli nie wygrywa".

### **Zakończenie**

Brak woli walki, oporu społeczeństwa przeciwko agresorowi oznaczał koniec niemal każdego konfliktu zbrojnego w historii świata. Morale i zdolność do oporu należy zatem uznać za czynniki krytyczne w miarę postępu kryzysu militarnego.

Przykłady takich sytuacji można znaleźć w historii, na przykład podczas II wojny światowej, kiedy państwa, które szybko się poddały, miały znacznie gorsze warunki pokojowe i były traktowane gorzej przez zwycięskie państwa.

W miarę postępu kryzysu militarnego morale i zdolność do oporu społecznego mogą znacznie wpłynąć na wynik konfliktu. Ludzie, którzy mają wysokie morale i są zdolni do walki, mogą stawić skuteczny opór agresorowi, nawet jeśli są słabsi militarnie. Natomiast brak woli walki i oporu może prowadzić do szybkiego upadku, nawet jeśli państwo posiada silne siły zbrojne.

Dlatego też, aby skutecznie przeciwdziałać agresji i walczyć w kryzysie militarnym, ważne jest, aby poprawić morale i zdolność do oporu społecznego. W tym celu można prowadzić

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<sup>653</sup> C. Karp, (1988), *Afghanistan: Eight Years of Soviet Occupation. Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 88, number 2132.

skuteczną edukację, angażować lokalne społeczności w działania obronne, tworzyć solidarne związki między obywatelami, a także dbać o dobre warunki życia i bezpieczeństwo obywateli. Wnioskiem jest, że morale i zdolność do oporu społecznego są kluczowymi czynnikami w kryzysie militarnym i konfliktach zbrojnych. W celu przeciwdziałania agresji i walczenia w kryzysie militarnym należy zatem skutecznie poprawić morale i zdolność do oporu społecznego.

Przewidzenie wyniku konfliktu pomiędzy Ukrainą a Rosją jest trudnym zadaniem, ale jednym z możliwych rezultatów jest przedłużające się powstanie, w którym rosyjscy okupanci będą musieli stawić czoła najprawdopodobniej zaciekłemu oporowi ukraińskiemu. O losach takiego powstania zadecyduje wiele czynników, w tym rosyjska strategia antyrebeliancka w stosunku do stopnia rezystancji społeczeństwa ukraińskiego, interwencja mocarstw zewnętrznych oraz morale obu stron. Zwłaszcza w tej ostatniej kwestii Ukraina wydaje się mieć zdecydowaną przewagę, co jest bardzo dobrą lekcją dla przyszłości polskiego potencjału Sił Zbrojnych w tym Obrony Terytorialnej.

#### **Streszczenie:**

Zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa państwa to zadanie wielu skoordynowanych działań, ukierunkowanych na przeciwdziałanie wszelkim zidentyfikowanym zagrożeniom. Jednym z takich zagrożeń jest wojna, (której państwo chcąc przetrwać, powinno przeciwdziałać i stawiać opór angażując całe społeczeństwo wraz z potencjałem gospodarczo-militarnym) której chcąc przetrwać powinno przeciwdziałać, stawiać całe państwo wraz ze społeczeństwem. Jeśli wojna jest nieuchronna to społeczeństwo musi stawić opór agresorowi. Opór w formie działań nieregularnych zwanych bronią biednych, a w polskiej tradycyjnej sztuce wojennej wojną urywczą, szarpaną, bądź podjazdową sprawiają, że upokorzeń militarnych doznają najlepiej wyszkolone i wyposażone armie świata. Dlaczego społeczeństwa stawiają opór zbrojny i co wpływa na skuteczność tej formy działań bojowych, że rzuca ona na kolana najsilniejszych? Czy w polskiej myśli wojennej XXI wieku, w ramach przygotowania obronnego państwa, powinniśmy wrócić do rozważań nad implementacją w wojnie szarpanej najnowszej technologii militarnej i nowatorskich taktyk działania na polu walki.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Walka, opór, obrona terytorialna.

#### **Key words:**

Fighting, resistance, territorial defense.

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**Wybrane aspekty polityki bezpieczeństwa władz powstańczych  
polskiej insurekcji 1863 roku w Królestwie Polskim  
oraz na kresach wschodnich Polski przedrozbiorowej**

**Wstęp**

Powstanie Styczniowe 1863 – 1865 pozostaje obok Powstania Warszawskiego 1944 roku jednym z najbardziej krwawych, tragicznych w swoim wymiarze w końcu skazanych na porażkę zrywów niepodległościowych polskiego narodu dążącego do zrzucenia jarzma zaborczego. O ile w obszarze działań militarnych styczniową insurekcję należy uznać za klęskę podobnie zresztą jeśli analizie poddamy skutki polityczne powstania o tyle w warstwie ideologicznej, myśli społecznej wykutej po tym niezwykle ważnym wydarzeniu oceny są już znacznie mniej jednoznaczne. Po 1863 roku, aż do chwili odzyskania niepodległości Polacy nie powstałi już zbrojnie na taką skalę przeciwko zaborcom koncentrując się na wzmacnianiu fundamentów swojej tożsamości narodowej, budując niejako równolegle do obowiązującego, narzuconego przez Rosjan, Austriaków oraz Niemców własne struktury. Te ostatnie z czasem staną się kamieniem milowym na drodze do budowy państwowości w okresie I Wojny Światowej, która przyniosła za sobą ostateczny krach Świętego Przymierza, przez ponad sto lat stanowiący barierę nie do przebycia dla polskich aspiracji niepodległościowych. Kres walk powstańczych oznaczał również powstanie załączka państw narodowych. Litwini, Ukraińcy w mniejszym stopniu Białorusini zaczęli myśleć o własnych państwach, niezależnych od Polski. Zapoczątkowane wówczas zmiany z czasem stały się nieodwracalne tak samo jak do historii przeszła wspólna walka z rosyjskim zaborcą pod symbolami „Orła i Pogoni”.<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> S. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie Styczniowe*, Warszawa 2009, s. 747 – 748.

Niezwykłe interesujące z perspektywy nauk o bezpieczeństwie są zagadnienia związane z działalnością formacji powstańczych sprawujących funkcje z obszaru bezpieczeństwa to jest podejmujących zadania na rzecz wprowadzenia karność w szeregi powstańcze, likwidujących czołowych zabórczych przedstawicieli aparatu władzy, przeprowadzające pobór podatków. W tym katalogu spraw ważnych nie może również zabraknąć nawiązania do bardziej kontrowersyjnych przejawów działalności czego przykładem liczne akcje pacyfikacyjne polskich wsi wpierających działania rosyjskie lub nawet jawnie występujących przeciwko powstaniu, prowadzone ad hoc egzekucje na podstawie często lichych dowodów. Podstawową formacją powstańczą reprezentującą aparat bezpieczeństwa państwa podziemnego była Żandarmeria stanowiąca najlepiej uzbrojoną, przygotowaną do działań o charakterze zbrojnym formację wojsk powstańczych. Nic dziwnego, iż oddziały Żandarmów Powstańczych przetrwały najdłużej, prowadząc działania operacyjne aż do maja 1864 roku, zaś w przypadku partyzantki miejskiej jak również w zakresie realizacji wyroków sądów powstańczych aż do 1865 roku. Niektórzy z Żandarmów, którzy dostali się do carskiej niewoli i udało się im uniknąć bądź wskutek zaniechań lub też braku wiedzy przysłowiowego rosyjskiego stryczka, zdołali jeszcze wziąć udział w swoistym epitafium dla Powstania Styczniowego czyli Powstaniu Zabajkalskim 1866 roku. Był to ostatnim tragiczny w skutkach przejaw „styczniowego” buntu przeprowadzony przez zesłańców na dalekiej Syberii w pięknej, choć za pewne nie dla nich scenerii Jeziora Bajkalskiego.<sup>655</sup>

### **Powstanie Styczniowe 1863 – 1865: koncepcje, założenia strategii bezpieczeństwa władz powstańczych**

Powstanie Styczniowe 1863 roku objęło swoim zasięgiem ziemie II i III zaboru rosyjskiego (1793, 1795). Należy jednak zaznaczyć, iż jedynie w przypadku Królestwa Polskiego oraz Litwy, w mniejszym stopniu Białorusi przybrało masowy charakter. Prawie wszystkie poza kilkoma przypadkami bitwy insurekcji styczniowej stoczono właśnie na wspomnianym wyżej obszarze choć ze względu na ciężar gatunkowy tych tragicznych wydarzeń nie można zapominać o próbach wywołania buntu w Ukrainie czy odległej Mołdawii. Ze względu na brak wsparcia ze strony miejscowej ludności, słabe zaplecze logistyczne te nieliczne kresowe ogniska buntu były szybko tłumione przez carski aparat represji. Główny ciężar walk przypadł na okres kilkunastu miesięcy poczynając od chwili wybuchu zbrojnej insurekcji w nocy z 22

<sup>655</sup> K. Żabierek, *Powstanie Zabajkalskie 1866 roku*, Brodnica 2017, ss. 125; E. Niebelski (red.), *Polskie Powstanie nad Bajkałem 1866 roku. Nowe odsłony*, Lublin 2022, ss. 345.

## Zasięg Powstania styczniowego 1863 - 1865



<sup>657</sup> J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Wielka Prowokacja. Rzekomy Rząd Narodowy 1865 roku*, Warszawa 1928, s. 88.



Z perspektywy czasu, kiedy wszystko wiemy lepiej, mamy zdecydowanie dokładniejszy ogląd sytuacji niż w przypadku tych, którzy insurekcję styczniową zaczynali strategią przyjętą przez powstańców jawi nam się jako mocno chaotyczny, reaktywny bowiem spowodowany branką szeregu niezwiązanych często ze sobą decyzji, działań zbrojnych. Z wielkich planów zakładających opanowanie magazynów broni, likwidację większych placówek wojskowych przeciwnika niewiele stało się faktem, bowiem stosunek sił, ilości posiadanych środków wojskowych przemawiał od początku raczej przeciw niż za rozpoczęciem regularnych działań zbrojnych. Mimo niekorzystnych okoliczności, amatorskiego często choć nie pozbawionego heroicznych postaw dowodzenia przyczyniającego się niestety do poważnych strat wśród oddziałów powstańczych udało się jednak rozbić mniejsze garnizony wojsk rosyjskich i wymusić na władzach carskich zaskoczonych jeśli nie samym rozpoczęciem insurekcji to jej skalą wycofanie się z szeregu prowincjonalnych miejscowości na rzecz głównych garnizonów. Umożliwiło to przy biernej, w pierwszych tygodniach postawie władz carskich na znacznie lepsze wykorzystanie istniejącego potencjału, pozyskanie bardzo dobrej jakości broni za granicą (słynne sztucery belgijskie) oraz na niepełne co było spowodowane brakiem czasu przeprowadzenie podstawowych szkoleń oddziałów powstańczych. Koniecznym dla władz powstania, które zmieniały się w atmosferze kolejnych skandalicznych waśni i sporów, wyzwaniem okazało się stworzenie formacji bezpieczeństwa. Te ostatnie miały za zadanie likwidację zbrojnych grup chłopskich szykujących się w niektórych częściach Królestwa Polskiego do zbrojnych wystąpień przeciwko szlachcie, oddziałów o charakterze rabunkowym podszywających się za oddziały powstańcze, utrzymanie dyscypliny poprzez karanie osób będących jawnie przeciwko powstaniu lub sprzeniewierzających się jego celom w końcu dezorganizację aparatu władzy zaborczej poprzez organizowanie zamachów o charakterze terrorystycznym.<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Z. Strzyżewska, *Emanuel Szafrarczyk i Sztyletnicy 1863 roku*, „Przegląd Historyczny”, Warszawa 1986, nr 4, s. 677 – 702.

