

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SUBJECTIVITY OF THE EU AND THE CASE OF UKRAINE IN RELATIONS WITH NATO, USA AND RUSSIA

Глобальна та регіональна суб'єктність ЄС на прикладі взаємин України з НАТО, США та Росією

ЄС позиціонує себе у світі як регіональна європейська спільнота з амбітними цілями стати більш впливовим суб'єктом глобальних міжнародних відносин. В контексті «реальної політики» це має означати бажання ЄС перетворитися в справжній, більш інтегрований, реально єдиний та більш самостійний центр впливу. Чи є ЄС насправді таким амбітним актором глобальних відносин? Часткову відповідь на це має дати приклад взаємодії ЄС з Україною як рефлексія на взаємини України з НАТО, США та Росією.

The EU, where we can find four G8 members out of eight and two out of five constant UN Security Council members, the largest integrative community in the world with a perspective of federalization, is doomed to play a super-active role in the process of constructing of a multi-polar world by being one of its leaders. In this respect the EU is tending to be a global player in order to fulfill such mission successfully. At the same time, this is not accidentally, that the question «are Europeans ready for global tasks?» is still more than acute inside European community of political experts nowadays [1]. The EU global subjectivity has been sharply tested by the EU-USA, the EU-NATO, and the EU-Russia relations. At the same time, the European Union itself with its Neighbourhood Policy and Common Foreign and Security Policy has been making a huge impact on the pan-European and Euro-Atlantic relations especially after the last enlargement. The EU in a capacity of the undisputed center of power at least in Europe appeared to be even more dramatic

contributor into international situation in the Central and Eastern Europe, including the Danube region, than, let us say, NATO. For example, it is the EU, not NATO, which constituted the new borders in Eastern Europe during the process of May 1, 2004 enlargement, closed the borders between the new EU members and the new EU neighbors, including Ukraine.

The last one in the context of the EU Neighbourhood policy and out of it can also be a test for the EU on the way to the global activity. As a result of the recent EU enlargement with its territorial restrictions due to the uncertain roots of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine has appeared in the middle of a «gray zone» which is arising on the East of the European Union. Such «gray zones» are products of the dissolution of the previous centers of power where the «vacuum of power» occurred, and as a result, objects of the unfinished competition of the old and new global powers for the geopolitical domination over such zones.

For the EU, NATO and Russia the issue of the «gray» neighbourhood in Europe is not just a simple sound. The international space between the enlarged EU and NATO, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, attracts a serious interest, concern and involvement of the USA as well, even when the US geographically seems to be far away from Central and Eastern Europe. Of course, there is not only the issue of common borders, but a larger scope of problems which are currently under consideration in Kiev, Brussels, Moscow and Washington, especially when geographical factor plays almost no role for the White House, but political motivation and global national interests a lot. Each of the actors has its own vision of the future developments in such countries like Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In this respect, the EU is able to intervene as an equal global and regional player into the practical discourse and geopolitical tensions over Western NIS and especially Ukraine. Such tensions, where the EU prefers to remain in the shadow, are developing primarily between NATO and USA on the one hand, and Russia on the other. At the same time, more active geopolitical efforts of the EU could

give a chance for more dialog, rather than just a passive support of great powers' unilateral monologues around such «gray zone». On the one hand, the EU, despite all recent critical approaches towards the US, is interested in continuing strategic partnership with America and rely on it within NATO (especially when there is no serious alternative for NATO in Europe and transformation of the Euro-Atlantic collective security architecture into just European one is far away from the reality). On the other, the EU is also interested to have a goodwill and stable neighborhood political and economic relations with Russia, especially in the frame of the acute issue of providing energy security for the EU market in the frame of the Energy Charter [2] and not only. At the same time, being in between of the USA, NATO and Russia when the geopolitical future of Ukraine is concerned, the EU shows almost no geopolitical ambitions which looks totally opposite when the policy of NATO, for example, is concerned.

Of course, there is a big difference in concrete mechanisms when talking about geopolitical ambitions of any single country and international units, like the EU and NATO. Contrarily to the USA and Russia, the EU and NATO does have a potential ability and capacity to integrate new territories and states in themselves and by doing this, to fill the «vacuum of power.» Ukraine can be at least in theory the part of the EU and NATO as an independent and sovereign state, but can not be part of the USA and Russia. Here we can stress another important issue: the Western allies have more chances to be more successful in integrating Ukraine, because here we have the EU and NATO on the one side, when Russia only is trying to propose its mechanism of re-integration in a look of a «mini»-CIS: Single Economic Space. Meanwhile, its is more or less evident, that NATO, as one of the integrative mechanisms of the West, shows much more geopolitical ambitions and appetites, than the EU.