### Cele Powstańczego Aparatu Bezpieczeństwa

Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Zapewnienie porządku i karności w szeregach powstańczych poprzez stosowanie kar porządkowych jak również w przypadkach skrajnej niesubordynacji kary śmierci
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Likwidacja oddziałów powstańczych przyjmujących charakter grup zbrojnych charakteryzujących się działalnością kryminalną
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Przeciwdziałanie możliwości wystąpienia zbrojnej chłopskiej rebelii na wzór rabacji galicyjskiej 1846 roku poprzez wydawanie wyroków na prowodyrów oraz w ostateczności akcje pacyfikacyjne terenów wiejskich
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Likwidacja czołowych carskich urzędników oraz działających na rzecz aparatu carskiego kolaborantów
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Umacnianie postaw patriotycznych poprzez kolportowanie materiałów propagandowych w tym co istotne deklaracji, odezw, manifestów władz centralnych Powstania Styczniowego
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	W zależności od potrzeb udział w regularnych walkach powstańczych
Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa	Prowadzenie działań na rzecz ściągania podatków na cele powstańcze (funkcja poborcy podatkowego)

<b>Cele powstańczego aparatu bezpieczeństwa</b>	<b>Dokonywanie zaboru mienia, żywności, inwentarza żywego potrzebnego do prowadzenia działań zbrojnych przez ukrywające się kompleksach leśnych oddziały powstańcze</b>
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Źródło: opracowanie własne

W prowadzonych działaniach oddziały Żandarmerii Wojsk Powstania Styczniowego były niezwykle rygorystyczne. Stopień represyjności nie odbiegał w tym względzie od działań realizowanych przez wojska carskie. Te ostatnie nazywały oddziały Żandarmerii powstańczej „Żandarmerią Wieszającą”. Często więc schwytani przez Rosjan (bywało że również oficerów i żołnierzy narodowości polskiej biorących udział w tłumieniu insurekcji styczniowej) byli skazywani na karę śmierci w miejscu zatrzymania bez wyroku sądu polowego. Inni kończyli swoją działalność wykonaną w majestacie zaborczego prawa egzekucją lub w najlepszym razie wieloletnią syberyjską katorgą, z której wróciło niewielu. Świadczy to elitarności oddziałów powstańczych żandarmów ale również o narzędziach represyjnych stosowanych przez te ostatnie zarówno wobec zaborcy jak również miejscowej ludności. Ta ostatnia późną jesienią 1863 roku stworzyła strażę wiejskie, uzbrojone przez władz zaborcze, które zajęły się ochroną wiosek przed nielicznymi już oddziałami powstańczej żandarmerii oraz wyłapywaniem pojedynczych, ukrywających się na prowincji powstańców. Zimą 1864 roku według oficjalnych danych rosyjskich w strażach służyło blisko 600 chłopów nie licząc wspomagającej ich siatki wiejskich informatorów. Jeszcze w latach 70 XIX wieku samozwańcze już często strażę wiejskie potrafiły schwycić i doprowadzić ukrywających się ostatnich uczestników buntu. Nie tak rzadkie było dobijanie rannych powstańców zarówno na placu bitwy jak również ukrywających się w gospodarstwach wiejskich. Za główny powód takich postaw można uznać chęć zysku w postaci możliwości zrabowania należących do zmarłego rzeczy. Trudno dziś z perspektywy czasu ocenić skalę tych wydarzeń aczkolwiek czytając pamiętniki powstańców przewija przez te ostatnie negatywny stosunek chłopów do powstania. W dużym stopniu było to wynikiem konfliktu na linii chłop – dwór szlachecki jak również pewnej wdzięczności tych pierwszych dla władz carskich za dekret o zniesieniu pańszczyzny wydany 22 marca 1864 roku. Podobne zamierzenia miał zresztą Rząd Narodowy wydając przy tym manifesty, dekrety, dokumenty ukierunkowane na przekonanie polskiego chłopca do powstania. Nie miał jednak

siły sprawczej czyli władzy a tą ostatnią dysponował rosyjski car. Stąd też nawet i w czasach nam współczesnych można spotkać kapliczki fundowane przez poszczególne wsie jako wota wdzięczności dla cara za uwolnienie z poddaństwa. Stąd również taka a nie inna postawa Żandarmerii Powstańczych. Do pełnego zjednoczenia narodowego było jeszcze daleko choć co trzeba podkreślić, władzom carskim nie udało się doprowadzić do otwartego buntu chłopskiego wymierzonego w Powstanie na tak szeroką skalę jaka to miało miejsce w przypadku rabacji galicyjskiej. W przeważającej masie chłop polski pozostał nieufny, zajmując wobec trwającego konfliktu pozycję neutralną zarówno w stosunku do władz carskich jak i szlachty reprezentującej powstańczy aparat władzy choć i nie brakowało takich, którzy życiem za sprawę niepodległości zapłacili.<sup>659</sup>

### **Żandarmeria Wojskowa Powstania Styczniowego: organizacja, metody działania**

Wraz z wybuchem zbrojnej insurekcji narodziła się konieczność powołania odpowiednich struktur w tym również wydzielonych oddziałów, które byłyby zdolne do prowadzenia działań o charakterze policyjnym jak również wspierających funkcjonowanie aparatu cywilnego władz powstańczych. W pierwszej fazie powstania to jest do wiosny 1863 roku taką rolę spełniała założona przez Włodzimierza Lempkego Straż Bezpieczeństwa. W wyniku podjętych w maju 1863 roku reformy aparatu władzy Straż Bezpieczeństwa została zastąpiona przez nową formację zbrojną Żandarmerię Narodową (jej nazwę zmieniono w sierpniu 1863 roku na Straż Narodową aczkolwiek nie przyjęła się ona i Żandarmeria Narodowa dalej funkcjonowała w powszechnym obiegu). Jej pierwszym dowódcą został organizator zamachów na czołowych przedstawicieli aparatu władzy zaborczej Paweł Landowski. W myśl założeń przyjętych przez władze powstańcze oficerowie Żandarmerii Narodowej pełnili swoje funkcje nieodpłatnie zaś szeregowi otrzymywali niewielki żołd w wysokości 50 kopiejek dziennie, który wystarczał na pokrycie jedynie najważniejszych potrzeb. Stąd też niestety dochodziło do częstych nadużyć w ramach prowadzonych przez Żandarmerię Narodową akcji rekwizycyjnych czy też poboru podatków. W pierwszym okresie działalności warszawskiej Żandarmerii Narodowej powołano do życia cztery „liniowe” oddziały. Ich liczebność ocenia się na 250 żołnierzy. Piąty najbardziej zakonspirowany oddział żandarmerii znany powszechnie „warszawskiej ulicy” jak również carskim służbom bezpieczeństwa jako sztyletnicy był odpowiedzialny za zamachy na przedstawicieli aparatu władz carskich jak również współpracujących z nimi miejscowych

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<sup>659</sup> H. Brodowska, *Świadomość chłopów pokolenia Powstania Styczniowego*, Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie – Skłodowska. Sectio F. Historia, Lublin 1993, nr 48, s. 19 – 27.

konfidentów. W okresie 1863 - 1865 Sztyletnicy dokonali łącznie kilku tysięcy zamachów wymierzonych zarówno w konkretne osoby jak również mienie zaborcze. W czasie przeprowadzanych akcji śmierć poniosło nie co ponad tysiąc osób reprezentujących w mniejszym lub większym stopniu miejscowe władze. Sztyletnicy uczestniczyli również w krwawych akcjach pacyfikacyjnych wymierzonych w polskie wsie sprzyjające zaborcy. Jednym z najbardziej krwawych przykładów rozprawy z ludnością terenów wiejskich jawnie i czynnie sprzyjającej zaborcy była pacyfikacja wsi Lipie dokonana przez oddział Żandarmów Narodowych pod dowództwem Konrada Antoniego Błaszczyńskiego „Bończy”. Opis tych wydarzeń zawdzięczamy pamiętnikowi ich uczestnika Władysława Modrzewskiego „Sulimy”; „Oddział żandarmerii otoczył wieś i podpalił ją z dwóch stron. Następnie ludność wioski spędzono na obszerny plac w celu odczytania rozkazu Rządu Narodowego. Bończa wyjaśnił miejscowym powody przybycia oddziału, zarzuty wobec mieszkańców i decyzję w sprawie podjętej kary”.<sup>660</sup> Oprócz spalenia chłopskich domostw wykonano również kilka wyroków śmierci oraz chłosty na mieszkańcach wioski. W późniejszym okresie Żandarmom Narodowym przyszło się zmagać również z samowolnie formowanymi oddziałami chłopskimi, które napadały na mniejsze partie powstańcze lub najczęściej pojedynczych powstańców celem rabunku a następnie przekazania w ręce carskie lub w zależności od okoliczności wykonania na miejscu egzekucji. Jednym z najbardziej znanych dowódców zbrojnych chłopskich gromad był działający w okolicach Radomia chłop o imieniu Bulwa lub według innych źródeł Bulwer. Dysponował on siecią agentów wiejskich oraz kilkoma oddziałami, których działalność miała typowe podłoże kryminalne. Organizowali oni obławy na ukrywających się w lasach lub po wsiach powstańców. W końcu udało się schwycić samozwańczego przywódcę, doprowadzić pod sąd polowy a następnie w wyniku jego wyroku rozstrzelać. Mimo licznych obrażeń Bulwie udało się jednak przeżyć. Stąd też zapewne jego niechlubny udział w insurekcji styczniowej został przywołany we wspomnieniach „Sulimy” bowiem był to jak na okoliczności powstańcze przypadek niezwykle.<sup>661</sup> Obok działań mających charakter zbrojny żandarmi prowadzili także szereg działań o charakterze fiskalnym (egzekwowanie podatków uchwalonych przez Rząd Narodowy zarówno w relacji do osób cywilnych jak również instytucji opierających się wspomaganie finansowemu rebelii). Niestety dochodziło również do wykonywania wyroków śmierci za niesubordynację oraz czyny kryminalne dokonywane przez dowódców części oddziałów powstańczych. Przykładem tego stała się egzekucja majora Władysława

<sup>660</sup> Cyt. za W. Oszczęda, *Zdarzenie we wsi Lipa w kwietniu 1863 roku*, [https://www.opocznotop.pl/artukul,Zdarzenie\\_we\\_wsi\\_Lipa\\_\\_\\_kwiecien\\_1863\\_r\\_,11442.html](https://www.opocznotop.pl/artukul,Zdarzenie_we_wsi_Lipa___kwiecien_1863_r_,11442.html) (09.11.25)

<sup>661</sup> Ibidem

Sokołowskiego „Iskry” przez Żandarmów Narodowych z oddziału pułkownika Zygmunta Chmieleńskiego słynącego z utrzymywania żelazną ręką dyscypliny.<sup>662</sup> Oddziały żandarmów brały również udział w prowadzeniu werbunku do polowych formacji powstańczych kryjących się po wielkich kompleksach leśnych prowadzących ćwiczenia, musztrę mających na celu wprowadzenie ich w późniejszym okresie do walki. Żandarmi odpowiadali również za dyscyplinę w oddziałach powstańczych. O ile w innych armiach odchodzono już od kar cielesnych o tyle obowiązywały one nadal w armii rosyjskiej. Niestety podobne standardy obowiązywały w oddziałach powstańczych. Przykładem utrzymywanie dyscypliny poprzez karę chłosty w oddziałach Dionizego Czachowskiego, Karola Kality Rębajły czy wspomnianego wyżej Zygmunta Chmieleńskiego. Karą dodatkową towarzyszącą karze cielesnej było pohańbienie skazanego poprzez wykonywanie wyroku publicznie, często przed całym oddziałem powstańczym. Nie tylko jednak z takich wydarzeń są nam znani Żandarmi Narodowi. Uczestniczyli oni bowiem czynnie w regularnych bojach przeciwko carskiej armii. Najlepszym tego przykładem działalność legendarnego zagończyka majora Władysława Nowackiego - Kopaczyńskiego Junoszy, który wraz ze swoim oddziałem walczył aż do maja 1864 roku, nigdy nie będąc całkowicie rozbitym w walkach.<sup>663</sup>

Żandarmi działający w ramach partyzantki miejskiej najczęściej sięgali po metody mordów skrytobójczych. Przodowała w tym wspomniana powyżej organizacja sztyletników. Dowódcą tejże organizacji był Ignacy Chmieleński zwany „Małym Robespierrem” brat wspomnianego Zygmunta Chmieleńskiego podobnie jak wymieniony wcześniej Włodzimierz Lempke syn rosyjskiego generała. Tak więc czołowe postacie polskiej Żandarmerii Narodowej wywodziły swoją genealogię z armii carskiej co nie dziwi biorąc pod uwagę panujące w tej formacji tendencje rewolucyjne, ujawnione w pewnym stopniu w czasie Powstania Styczniowego. Na czele najsilniejsze, warszawskiej organizacji sztyletników stał za to Emanuel Szafarczyk członek powstańczej warszawskiej organizacji miejskiej. Podlegli dowódcy sztyletnicy działali do końca 1864 roku kiedy to Emanuel Szafarczyk został aresztowany przez władze carskie a następnie stracony wraz z ostatnim naczelnikiem powstańczym Warszawy Aleksandrem Waszkowskim 17 lutego 1865 roku na stokach złowieszczej cytadeli. Była to ostatnia publiczna

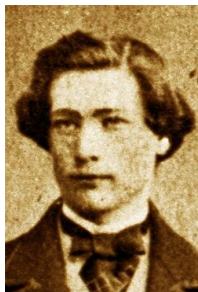
<sup>662</sup> A. Buława, *Życie obozowe powstańców styczniowych*, <https://nck.pl/projekty-kulturalne/projekty/powstanie-styczniowe-150-rocznica/aktualnosci/1863-zycie-obozowe-powstancow-styczniowych> (09.11.25)

<sup>663</sup> W. Nowacki – Kopaczyński, *Pamiętnik Junoszy – Oficera Polskich Żandarmów w Powstaniu Styczniowym*, Warszawa 1960, s. 102.

egzekucja przeprowadzona na uczestnikach powstania styczniowego  
Warszawie.<sup>664</sup>

w

### Emanuel Szafarczyk



Źródło: Muzeum Niepodległości <https://muzn.pl/pl/> (09.11.25)

Żandarmeria Narodowa Powstania Styczniowego



Źródło: *Wieszacie i sztyletnicy bicz boży rządu narodowego*, <https://powstanie1863-64.pl/artukul/wieszacie-i-sztyletnicy-bicz-bozy-rzadu-narodowego/> (14.06.25).

### Zakończenie

Nie ulega wątpliwości, iż jak na możliwości polskiej konspiracji niepodległościowej okresu Powstania Styczniowego aparat bezpieczeństwa stworzony przez władze państwa podziemnego spełnił swoje zadania, do których został powołany. Oczywiście wypełnił wspomniane zadania w takim zakresie jakim było to możliwe. Wpłynąć na ostateczny rezultat walki nie mógł aczkolwiek przyczynić się do jej przedłużenia o czym świadczy fakt, iż najdłużej zwartą liczącą kilkudziesięciu kawalerzystów formację zbrojną powstania, która stanowiła realne zagrożenie dla rosyjskich formacji liniowych była wspomniana już we wcześniejszej

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<sup>664</sup> H. Jabłoński, *Aleksander Waszkowski. Ostatni naczelnik miasta Warszawy w powstaniu 1863 – 1864*, Warszawa 1978.

części tekstu grupa żandarmeryjna pod dowództwem legendarnego zagończyka „Junoszy”. Mimo prowadzonych wobec niej intensywnych działań, w które zaangażowany był cały garnizon kielecki, formacja „Junoszy” nie została nigdy rozbita i utrzymała się w terenie aż do maja 1864 roku kiedy to na rozkaz władz powstańczych „Junosza” rozwiązał oddział wydając przy tym rozkaz o przejściu do konspiracji oraz wytyczne w celu ewentualnego szybkiego sformowania oddziału na nowo. Do tego jednak nie doszło ponieważ zorganizowany opór na obszarze Królestwa Polskiego oraz polskich kresów wschodnich w tym Litwy oraz Białorusi po prostu zamarł. Skala militarna klęski była poważna. Blisko 30 tysięcy zabitych, 200 tysięcy zesłanych na Syberię lub też prześladowanych przez miejscowe władze carskie. Zlikwidowano resztki niezależności w postaci Królestwa Polskiego, które zamieniło się w Kraj Nadwiślański. Stracono również szereg przywilejów wywalczonych przez margrabię Aleksandra Wielopolskiego. Rolę przywódcy narodu przestała odgrywać szlachta. Coraz większe znaczenie zaczęli nabierać mieszkańcy dużych miast, powoli swoją pozycję zaczęli budować również stanowiący większość społeczeństwa chłopci. Dwie dekady po zakończeniu zbrojnej rebelii trwał już w najlepsze proces industrializacji ziem polskich czego dowodem Łódź. Litwini, Białorusini oraz Ukraińcy wybrali własne, narodowe drogi zrywając z duchem zamierzchłej już epoki wyznaczonej kierunkiem obranym w ramach Unii Lubelskiej 1569 roku. Z drugiej jednak strony to właśnie powstańcy styczniowi stali się natchnieniem dla przyszłych pokoleń, które czerpiąc z ich dorobku podobnie jak to uczynił Józef Piłsudski przyczyniło się do odzyskania niepodległości. Tej ostatniej doczekało się blisko cztery tysiące kombatantów, którym stworzono warunki do godnego życia już w wolnej Polsce. Kilku z pośród 36, którzy dożyli wybuchu II Wojny Światowej doczekało także kresu niemieckiej okupacji w latach 1939 – 1945. Najstarszy, uczestnik szlaku bojowego oddziałów generała Mariana Langiewicza Franciszek Malinowski zmarł w wieku 103 lat w Warszawie ósmego grudnia 1950 roku.<sup>665</sup>

### Streszczenie:

Artykuł *Wybrane aspekty polityki bezpieczeństwa władz powstańczych polskiej insurekcji 1863 roku w Królestwie Polskim oraz na kresach wschodnich Polski przedrozbiorowej* omawia

<sup>665</sup> S. Wojciechowski, *Weterani 1863 – 1864 roku w II Rzeczypospolitej*, Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Dawnej Broni i Barwy, Warszawa 2022; s. 59, J. S. Wojciechowski, *Stowarzyszenia i związki kombatanckie w latach 1919-1939*, Pruszków 2007, s. 82.



wybrane, kluczowe zdaniem autora kwestie związane z działalnością władz powstańczych w obszarze bezpieczeństwa z uwzględnieniem szczególnej roli Żandarmerii Powstańczej. Autor artykułu koncentruje się na charakterystyce działalności oddziałów Żandarmerii Powstańczej zarówno w aspekcie militarnym jak również cywilnym. Swoją analizę opiera o dzieła znanych polskich historyków podejmujących badania nad tym okresem historii naszego kraju oraz co szczególnie cenne pamiętników uczestników tamtych wydarzeń, których wiele pojawiło się na rynku wydawniczym na przełomie XIX i XX wieku, obecnie zaś wznowionych przez prywatne oficyny wydawnicze. Warto przy tym pamiętać, iż działalności władz powstańczych w obszarze bezpieczeństwa stała się przyczynkiem do rozważań o polskim ruchu oporu zarówno dla władz niemieckich jak i radzieckich w czasie II Wojny Światowej. Do dnia dzisiejszego zachował się raport *Die polnische Methoden bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des Aufstands gegen die Russen im Jahre 1863. Die Art. Der russischen Abwehr* sporządzony przez Kriegswissenschaftliche Abteilung, Oberkommando des Heeres) Heinricha Himmlera dotyczący możliwości przeniesienia doświadczeń z konspiracji powstańczej na grunt konspiracji państwa podziemnego w latach 1939 – 1945<sup>666</sup>.

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<sup>666</sup> W przekładzie polskim tytuł raportu stanowi: *Taktyka polska w dziedzinie przygotowań i przeprowadzenie powstania przeciwko Rosjanom w 1863 r. Metody obrony rosyjskiej*. O znaczeniu dokumentu świadczy fakt, iż Reichsführer – SS Heinrich Himmler, rozkazał: „przesłać tę pracę do wszystkich placówek służbowych, do dowódcy batalionu SS i policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie, do okręgów SS „Wisła” i „Warta”, jak również do terenowych placówek gestapo”. Raport został odnaleziony po II Wojnie Światowej przez profesora Emanuela Halicza, który jako pierwszy podjął się jego przetłumaczenia oraz jego analizy. Wartym podkreślenia jest fakt, iż do sporządzenia raportu strona niemiecka wykorzystała szeroki wachlarz istniejących dokumentów, opracowań monograficznych w tym autorstwa Józefa Piłsudskiego oraz obserwatora insurekcji styczniowej z ramienia rządu pruskiego Juliusa von Verdy du Vernois. Celem raportu było przełożenie wydarzeń historycznych okresu Powstania Styczniowego na „język współczesności” a więc wykorzystanie doświadczeń rosyjskich w tłumieniu polskiego wystąpienia zbrojnego oraz metod działania polskiego państwa podziemnego w warunkach konspiracji. Autorzy raportu podkreślają dobrą organizację władz cywilnych powstania, sprawną działalność aparatu bezpieczeństwa. Z innych ważnych konkluzji dokumentu wynika brak wsparcia dla idei buntu ze strony dużej części polskiego społeczeństwa w tym chłopów oraz urzędników będących nominatami rosyjskimi. Autorzy, co warto zauważyć podkreślają, iż powyższa sytuacja nie znajdzie przełożenia na warunki niemieckiej okupacji co jest efektem zmian w świadomości społeczeństwa polskiego, do których doszło po zakończeniu styczniowej insurekcji. Cenną uwagą autorów raportu było podkreślenie roli kobiet w wystąpieniu zbrojnym w tym zwłaszcza jako organizatorek sprawnie działające poczty powstańczej (kurierki). Dokument odnosi się także do braku realnego (poza werbalnym) wsparcia dla powstańców ze strony państw zachodnich co zdaniem autorów stanowi analogię do wydarzeń września 1939 roku. Ostateczną konkluzją sporządzonego przez Niemców raportu jest opinia o konieczności bezwzględnej walki z wszelkimi przejawami buntu ze strony Polaków przy pomocy zróżnicowanych metod i technik działania. E. Halicz, *Doświadczenia Powstania Styczniowego w ujęciu naczelnich władz hitlerowskich*, „Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny”, Warszawa 1965, nr 3 (35), s. 356-368; K.

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**Słowa kluczowe:**

Bezpieczeństwo, kresy, Królestwo Polskie, powstanie

**Key words:**

Security, borderlands, Polish Kingdom, uprising

**Bibliografia:**

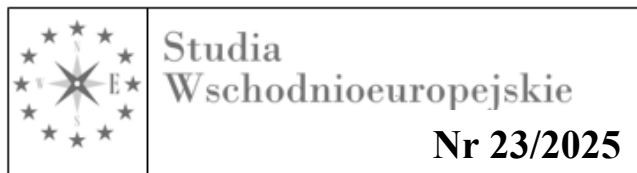
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Polska Akademia Umiejętności

Uniwersytet Komisji Edukacji Narodowej

w Krakowie



**Holding w prawie polskim: charakterystyka pojęcia,  
umocowanie normatywne, rola i znaczenie grup kapitałowych  
dla bezpieczeństwa polskiej gospodarki**

**Wprowadzenie**

**W**dobie postępującej globalizacji, dynamicznych przemian gospodarczych oraz zaostrzającej się konkurencji międzynarodowej zarówno w ujęciu podmiotów relacji międzynarodowych jakimi są państwa, jak również pomiędzy wielkimi koncernami często prowadzącymi niezależną politykę, te ostatnie stają przed koniecznością wdrożenia nowych modeli organizacyjnych. Celem tak definiowanych działań jest wygenerowanie podstaw pod optymalizację zasobów, stworzenie fundamentów na rzecz konsolidacji działań, jak również, co szczególnie ważne w czasach braku odpowiedniej stabilności globalnego rynku finansowego, dywersyfikację ryzyka. Odpowiedzią na tak formułowane zapotrzebowania może stać się holding będący strukturą kapitałowo - organizacyjną, w której spółka dominująca wywiera kontrolę nad szeregiem spółek zależnych, które jednocześnie zachowują pewną formalną odrębność prawną. W tym ostatnim przypadku umożliwia to odpowiednią dywersyfikację celów opierającą się na zasadzie decentralizacji zadań, nad którymi władztwo dysponujące narzędziem nadzoru sprawuje kierownictwo spółki dominującej. Artykuł *Holding w prawie polskim: charakterystyka pojęcia, umocowanie normatywne, rola i znaczenie dla bezpieczeństwa polskiej gospodarki* podejmuje interdyscyplinarną analizę instytucji holdingu koncentrując się przy tym na wybranych aspektach teoretycznych, jak również pewnych uwarunkowaniach praktycznych. Publikacja ta ma na celu przedstawienie mocno zróżnicowanych historycznych uwarunkowań, które legły u podstaw stworzenia instytucji

prawno – gospodarczej jaką jest Holding, określenie teoretycznych fundamentów, na których osadzona została przywołana instytucja, a także podkreślenie znaczenia ekonomicznego, jakie odgrywa ona na szeroko definiowanym rynku. Publikacja koncentruje się również na wymienieniu i scharakteryzowaniu strukturalnych elementów stanowiących część omawianej instytucji oraz problematyki umocowania prawnego holdingu w polskim systemie prawnym. W ramach prowadzonej analizy przedmiotu badań naukowych, autor publikacji stara się porównać polskie rozwiązania z modelami stosowanymi w innych krajach europejskich. Przedstawiony artykuł stanowi próbę zarysowania wybranych zagadnień prawno – gospodarczych. Celem autora jest nie tylko pogłębienie wiedzy teoretycznej, ale także dostarczenie wskazówek praktycznych, które mogą znaleźć zastosowanie w procesie wdrażania koniecznych jego zdaniem reform legislacyjnych. Istotnym przy tym jest odpowiednie zdefiniowanie pojęcia oraz istoty Holdingu. Instytucja holdingu pozostaje od momentu przemian społeczno – gospodarczych, do których doszło w 1989 roku przedmiotem szerokiej dyskusji doktrynalnej, w której dominują różne interpretacje definicji holdingu. Dyskusja mająca miejsce zarówno w przestrzeni akademickiej, jak również szeroko ujmowanej menadżerskiej, koncentruje się także na aspektach kapitałowych, organizacyjnych, jak i kontraktowych zagadnieniach.

Badania, poprzedzające artykuł zostały sformalizowane w oparciu o metody interdyscyplinarne zarówno prawnicze, jak też mające zastosowanie w naukach o polityce i administracji. Przykładem tego jest wykorzystanie metody studium przypadku będącej - zdaniem autora publikacji - dobrym narzędziem umożliwiającym zasygnalizowanie oraz dokonanie analizy najważniejszych wybranych zagadnień. Wykorzystanie tej metody oraz elementów metody scenariuszowej umożliwia zawarcie kwintesencji wiedzy, perspektywicznych prospektów w ramach analizowanego obszaru badawczego na relatywnie niewielkim formacie charakterystycznych dla mocno syntetycznych artykułów naukowych. W artykule wykorzystano literaturę przedmiotu badań naukowych opartą o prace monograficzne, artykuły w drukach zwartych, netografię oraz materiały źródłowe, w tym te związane z normami prawa stanowionego.

### **Holding – próba zdefiniowania problemu**

W klasycznej literaturze prawniczej, holding traktowany jest jako kategoria doktrynalna wynikająca z interdyscyplinarnego scalenia określonych relacji kapitałowych, organizacyjnych

oraz kontraktowych.<sup>667</sup> Według Andrzeja Kidyby, holding nie jest zdefiniowany ustawowo, lecz funkcjonuje jako pewnego rodzaju konstrukcja praktyczna. Ta ostatnia ewoluuje w wyniku licznych przemian, do których dochodzi w strukturach gospodarczych, jak również w efekcie zmieniających się potrzeb przedsiębiorstw. Te ostatnie mogą wynikać zarówno z uwarunkowań wewnętrznych, takich jak proces restrukturyzacji, zmiany obowiązujących norm w obszarze prawa handlowego, czy też zewnętrznych, czego najlepszym przykładem jest konieczność implementacji prawa Unii Europejskiej. Inny pracownik naukowy Jerzy Jacyszyn, wieloletni redaktor naczelny opiniotwórczego czasopisma naukowego „Rejent”, wydawanego przez Stowarzyszenie Notariuszy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej podkreśla, iż istotą holdingu jest centralizacja decyzyjna, która umożliwia spółce dominującej, tak zwanej „spółce matce” wywieranie wpływu na jednostki zależne. W jego opinii dzieje się tak nawet przy zachowaniu ich formalnej odrębności prawnej, co jest poniekąd wynikiem - choć nie bezpośrednim - procesów decentralizacyjnych. Tak zarysowana koncepcja wskazuje, iż holding nie ogranicza się jedynie do relacji kapitałowych, ale obejmuje także mechanizmy kontraktowe. Wśród tych ostatnich możemy wyszczególnić umowy o zarządzanie, czy też niesformalizowane relacje personalne. Owe relacje, które można by określić jako „soft law” mają jednak znaczący wpływ na proces decyzyjny w obrębie grupy kapitałowej. Rozwój instytucji holdingu w Polsce jest mocno związany z procesami transformacji ustrojowej i gospodarczej, będącymi efektem końca „Zimnej Wojny” i narodzinami nowego ładu w sferze bezpieczeństwa mierzonego normami prawa międzynarodowego. Konieczne zmiany dotknęły przy tym systemy gospodarcze państw byłego RWPG oparte o normy nakazowo – rozdzielcze definiujące gospodarkę państw socjalistycznych. W latach 90. XX wieku przedsiębiorstwa, poddane zostały gruntownym reformom, które wymusiły na kadrze pracowniczej poszukiwanie nowych metod konsolidacji swoich działań oraz optymalizacji wykorzystania zasobów. To właśnie w ostatniej dekadzie XX wieku pojawiły się struktury holdingowe, które zyskały na znaczeniu, umożliwiając integrację różnych sektorów gospodarki oraz zapewniając przy tym, co niezwykle istotne, elastyczność w zarządzaniu portfelem inwestycyjnym. Tak więc odwołanie się do historii przemian gospodarczych w Polsce powinno stanowić fundament dla współczesnych interpretacji instytucji holdingu, wskazując przy tym w jakim stopniu i zakresie, ewolucja rynków kapitałowych przy uwzględnieniu postępującej globalizacji, wpłynęła na konieczność wdrażania rozwiązań umożliwiających efektywną konsolidację, a przy tym umiejętne zarządzanie ryzykiem. W efekcie holding stał się nie tylko narzędziem kontroli kapitałowej,

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<sup>667</sup> A. Kidyba, *Prawo handlowe. Zarys wykładu*, Wolters Kluwer, Warszawa 2018, s. 230–236.

lecz także kluczowym instrumentem strategicznym, który umożliwia firmom adaptację do coraz bardziej dynamicznie zmieniających się warunków rynkowych. Te ostatnie poddane są stałym naciskom wynikającym ze zmieniających się zasad rządzących wolnym rynkiem, implementacji rozwiązań prawnych, a w końcu postępowaniem technologicznym, w tym zwłaszcza w obszarze AI. Należy przy tym wspomnieć, iż konstrukcja holdingu charakteryzuje się mocnym zróżnicowaniem, obejmującym szereg aspektów poczynając od relacji kapitałowych, poprzez mechanizmy kontraktowe kończąc. Przekładając to na język praktyczny oznacza to, iż struktura holdingu nie może być charakteryzowana jedynie w kategoriach własnościowych, ale musi być analizowana z uwzględnieniem całokształtu procesów decyzyjnych. Formalna struktura, w której spółka dominująca posiada większość udziałów, umożliwia centralizację władzy. Często jednak tak zdefiniowany rzeczywistością model zarządzania zależny jest od rzeczywistego wpływu na spółki zależne, co znajduje swoje przełożenie w dodatkowych umowach, porozumieniach oraz relacjach międzyludzkich. Te ostatnie mieszczą się w kategoriach analizy psychologicznej oraz socjologicznej. Tak zwany czynnik ludzki był, jest i pewnie będzie niezwykle istotnym elementem każdego procesu, działania. Dotyczy to również generowania norm prawnych, które nie powstają w umownej próżni, podatne są - na co wskazują ostatnie lata - w coraz większym stopniu na naciski polityczne, lobbying.<sup>668</sup> Wielowymiarowość tej konstrukcji powoduje konieczność uwzględnienia aspektów formalnych, jak również niezwykle przy tym istotnych mechanizmów kontroli. Niezbędna przy tym pozostaje analiza, w której uwzględnia się nie tylko strukturę własnościową, ale także funkcjonowanie systemów nadzoru, audytu wewnętrznego, kontroli procedur decyzyjnych. Wynikiem podjętych w tym obszarze działań jest powstanie syntezy, co umożliwia uzyskanie pełniejszego obrazu funkcjonowania holdingu. Pozwala to na znacznie lepsze zdefiniowanie jego możliwości oraz istniejących ograniczeń. Autorzy definicji, modeli holdingu podkreślają, iż centralizacja funkcji wspólnych, takich jak zarządzanie finansami, logistyka, IT, odpowiednie wykorzystanie zasobów ludzkich, umożliwia standaryzację procedur oraz poprawę możliwości efektywnego wykorzystania zasobów. Działania te prowadzą do redukcji kosztów transakcyjnych. W efekcie, przedsiębiorstwa działające w ramach holdingu mogą korzystać z synergii operacyjnej, osiągając lepsze wyniki finansowe i większą efektywność działania. W warunkach globalnej konkurencji, gdzie marżyny zysku są coraz mniejsze, co wynika z dostępu do informacji i systemów zarządzania, zdolność do optymalizacji kosztów staje się kluczowym elementem strategii korporacyjnej. Holding to jedna z najbardziej

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<sup>668</sup> J. Jacyszyn, *Grupy spółek w prawie handlowym*, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2021, s. 54 – 68.

rozwiniętych instytucji rynku umożliwiającą przedsiębiorstwom dywersyfikację ryzyka poprzez odpowiednie rozłożenie inwestycji na poszczególne sektory gospodarki. W ramach grupy kapitałowej możliwe jest zarządzanie portfelem inwestycyjnym w taki sposób, aby niepowodzenia w jednym obszarze działalności były kompensowane poprzez uzyskanie stabilnej pozycji w innych segmentach. Jak widać niezwykle ważna przy tym jest odpowiednia strategia dywersyfikacji, która zmniejsza ryzyko finansowe przedsiębiorstwa poprzez zwiększenie odporności na nieprzewidziane sytuacje kryzysowe mieszczące się w obszarze gospodarczym, ale i również politycznym. Badania prowadzone przez szereg ośrodków akademickich i analitycznych działających na osi prawa - gospodarki - polityki wskazują, iż centralizacja decyzyjna w holdingach umożliwia znacznie bardziej efektywne zarządzanie ryzykiem, co nie jest możliwe w przypadku firm jednowektorowych. Nabiera to obecnie istotnego znaczenia w warunkach zmiennego otoczenia gospodarczego podatnego na coraz większą liczbę czynników o mocno zróżnicowanym charakterze. Pozwala także działać w oparciu o prognozowanie i symulacje w przedziale większym niż tylko krótkoterminowym, co daje przewagę nad konkurencją.<sup>669</sup> Struktury holdingowe umożliwiają przedsiębiorstwom szybkie reagowanie na zmieniające się warunki rynkowe poprzez elastyczne przekierowywanie zasobów finansowych oraz adaptację strategii inwestycyjnych. Normy prawa stanowionego dają możliwość stosowania strategii opierających się na elastyczności, która jest kluczowa w kontekście globalnych rynków, gdzie tempo zmian charakteryzuje się silną dynamiką, a zdolność do adaptacji decyduje o sukcesie, którego wymiar determinuje długoterminowa konkurencyjność firmy. Efektywna integracja silnie zróżnicowanych segmentów działalności gospodarczej, realizowana w ramach holdingu, umożliwia osiągnięcie tak zwanej synergii operacyjnej. Wartość tej ostatniej przekracza sumę indywidualnych efektów działania poszczególnych spółek mierzonych jako indywidualne przedsięwzięcia. Przywołana synergia może przyjmować różne formy działalności, począwszy od wspólnych zakupów i negocjacji z dostawcami, poprzez optymalizację procesów produkcyjnych. Coraz bardziej istotna też staje się wymiana wiedzy, doświadczenia oraz dostęp do informacji, który stanowi fundament każdej strategii firmy. Tak zdefiniowany model umożliwia bardziej efektywne wykorzystanie zasobów, wpływa pozytywnie na innowacyjność oraz wdrażanie nowych technologii wzmacniając tym samym konkurencyjność całej grupy. Integracja systemów IT w połączeniu z integracją działów badawczo - rozwojowych może w sposób znaczny przyczynić się do

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<sup>669</sup> M. Wyrzykowski, *The Governance of Holding Companies*, Journal of Corporate Law Studies, 2020, t. 19, nr 1, s. 45 – 63.

poprawy wyników operacyjnych oraz dynamiki wzrostu wartości rynkowej przedsiębiorstwa. Przykładem jest choćby wykorzystanie asystenta AI do badań satysfakcji klienta w połączeniu z systemem przetwarzania danych oraz możliwościami syntetycznej oceny. Znaczenie gospodarcze holdingu pozostaje jak widać wielowymiarowe. Wszelkie więc możliwości i ograniczenia stanowią fundament współczesnych strategii korporacyjnych, umożliwiając przy tym przedsiębiorstwom efektywne zarządzanie w warunkach nie zawsze uczciwej, mierzonej normami prawa stanowionego będącego głównym wektorem międzynarodowych stosunków gospodarczych, globalnej konkurencji.<sup>670</sup>

### Charakterystyka Struktury Holdingowej

Fundamentalnym elementem struktury holdingu pozostają relacje kapitałowe. Determinują one w sposób jednoznaczny stopień kontroli, jaką „spółka matka” może sprawować nad spółkami zależnymi. Posiadanie przy tym większości udziałów lub akcji holdingu pozostaje nie tylko źródłem władzy decyzyjnej, ale również doskonałym fundamentem konsolidacji zasobów oraz osiągania efektów synergii. W literaturze przedmiotu podkreśla się, iż precyzyjne określenie relacji kapitałowych stanowi klucz dla zabezpieczenia interesów wszystkich uczestników grupy, ponieważ wyznacza ono granice odpowiedzialności, co skutkuje efektywną kontrolą nad przepływami finansowymi. Można więc zaryzykować stwierdzenie, iż czym wyższy poziom koncentracji kapitału w rękach spółki dominującej, tym większa staje się możliwość centralizacji strategicznych decyzji. Istotnym przy tym problemem może się stać rozmycie granic odpowiedzialności w ramach procesu tak zwanego „zrzucania winy i odpowiedzialności”, wykorzystując przy tym nieprzejrzysty system funkcjonowania holdingu, istniejące braki w zapisach regulaminu jego działalności na osi spółka dominująca – spółki zależne. Często też wpływ mają niejasne przepisy prawa stanowionego, a raczej brak ich odpowiedniej interpretacji przez stosowne organy. Powiązania kontraktowe odgrywają istotną rolę w formalizacji relacji między spółką dominującą a jej spółkami zależnymi. Umowy o zarządzanie, czy też przekazywanie zysków stanowią narzędzie umożliwiające określenie zakresu uprawnień, obowiązków, w końcu również nadzoru. Tak definiowane umowy przybierają charakter mocno dynamiczny, co znajduje przełożenie w konieczności stałego ich

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<sup>670</sup> Podmioty obowiązane do udostępniania informacji publicznej, <https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/dostep-do-informacji-publicznej-16913107/art-4>; *Tajemnica przedsiębiorstwa a dostęp do informacji*, <https://poradnikprzedsiębiorcy.pl/-tajemnica-przedsiębiorstwa-a-dostep-do-informacji-publicznej> (11.02.25); Sz. Dubiel, *Informacja publiczna od spółki*, <https://informacjapubliczna.org/news/informacja-publiczna-od-spolki/>; *AI analizuje satysfakcję klientów holdingu*, <https://businessinsider.com.pl/technologie/nowe-technologie/xxii-ventures-ai-analizuje-satysfakcje-klientow-holdingu/6k7fdmp> (12.02.25)



renegocjowania, koniecznością dostosowywania do zmieniających się warunków rynkowych, czy też specyfiki działalności grupy. Wdrożenie standardów audytu wewnętrznego, właściwego systemu raportowania, staje się więc niezbędne dla zapewnienia przejrzystości oraz skutecznego monitorowania realizacji celów, zarówno tych krótkoterminowych, jak również mających charakter strategiczny decydujący o przyszłości przedsiębiorstwa. Wszystko to ma na celu minimalizację ryzyka wystąpienia potencjalnych konfliktów, czy też możliwości nadużyć wewnątrz grupy kapitałowej. Oprócz formalnych relacji kapitałowych i kontraktowych, nierzadko kluczową rolę odgrywają przywołane już we wcześniejszej części artykułu, a często niedoceniane, czy też w ogóle pomijane przez środowisko naukowe, powiązania personalne między członkami zarządów poszczególnych spółek. Relacje te nie należą do rzeczy wymiernych, a jako takie są trudne do jednoznacznego uregulowania prawnie. Niestety mają ogromny wpływ na proces decyzyjny, jak również koordynację działań w ramach holdingu. Decydują o sukcesie zarówno w odniesieniu do praktyki dnia codziennego, a także przywołanej wcześniej strategii długoterminowej, która już na wstępie obarczona jest błędem. W praktyce, menedżerowie spółki dominującej często pełnią kluczowe funkcje również w spółkach zależnych, co z jednej strony umożliwia znacznie bardziej spójną realizację strategii, z drugiej jednak strony stwarza poważne ryzyko koncentracji władzy w rękach niewielkiej grupy decydentów, co może prowadzić do braku postępów w definiowaniu strategii firmy szczególnie w procesie długoterminowym. Uważa się przy tym, iż menadżerowie nie powinni zarządzać jedną firmą w przestrzeni czasowej dłuższej niż dekada, bowiem istotą natury ludzkiej jest szukanie stabilizacji i przyzwyczajanie do istniejących norm zachowań, co w efekcie często prowadzi do stagnacji, w skrajnych przypadkach kryzysu. Tworzące się z czasem nieformalne powiązania, zażyłość wynikająca z interesów prywatnych często nie są źródłem korzyści, a raczej stanowią fundament pod potencjalne nadużycia. Wszystko to wymaga uwzględnienia przy opracowywaniu mechanizmów ochronnych oraz modeli systemów nadzoru opartych zarówno na doświadczeniach, jak i przy wykorzystaniu nowych technologii oraz rozwiązań w tym obszarze. Dokonując analizy należy uwzględnić, iż mimo że spółki zależne wchodzące w skład holdingu zachowują formalną niezależność prawną, to praktyka pokazuje, że rzeczywiste mechanizmy kontroli i centralizacji często wykraczają poza granice formalnie określone przez prawo. Formalna niezależność jest gwarantowana zasadą odrębności osobowości prawnej, co ma chronić mienie poszczególnych jednostek i ograniczać ryzyko przenoszenia odpowiedzialności. Niemniej jednak, de facto kontrola sprawowana przez spółkę dominującą może prowadzić do sytuacji, w których granice tej niezależności stają się niejasne, a odpowiedzialność za decyzje strategiczne mocno rozmyta. W związku z tym, konieczne jest

stworzenie jednolitych mechanizmów regulacyjnych, które będą uwzględniać zarówno formalne, jak i faktyczne relacje władzy, co umożliwi skuteczną ochronę interesów wszystkich uczestników grupy kapitałowej. Charakterystyka struktury holdingu obejmuje wielowymiarową analizę relacji kapitałowych, kontraktowych, personalnych oraz zagadnień związanych z formalną niezależnością prawną. Złożoność tych elementów stanowi zarówno źródło siły, jak i potencjalnych zagrożeń, co wymaga wdrożenia precyzyjnych mechanizmów kontrolnych i ochronnych. Najlepszym tego przykładem są problemy instytucji działających w obszarze szeroko definiowanej sfery finansów, w tym zwłaszcza banków<sup>671</sup>.

### **Umocowanie holdingu w polskim systemie prawnym**

Polski system prawny, choć zawiera szereg istotnych norm regulujących obszar współdziałania na linii spółki dominująca – spółka zależna, to jednak nadal nie wypracował jednej regulacji, która w sposób kompleksowy dotyczyłaby holdingu. Prowadzi to do mocno niepożądanego efektu w postaci tak zwanego rozproszenia normatywnego. I tak współczesne regulacje prawne w obszarze funkcjonowania holdingu są rozproszone pomiędzy Kodeksem Spółek Handlowych, przepisami prawa upadłościowego, normami prawa podatkowego oraz całym szeregiem innych przepisów dotyczących rachunkowości.

Wymaga jednocześnie podkreślenia, że ustawodawca dostrzega znaczenie holdingu we współczesnej gospodarce i podjęte zostały działania nakierowane na unormowanie holdingu w sposób bardziej szczegółowy. W tym zakresie należy wskazać na nowelizację KSH dokonaną ustawą z dnia 9 lutego 2022 r. o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks spółek handlowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw (Dz. U. z 2022 r. poz. 807). Na mocy tejże nowelizacji, która weszła w życie 13.10.2022 r., przepisy KSH zostały wzbogacone zarówno o samą definicję „grupy spółek”, jak również o odrębny dział dedykowany grupie spółek. Jak wskazano w uzasadnieniu projektu ustawy nowelizującej: „Rzeczywistość prowadzenia aktywności gospodarczej ulega nieustannym przeobrażeniom, dlatego rolą ustawodawcy powinno być przyglądanie się realnym potrzebom jej uczestników oraz podejmowanie działań zmierzających do zwiększania efektywności procesów związanych z zarządzaniem przedsiębiorstwami (...) W efekcie przeprowadzonych analiz, sformułowano przedkładany projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks spółek handlowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, którego podstawowym celem jest wprowadzenie do polskiego prawa regulacji prawnej prawa holdingowego (prawa grup spółek,

<sup>671</sup> D. Prokopowicz, *Procesy konsolidacyjne i koncentracja kapitału jako istotne usankcjonowane normatywnie ekonomiczne determinanty procesy globalizacji ekonomicznej kształtujących rozwój systemu bankowego w Polsce*, International Journal of Legal Studies Warszawa 2018, nr 2.

prawa koncernowego), które – w szerokim znaczeniu doktrynalnym – reguluje relacje prywatno-prawne między spółką dominującą a jej spółkami zależnymi, w sposób uwzględniający interes wierzycieli, członków organów oraz drobnych wspólników (akcjonariuszy) spółki zależnej, jak również wyposażenie rad nadzorczych w narzędzia umożliwiające prowadzenie bardziej efektywnego nadzoru korporacyjnego, a także wyeliminowanie wątpliwości podnoszonych przez przedsiębiorców i przedstawicieli doktryny”<sup>672</sup>.

Wprowadzona nowelizacja z założenia została skonstruowana, jako regulacja o charakterze szcątkowym. W uzasadnieniu ww. ustawy nowelizującej takie podejście wyjaśniono w następujący sposób: „Pierwsza część niniejszego projektu dotyczy wprowadzenia do polskiego prawa spółek handlowych regulacji prawnej tak zwanego prawa holdingowego (prawa grup spółek, prawa koncernowego), które – w szerokim znaczeniu doktrynalnym – reguluje relacje prywatno-prawne między spółką dominującą a jej spółkami zależnymi, w sposób uwzględniający interes wierzycieli, członków organów oraz drobnych wspólników (akcjonariuszy), zwłaszcza spółki zależnej. Tak jak wspomniano, nowe przepisy dotyczą jedynie sfery prywatnoprawnej, tak więc nie mają wpływu na obowiązywanie norm prawa publicznego, w tym norm prawa podatkowego (...) Kompleksowe uregulowanie ogółu problemów publiczno- i prywatno-prawnych (w tym kwestii cen transferowych oraz kwestii bilansowych) w jednej ustawie szczególnej wydaje się mało realne. (...) W regulacji prywatnoprawnej prawa holdingowego, czyli w ramach Kodeksu spółek handlowych, możliwe są dwa warianty, to jest wariant pełnej regulacji – wariant pierwszy, oraz wariant braku regulacji bądź regulacji ograniczonej (szcątkowej) – wariant drugi. Wariant pierwszy występuje zdecydowanie rzadziej w ramach prawa krajowego państw należących do Unii Europejskiej. Chodzi tu w szczególności o regulację niemiecką (§ 291–337 AktG z 6.09.1965 r.), portugalską (art. 488–508 Decreto Lei 262/86 z 2.09.1986 r.), słoweńską (art. 460–569 ustawy o spółkach gospodarczych z 10.06.1993 r.) oraz czeską (§ 190 a.–§ 190 d. Kodeksu handlowego z 1991 r. ze zm.). Wariant drugi występuje natomiast w pozostałych krajach Unii Europejskiej, a ponadto w Stanach Zjednoczonych, gdyż zasadnicze problemy prawne składające się na prawo holdingowe w rozumieniu doktrynalnym są rozwiązywane przez orzecznictwo sądowe bądź poglądy nauki prawa (...) W polskiej praktyce gospodarczej dominują holdingi faktyczne. Holdingi umowne należą do rzadkości, podobnie jak tak zwane podatkowe grupy kapitałowe

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<sup>672</sup> Źródło: <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/druk.xsp?nr=1515> (12.02.25)

(art. 1a ust. 1 ustawy o podatku dochodowym od osób prawnych). Stąd proponowana nowelizacja KSH – przez wprowadzenie nowego Działu IV, pod tytułem „Grupa spółek” w ramach tytułu pierwszego KSH, pod tytułem „Przepisy ogólne” (art. 21<sup>1</sup>–21<sup>16</sup> KSH) – dotyczy zasadniczo holdingów faktycznych. Przepisy te mogą jednak znaleźć zastosowanie także do holdingów umownych, ponieważ holding umowny z reguły spełnia przesłanki istnienia holdingu faktycznego. Dopuszczalność tworzenia holdingów umownych wynika także z zasady wolności umów (art. 353<sup>1</sup> Kodeksu Cywilnego (dalej również jako: „KC”) w związku z art. 2 KSH), co wobec braku wystarczająco ukształtowanej praktyki kontraktowej wyklucza potrzebę szczegółowej regulacji takich holdingów w ramach Kodeksu spółek handlowych. (...) Mając na uwadze negatywne doświadczenia praktyczne krajów, które przyjęły wariant pierwszy (to jest pełnej regulacji prawa holdingowego), polegające na pojawieniu się nowych, dodatkowych wątpliwości prawnych w następstwie takiej regulacji, niniejsza nowelizacja Kodeksu spółek handlowych stoi na gruncie wariantu drugiego, w wersji przyjęcia ograniczonej (szczątkowej) regulacji prawnej tylko tych kwestii z zakresu funkcjonowania holdingów faktycznych, których regulacja prawna jest rzeczywiście niezbędna i wychodzi naprzeciw najważniejszym postulatom zgłaszanym przez przedsiębiorców, a jednocześnie nie narusza zasad systemowych prawa spółek handlowych”<sup>673</sup>.

Wspomniana nowelizacja wprowadziła definicję „grupy spółek”, przez którą rozumie się „spółkę dominującą i spółkę albo spółki zależne, będące spółkami kapitałowymi, kierujące się zgodnie z uchwałą o uczestnictwie w grupie spółek wspólną strategią w celu realizacji wspólnego interesu (interes grupy spółek), uzasadniającą sprawowanie przez spółkę dominującą jednolitego kierownictwa nad spółką zależną albo spółkami zależnymi”<sup>674</sup>. Jednocześnie, obok ww. definicji pozostawiono w słowniku ustawy definicję „spółki dominującej”<sup>675</sup>. Ratio legis tego zabiegu było „odróżnienie grupy spółek (art. 4 § 1 pkt 5<sup>1</sup> KSH) od definicji legalnej z art. 4 § 1 pkt 4 KSH. Grupa spółek jest "kwalifikowanym" stosunkiem dominacji i zależności pomiędzy określonymi spółkami kapitałowymi tworzącymi grupę spółek, gdyż spółki te, zgodnie z uchwałą o uczestnictwie w grupie spółek, kierują się wspólną strategią w celu realizacji wspólnego interesu (tzw. interesu grupy spółek), która umożliwia spółce dominującej sprawowanie jednolitego kierownictwa nad spółką albo spółkami zależnymi. Pozwala to wyróżnić nową kategorię prawną występującą w praktyce

<sup>673</sup> Źródło: <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/druk.xsp?nr=1515> (12.02.25)

<sup>674</sup> Art. 4 § 1 pkt 5(1) KSH.

<sup>675</sup> Art. 4 § 1 pkt 4 KSH.

polskich i zagranicznych grup spółek, jaką jest "interes grup spółek"<sup>676</sup>. Cechą wyróżniającą grupę spółek jest więc kierowanie się wspólnym interesem. Jak wskazuje się w doktrynie tworzy to dualizm interesów, gdyż z momentem utworzenia grupy spółek spółka uczestnicząca w grupie spółek, zarówno w charakterze spółki dominującej, jak i spółki zależnej, winna kierować się – obok swojego interesu – interesem grupy spółek<sup>677</sup>.

Na mocy ww. nowelizacji dodano także oddzielny Dział poświęcony regulacji grupy spółek<sup>678</sup>. Jak wskazano wcześniej, ustawodawca przyjął od początku założenie, że zawarte tam rozwiązania będą miały charakter regulacji ograniczonej. Można postawić tezę, że ustawodawca wybierając materię, która została ostatecznie ujęta w formę przepisów prawa, kierował się potrzebą unormowania najbardziej podstawowych, ale jednocześnie szczególnie istotnych dla praktyki i poprawy efektywności funkcjonowania holdingów kwestii, takich jak zasady odpowiedzialności, kontroli<sup>679</sup>, kierownictwa, czy ochrony mniejszości<sup>680</sup>. Ramy prawne niniejszego artykułu nie pozwalają na szczegółowe omówienia każdego z wprowadzonych przepisów, niemniej jednak w sposób syntetyczny należy wskazać, że art. 21<sup>1</sup> § 1 KSH wprowadzając zasadę kierowania się przez spółki uczestniczące w grupie nie tylko interesem własnym, ale także interesem grupy spółek, uzależnia możliwość działania w interesie grupy spółek od tego, by nie zmierzało to do pokrzywdzenia wierzycieli lub współników mniejszościowych albo akcjonariuszy mniejszościowych spółki zależnej. W doktrynie wskazuje się, że „Rozwiązanie to budzi wątpliwości na wielu poziomach. Po pierwsze, ochrona mniejszości i wierzycieli spółki zależnej wynika już w istocie z definicji zawartej w art. 4 § 1 pkt 5<sup>1</sup>. Jeżeli bowiem interes grupy spółek stanowi wspólny interes spółek wchodzących w skład grupy i w związku z tym każda ze spółek realizuje w ramach koncepcji

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<sup>676</sup> J. Bieniak, M. Bieniak, G. Nita-Jagielski, Kodeks spółek handlowych. Komentarz. Wyd. 9, Warszawa 2024 wraz z przywołanym tam źródłem: Ocena skutków regulacji z 20.7.2020 r. do rządowego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks spółek handlowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, wykaz prac RCL UD113, s. 3); źródło: Legalis (12.02.25)

<sup>677</sup> Z. Jara (red.), Kodeks spółek handlowych. Komentarz. Wyd. 29, Warszawa 2025, źródło: Legalis (12.02.25)

<sup>678</sup> Dział IV, art. 21(1) – 21(16) KSH.

<sup>679</sup> Zob. art. 21(6) KSH regulujący prawo dostępu spółki dominującej do informacji o spółkach zależnych oraz art. 21(7) KSH stanowiący o sprawowaniu przed radę nadzorczą spółki dominującej stałego nadzoru nad realizacją interesu grupy spółek przez spółkę zależną.

<sup>680</sup> Zob. art. 21(9) KSH stanowiący o prawie współnika lub współników mniejszościowych albo akcjonariusza lub akcjonariuszów mniejszościowych reprezentujący co najmniej 10% kapitału zakładowego do zwrócenia się do sądu rejestrowego z wnioskiem o wyznaczenie firmy audytorskiej w celu zbadania rachunkowości oraz działalności grupy spółek; art. 21(10) KSH regulujący prawo współnika lub współników mniejszościowych albo akcjonariusza lub akcjonariuszów mniejszościowych reprezentujący co najmniej 10% kapitału zakładowego do odkupienia jego udziałów albo akcji przez spółkę dominującą; czy art. 21(11) KSH stanowiący o przymusowym wykupie udziałów albo akcji należących do współników mniejszościowych.

interesu grupy spółek swój własny interes (...), to interesy wspólników albo akcjonariuszy mniejszościowych i wierzycieli spółki zależnej podlegają uwzględnieniu już na etapie kształtowania interesu spółki zależnej, polegającego na wyważeniu interesów poszczególnych grup udziałowców oraz dbałości o zachowanie przez spółkę płynności”<sup>681</sup>.

Przepis art. 21<sup>2</sup> KSH reguluje możliwość wydawania spółce zależnej wiążących poleceń dotyczących spraw spółki, jeżeli jest to uzasadnione interesem grupy spółek oraz gdy przepisy szczególne nie stanowią inaczej. Wymaganą dla takiego wiążącego polecenia formą jest forma pisemna lub elektroniczna, pod rygorem nieważności. Z kolei art. 21<sup>3</sup> KSH wskazuje m.in., że wykonanie wiążącego polecenia przez spółkę zależną uczestniczącą w grupie spółek wymaga uprzedniej uchwały zarządu spółki zależnej oraz, że spółka zależna uczestnicząca w grupie spółek informuje spółkę dominującą o podjęciu uchwały o wykonaniu wiążącego polecenia albo uchwały o odmowie wykonania wiążącego polecenia. Z instytucją wiążącego polecenia pozostaje związana regulacja zawarta w art. 21<sup>5</sup> KSH, który wprowadza zwolnienie członka zarządu, rady nadzorczej, komisji rewizyjnej oraz likwidatora spółki zależnej z odpowiedzialności za szkody wyrządzone wykonaniem takiego wiążącego polecenia. W doktrynie wskazuje się, że „Komentowany przepis wprowadza generalne zwolnienie z odpowiedzialności odszkodowawczej wobec spółki za szkodę wyrządzoną wykonaniem wiążącego polecenia. Odpowiedzialność ta może wynikać z przepisów ogólnych (art. 415 lub 471 KC), jak i z przepisów szczególnych wskazanych wprost w komentowanym przepisie, tj. art. 293, 300<sup>125</sup> i 483 KSH (...) Zwolnienie to znajdzie zastosowanie jedynie wówczas, gdy wykonanie wiążącego polecenia nastąpiło przy dochowaniu należytej staranności wymaganej od członków organów, zgodnie z jego treścią, a jednocześnie wiążące polecenie wydane zostało zgodnie z wymogami stawianymi wiążącemu poleceniu (art. 21<sup>2</sup> KSH) oraz po podjęciu uchwały o jego wykonaniu (art. 21<sup>3</sup> KSH), dokonany przy braku przesłanek określonych w art. 21<sup>4</sup> § 1–3 KSH”<sup>682</sup>. Na mocy § 2 ww. artykułu, zwolnienie z odpowiedzialności za szkodę stosuje się odpowiednio do członka zarządu, rady nadzorczej, komisji rewizyjnej i likwidatora spółki dominującej działających w interesie grupy spółek.

Z zagadnieniem odpowiedzialności odszkodowawczej wiąże się także regulacja przewidziana w art. 21<sup>12</sup> - 21<sup>14</sup> KSH. Przepis art. 21<sup>12</sup> § 1 KSH ustanawia zasadę odpowiedzialności spółki dominującej wobec spółki zależnej za szkodę, która została wyrządzona wykonaniem wiążącego polecenia i która nie została naprawiona w terminie

<sup>681</sup> A. Opalski (red.) Kodeks spółek handlowych Tom IA. Spółki osobowe, Komentarz. Art. 1–36, Warszawa 2024, źródło: Legalis (12.02.25)

<sup>682</sup> Z. Jara (red.), Kodeks spółek handlowych. Komentarz. Wyd. 29, Warszawa 2025; źródło: Legalis (13.02.25)

wskazany w wiążącym poleceniu, chyba że nie ponosi winy. Z kolei w § 3 ww. artykułu uszczegółowiono, że odpowiedzialność spółki dominującej ustala się z uwzględnieniem obowiązku lojalności wobec spółki zależnej podczas wydawania i wykonania wiążącego polecenia. Jak wskazuje się w doktrynie: „Komentowany przepis wprowadza odpowiedzialność odszkodowawczą spółki dominującej za szkodę, jaką spółka zależna poniosła z faktu, iż wykonała wydane jej wiążące polecenie. Z tego tytułu do przesłanek odpowiedzialności zaliczyć należy wydanie przez spółkę dominującą wiążącego polecenia, wykonanie go przez spółkę zależną, fakt powstania szkody będącej bezpośrednim następstwem wykonania wiążącego polecenia oraz istnienie adekwatnego związku przyczynowego pomiędzy szkodą a wykonaniem wiążącego polecenia. Odpowiedzialność spółki dominującej opiera się również na winie tego podmiotu. Treść art. 21<sup>12</sup> § 1 *in fine* KSH wskazuje bezpośrednio, że spółka dominująca nie będzie ponosić tej odpowiedzialności, jeżeli nie można przypisać jej w tym zakresie zawinienia. Powód (spółka zależna) nie musi jednak, dochodząc swoich roszczeń, udowadniać przed sądem winy spółki dominującej. Ciężar dowodu, tak jak w ogólnych przypadkach dochodzenia roszczeń odszkodowawczych, jest tutaj przerzucony. Tym samym przepis wprowadza domniemanie winy spółki dominującej”<sup>683</sup>.

Dwie kolejne regulacje odnoszące się do odpowiedzialności spółki dominującej ujęto w art. 21<sup>13</sup> KSH, dotyczącym odpowiedzialności spółki dominującej za obniżenie wartości udziałów albo akcji, oraz w art. 21<sup>14</sup> KSH, który reguluje kwestie odpowiedzialności odszkodowawczej spółki dominującej wobec wierzycieli spółki zależnej. Względem tego pierwszego wskazuje się, że „Przepis art. 21<sup>13</sup> § 1 wiąże powstanie odpowiedzialności z faktem dysponowania przez spółkę dominującą, bezpośrednio lub pośrednio, większością głosów umożliwiającą podjęcie uchwały o uczestnictwie w grupie spółek oraz o zmianie umowy albo statutu spółki zależnej. Ustawodawca wprowadza w ten sposób wymóg kwalifikowanej zdolności do oddziaływania przez spółkę dominującą na spółkę zależną, związanej z możliwością doprowadzenia do zmiany ustroju tej spółki. Jednocześnie w art. 21<sup>13</sup> § 2 wprowadza się domniemanie, że spółka dominująca taką zdolność posiada, o ile bezpośrednio lub pośrednio reprezentuje w spółce zależnej co najmniej 75% kapitału zakładowego”<sup>684</sup>. Odpowiedzialność odszkodowawcza spółki dominującej wobec wierzycieli spółki zależnej uzależniona jest zaś od tego, by egzekucja przeciwko spółce zależnej

<sup>683</sup> P. Pinior, J.A. Strzępka (red.), Kodeks spółek handlowych. Komentarz, Warszawa 2024; źródło: Legalis (12.02.25)

<sup>684</sup> A. Opalski (red.) Kodeks spółek handlowych Tom IA. Spółki osobowe, Komentarz. Art. 1–36, Warszawa 2024; źródło: Legalis (12.02.25)

uczestniczącej w grupie spółek okazała się bezskuteczna. Wówczas spółka dominująca odpowiada za szkodę wyrządzoną wierzycielowi spółki zależnej, chyba że nie ponosi winy lub szkoda nie powstała w następstwie wykonania przez spółkę zależną wiążącego polecenia. W doktrynie wskazuje się, że: „Na tle pozostałych typów odpowiedzialności przewidzianych w art. 21<sup>12</sup> i 21<sup>13</sup> przepisy art. 21<sup>14</sup> § 1 wyróżniają się odmiennym rozkładem ciężaru dowodu w zakresie przesłanki związanej z realizacją wiążącego polecenia. Spółka dominująca odpowiada bowiem wobec wierzyciela spółki zależnej za wyrządzoną mu szkodę, chyba że szkoda nie powstała w następstwie wykonania przez spółkę zależną wiążącego polecenia. Ustawodawca formułuje tę przesłankę od strony negatywnej, nie zaś pozytywnej, jak w przypadku art. 21<sup>12</sup> i 21<sup>13</sup>, co prowadzi do wniosku o konieczności wykazania przez pozwanego (a nie powoda), że szkoda nie powstała w związku z wykonaniem wiążącego polecenia”<sup>685</sup>.

Omawiając ww. nowelizację należy również wskazać, że w art. 21<sup>16</sup> KSH wprowadzono wyłączenie, zgodnie z którym przepisów ustawy o spółce zależnej uczestniczącej w grupie spółek nie stosuje się do spółki publicznej; spółki, która jest spółką w likwidacji i rozpoczęła podział swego majątku albo jest spółką w upadłości oraz do spółki będącej podmiotem objętym nadzorem nad rynkiem finansowym w rozumieniu art. 1 ust. 2 ustawy z dnia 21 lipca 2006 r. o nadzorze nad rynkiem finansowym.

Wprowadzone przepisy stanowią niewątpliwie próbę rozwiązania części problemów zgłaszanych przez praktyków oraz doktrynę i stanowią formę reakcji ustawodawcy na postulowane w literaturze przedmiotu badań naukowych, wprowadzenie mechanizmów prawnych umożliwiających przejrzyste i efektywne funkcjonowanie holdingu. Stosunkowo krótki okres czas funkcjonowania tych przepisów nie pozwala jeszcze na formułowanie kategorycznej oceny odnośnie tego, czy i jakie pozytywne zmiany przedmiotowa regulacja przyniosła, w tym czy jest ona wystarczająca dla dalszego rozwoju instytucji holdingu oraz czy wykreowana tymi przepisami rzeczywistość gospodarcza zapewnia znacznie większą przewidywalność działań holdingu w obrocie gospodarczym. Sam fakt rozpoczęcia działań nakierowanych na stworzenie wyraźnych ram prawnych do funkcjonowania holdingu można jednak ocenić, jako pozytywny i umożliwiający dalszy rozwój tej regulacji, w tym eliminowanie rozwiązań wadliwych oraz ulepszanie obecnego *status quo*. Tym bardziej, że już wyrażane są głosy krytyczne wobec regulacji wprowadzonej w kształcie nadanym ww.

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<sup>685</sup> Ibidem.



nowelizacją<sup>686</sup>. Omawianą nowelizację należy więc traktować, jako początek procesu regulacji prawnej instytucji holdingu, a nie jako zamknięty etap. Otwarte pozostają też rozważania, czy zmiany legislacyjne nie powinny jednak iść w kierunku kompleksowej, a nie szczątkowej regulacji. Regulacja szczątkowa ze swej natury obarczona jest bowiem większym ryzykiem występowania problemów interpretacyjnych w stosowaniu odpowiednich norm prawa.

### **Porównanie międzynarodowych modeli regulacyjnych w obszarze funkcjonowania holdingów**

Kluczowym przy tym wydaje się spojrzenie na rozwiązania prawne stosowane w państwach wchodzących w skład Unii Europejskiej. I tak w Niemczech instytucja holdingu została rozwinięta w ramach rozbudowanego systemu prawa koncernowego (Konzernrecht), który charakteryzuje się stosunkowo wysoką precyzją regulacją relacji pomiędzy spółką dominującą a spółkami zależnymi. W niemieckim modelu stosuje się formalne umowy o zarządzanie (Beherrschungsvertrag) oraz umowy o przekazywanie zysków (Gewinnabführungsvertrag), które w sposób jednoznaczny określają obowiązki, uprawnienia jak również mechanizmy wpływające na formułowanie odpowiednich modeli nadzoru. Przyjęte rozwiązania nie tylko umożliwiają skuteczną centralizację decyzji, ale także nakładają na spółkę dominującą obowiązek przejęcia odpowiedzialności za zobowiązania spółek zależnych w określonych sytuacjach. Tym samym prawo obowiązujące w Republice Federalnej Niemiec w sposób jednoznaczny wskazuje na podmiot będący adresatem roszczeń. Precyzyjne uregulowania zawarte w niemieckim systemie prawnym zapewniają większą przejrzystość oraz ograniczają do minimum ryzyko nadużyć. To ostatnie jest szczególnie istotne w wymiarze ochrony interesów wierzycieli na co w ostatnich latach kładziony jest prawodawstwie Unii Europejskiej nacisk. Przyjęty przez władze Republiki Federalnej Niemiec model prawny stanowi przykład

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<sup>686</sup> zob. m.in. A. Opalski (red.) Kodeks spółek handlowych Tom IA. Spółki osobowe, Komentarz. Art. 1–36, Warszawa 2024, źródło: Legalis, gdzie wyrażono pogląd, iż „Regulacja prawa grup spółek zawarta w art. 21<sup>1</sup> i n. jest przedmiotem daleko idących kontrowersji w nauce i praktyce prawa. Od momentu ogłoszenia pierwszej wersji projektu ZmKSH z 9.2.2022 r. (wersja z 20.7.2020 r.) był on przedmiotem szerokiej i uzasadnionej krytyki w środowisku naukowym, które zgłaszało do niego zastrzeżenia o charakterze fundamentalnym, dotyczącym spójności modelu proponowanej regulacji prawa grup spółek oraz jego adekwatności do realiów funkcjonowania grup spółek w Polsce (por. szerzej uw. przed art. 21<sup>1</sup>, pkt V). Pomimo sprzeciwu środowiska naukowego (wyrażonego dobitnie w liście otwartym – zob. W sprawie projektu prawa grup spółek, Rzeczp. z 7.10.2020 r., s. A14) nowelizacja została uchwalona i weszła w życie 13.10.2022 r. Obawy zgłaszane przez środowisko naukowe zostały następnie potwierdzone w praktyce. Do 13.12.2023 r., a więc przez okres ponad roku obowiązywania nowej regulacji grup spółek, w rejestrze przedsiębiorców KRS zarejestrowano jedynie 16 spółek dominujących i ok. 80 spółek zależnych”.

efektywnego podejścia, które powinno stanowić inspirację dla polskich rozwiązań legislacyjnych.<sup>687</sup>

Kolejnym, mogącym mieć znaczenie dla generowania norm prawnych przez stronę polską w obszarze funkcjonowania holdingu jest francuski system regulacyjny. System ten, co charakterystyczne dla francuskiego systemu prawa jest znacznie mniej zcentralizowany niż ma to miejsce w przypadku przyjętych w Republice Federalnej Niemiec rozwiązań. Opiera się on na zasadzie „*intérêt du groupe*”, która nakłada na spółkę dominującą obowiązek wykazania, że podejmowane przez podmiot obrotu gospodarczego decyzje przynoszą za sobą korzyść dla całej grupy, a nie tylko i wyłącznie podmiotu nadrzędnego (w tym przypadku spółki dominującej). Przyjęta przez władze francuskie koncepcja wymaga, aby decyzje strategiczne były poparte przekonującymi argumentami ekonomicznymi, co umożliwia w efekcie ochronę interesów mniejszościowych oraz wierzycieli. Francuski model, oparty zarówno na przepisach Kodeksu Handlowego, jak i na rozbudowanym orzecznictwie, stawia nacisk na przejrzystość oraz odpowiedzialność w relacjach wewnątrz grup kapitałowych. Wskutek tak definiowanych działań, system ten minimalizuje ryzyko, że spółka dominująca będzie działać na niekorzyść spółek zależnych, co czyni go wartościowym przykładem dla krajów dążących do zwiększenia transparentności i ochrony interesów wszystkich uczestników rynku.<sup>688</sup>

Wiele wzorców prawnych zachowań w obszarze funkcjonowania holdingów można czerpać z włoskiego modelu prawnego „*direzione e coordinamento*” który charakteryzuje się dobrze określoną koordynacją działań pomiędzy „spółką matką” a „spółkami córkami”. Funkcjonowanie holdingu we Włoszech opiera się na silnie rozbudowanych mechanizmach raportowych oraz szczegółowych modelach kontroli wewnętrznej. Spółka dominująca ma obowiązek regularnego informowania spółek zależnych o każdej modyfikacji strategii, bieżących celach i zadaniach operacyjnych. W tak wygenerowanym modelu współdziałania, spółki zależne są partnerem dla spółki dominującej co umożliwia prowadzenie dialogu z pozycji opierającej się na współpracy nie zaś na możliwym dyktacie ze strony silniejszego. Jest to realizacja kursu na decentralizację władzy w holdingu przy zachowaniu władztwa w zakresie kwestii kluczowych, a zarazem odchodzenia od modelu dekoncentracji władzy. Pewna swoboda w realizacji działań wiąże się jednak z większą odpowiedzialnością. Nie zmienia to jednak faktu, iż pobudza to stronę innowacyjną „spółek zależnych”, sprzyja wypracowywaniu

<sup>687</sup> E. Schanze, *Konzernrecht in Deutschland. Eine Einführung*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019.

<sup>688</sup> B. Teyssié, *Les groupes de sociétés: Droit interne et droit international*, Presses Universitaires, Paris 2020, s. 90–103.

optymalnych rozwiązań. Wydaje się, iż model funkcjonowania holdingów we Włoszech można określić jako model kreatywny. Tak więc mechanizmy oraz narzędzia prawne będące elementem włoskiego systemu prawa w obszarze tworzenia, funkcjonowania w końcu zarządzania holdingami, umożliwiają bieżące monitorowanie wdrażanej polityki korporacyjnej. Model ten wyróżnia się znaczną elastycznością oraz, co równie istotne, silną adaptacją systemu kontroli w relacji do jednostek zależnych. Rozwiązania przyjęte we włoskim systemie prawnym są znacznie mniej sformalizowane niż niemieckie, czy też choć w mniejszym stopniu francuskie, wykazując przy tym co najmniej dobry poziom mechanizmów ochronnych opierających się na funkcjach kontrolnych, czy też nadzorczych, stanowiąc tym samym rodzaj platformy wyjściowej dla polskich decydentów odpowiedzialnych za wdrażanie prawa w tym obszarze. Analiza problemów badawczych w poruszanej przez autora materii w sposób jednoznaczny, choć uwzględniający sytuację zastaną w polskiej gospodarce, wskazuje na możliwość relatywnie szerokiej implementacji sprawdzonych rozwiązań do polskiego systemu prawnego. Zwłaszcza, że rozwiązania te pozostają w zgodności z normami prawa Unii Europejskiej i są wypracowane przez kluczowe dla funkcjonowania systemu prawnego Wspólnoty państw. Wprowadzenie poszczególnych, choć nie oderwanych od całości modeli, mogłoby przyczynić się do stworzenia bardziej jednolitego niż dotychczas, przejrzystego, w końcu również efektywnego systemu regulacyjnego. W znaczącym stopniu doprowadziłoby to do redukcji istniejącego ryzyka nadużyć, zarówno ze strony spółki dominującej, jak również spółek podległych. Nie bez znaczenia przy tym jest zwiększenie ochrony interesów wierzycieli oraz mniejszościowych akcjonariuszy.<sup>689</sup>

Istniejące w większości państw będących częścią Unii Europejskiej instrumenty prawne implementowane do polskiego porządku prawnego zwiększyłyby ochronę uczestników rynku, ograniczając zarazem istniejące dotychczas ryzyko nadużyć. Tak definiowane działania jednocześnie podniosłyby poziom przejrzystości w stosunkach wewnętrznych holdingu. Polski ustawodawca powinien rozważyć adaptację rozwiązań stosowanych w krajach takich jak Niemcy, Francja i Włochy. Niemiecki model koncernu umownego, oparty na precyzyjnych umowach o zarządzanie i przekazywanie zysków, stanowi przykład skutecznego narzędzia kontrolnego, które umożliwia wyraźne określenie granic odpowiedzialności. Francuska zasada „*intérêt du groupe*” natomiast, poprzez wymaganie uzasadnienia ekonomicznego dla podejmowanych decyzji, zwiększa ochronę interesów mniejszościowych. Włoski model

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<sup>689</sup> M. Nowak, *Comparative Corporate Group Regulations in Europe*, *European Business Law Review*, 2022, t. 33, nr 2, s. 112 – 130.

direzione e coordinamento kładzie zaś nacisk na elastyczność i bieżący monitoring działań, co umożliwia szybkie reagowanie na ewentualne nieprawidłowości. Adaptacja elementów tych modeli mogłaby znacząco przyczynić się do stworzenia spójnego i efektywnego systemu regulacyjnego, który ograniczałby ryzyko nadużyć oraz zwiększałby stabilność struktury holdingu<sup>690</sup>.

### **Zakończenie**

Ostatecznym celem reformy legislacyjnej w obszarze funkcjonowania holdingu w polskim systemie prawnym powinno być stworzenie spójnego interdyscyplinarnego systemu norm prawa, który integrowałby już istniejące przepisy prawa uwzględniając przy tym niezbędne konotacje ekonomiczne oraz zarządcze. Tylko kompleksowa synteza tych dziedzin umożliwi osiągnięcie harmonii między swobodą działalności gospodarczej a ochroną interesów wszystkich uczestników rynku. Prawo bowiem nie może być oderwane od realiów rynku, powinno również za zmianami tegoż nadążać. Stąd też działania legislatorów powinny być aktywne, często wyprzedzające zmiany a nie mocno reaktywne będące efektem zaniedbań. Wdrożenie mechanizmów monitoringu, audytu wewnętrznego oraz obowiązkowych umów zarządczych stanowi fundament, na którym opierać się będzie przyszły rozwój struktur holdingowych. Zintegrowany system prawny określający zachowania holdingu zapewni większą przejrzystość w podejmowaniu decyzji, kwestiach finansowych, w końcu przewidywalność oraz stabilność stosunków w ramach relacji wewnątrz korporacyjnych, jak również tych realizowanych na wolnym rynku. Postulowane przez autora publikacji zmiany legislacyjne mają na celu wygenerowanie odpowiedniego do wymagań współczesnego rynku spójnego, kompleksowego i efektywnego systemu regulacyjnego. Tylko wtedy pojawi się możliwość dynamicznego rozwój grup kapitałowych uwzględniającego zarazem konieczną ochronę interesów wierzycieli i akcjonariuszy mniejszościowych.

### **Streszczenie:**

Wysoka dynamika procesów globalizacyjnych dotyczy wszystkich sfer życia społecznego, w tym również gospodarki. Zarówno w sferze prywatnej, jak i państwowej dominującą pozycję na rynku zajmu potężne firmy o mieszanym kapitale posiadające liczne filie w kraju oraz poza

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<sup>690</sup> Ibidem, s. 112 – 130.

jego granicami. Badacze problemu uważają, iż z czasem to właśnie największe przedsiębiorstwa naszego globu, w tym energetyczne, transportowe wypracują własny model kultury strategicznej, który będzie wzorowany na podobnych rozwiązaniach przynależnych do tej pory jedynie państwu. Przykładów na poparcie tak sformułowanej tezy jest wiele, w tym choćby działalność Elona Muska, czy też strategia niegdyś w pełni japońskiej, obecnie zaś ponadnarodowej firmy, Sony. Autor artykułu Holding w prawie polskim: charakterystyka pojęcia, umocowanie normatywne, rola i znaczenie dla bezpieczeństwa polskiej gospodarki stara się przybliżyć znaczenie jakie Holdingi mogą odegrać w ramach polskiego (w przyszłości szerzej europejskiego) rynku gospodarczego. Szczególną rolę w tym względzie odegra spójny, odpowiadający wymaganiom normatywnym UE system prawny, który zdaniem autora publikacji powinien stać się fundamentem pod budowę nowoczesnej, spełniającej oczekiwania w stosunku do globalnych wyzwań gospodarki.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Spółki, prawo, handel, usługi

#### **Key words:**

Companies, law, information, services

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