The EU and NATO appeared to be in the vanguard of the international processes, which are shaping the Europe's future. At the same time, tactical approaches to the EU's and NATO's

Eastern borders and towards Ukraine are having a slightly different meaning in both Brussels' headquarters. Usually, NATO and the EU are accepted in Ukraine, and not only in Ukraine, as a one homogenous West, what is true from the conceptual point of view (even when NATO has a military and the EU has economic priorities). At the same time, there is a key difference between NATO and the EU in relations with Ukraine: NATO, where military and geopolitical issues are basically concerned, is more pro-Ukrainian because of the US global position on the one hand, and Russian factor on the other; there is no USA in the EU, that is why the EU is more selfish and less pro-Ukrainian because of its own high-standard economic top-interests and Russian dependence on energy and common military neighborhood. Plus, the issue of Ukraine in relations between the USA and the EU itself became the part of the contradicting never-ending story on European Eurocentrism and European Atlantism (though, what also resembles and reminds the case of Turkey in relations between NATO, the USA and the EEC/EU).

Anyway, taking into consideration this difference and from the tactical point of view, for Ukraine it is easier to get a full NATO membership than to join the EU. At the same time and in this respect, a NATO membership may be seen as a key step of Ukraine on the way to the EU and may facilitate this process. The European integration sometimes is seen as a continuation and integral part of the Euro-Atlantic integration. It is true and not true at the same time. «Yes» for some Central and Eastern European countries, who became NATO members first and members of the EU only after. «No» for Turkey, which became a NATO member a number of decades ago and desperately has been waiting for the EU membership almost the same period of time? Of course, there were different international situations — «Cold war» and «Post-Cold war» periods — when the decisions on the NATO and the EU enlargements have been taken. But still, two organizations are so close to each other and basically cooperate as a one instrument that for the outsiders there is almost no conceptual difference

between tactical membership in the EU and membership in NATO on the way to the strategic aim — to be part of the democratic and stable Europe.

Of course, there is an institutional difference for those European countries that are members of NATO, but not members of the EU, and visa versa, but no actual difference for those who are outside so far from both organizations. Even for the neutral Austria or Sweden, for example, there is no urgent need to be part of NATO: NATO will heavily remain ignorant to the any military threat to these countries. They already are inside NATO's zone of responsibility. For Ukraine it could be also the case: to remain neutral, but to continue its way to the EU by building Europe inside its frontiers. But today, when to join NATO within next 4-5 years is much more realistic than to join the EU even within next 15-20 years, for Ukraine is important to make this crucial step into democratic European space by means of NATO membership which also requires not only military, but also political obligations to develop democracy and market economy.

That is why the question of Ukraine inside NATO discusses much faster and is real than the question of Ukraine inside the EU. That is why for Russia the issue of Ukraine in NATO looks so painful from many points of view, but the most painful fact is, that Ukraine may join NATO and go out from the Russian zone of influence. Russia is more flexible and relaxed when talking about Ukraine and the EU, because there is nothing to panic, because the EU does not open itself for Ukraine institutionally not only now, but in a foreseeable future. It could also be interesting to witness a Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine in the moment, when the issues of its membership in the EU are real.

Of course, the EU is more complicated as a single unit than NATO. Here is another important aspect of the comparison between the integrative abilities of the EU and NATO, what, actually, makes NATO objectively more flexible in its strategy of enlargement. When talking about NATO enlargement, we are stressing basically the issue of Alliance's «widening». At the same time, the issue of the EU enlargement touches upon the painful

issue of not only «widening», but also «deepening» of integration. As we know, in this respect the EU faces more acute problems, than NATO. That is why the question of new potential members, as well as preparatory stage of negotiations and work to be done, poses so many problems to the EU members. The story with the EU Constitution is only stressing out the EU inner problems and hard decision-making mechanism.

Acute problems inside the EU, which are going much further than just discourse on the Constitution, are showing that the future membership of Ukraine in the EU is under a big question not only because of political reasons or geopolitical choice of «widening», but because of the concrete parameters of «deepening»: economic, financial, market, labor, social, foreign policy complications. The perspective of the next round of the EU enlargement with some Balkan states and Turkey is also not resolved. At the same time, it is also clear, that to cover more European space by next rounds of enlargement at any price obviously is not among top priorities of the EU.

The opposite approach has been shown by NATO since the middle of XX century, where the idea to cover as much geopolitical space as possible at any price prevail over the necessary criteria of membership. The case of unstable South Caucasus and Georgia is more than instructive, because NATO is not in favor of new members, which have unresolved national or international military and territorial disputes. At the same time, the reason to include Georgia to NATO, what the US is pushing almost on the edge of hysteria now, looks to be the same as it was with Turkey and Greece back to 1952: the level of democracy and military instability on the territory of potential candidate is nothing in comparing to the geopolitical aim. Basically, in theory of the communist threat to Turkey and Greece, which made the US to protect neighboring to the USSR democracies by inclusion them into NATO in early 1950-ies, the situation changed to the Russian threat to the Georgian independence in early 2000-th. In practice, the US both in the middle of XX century and in the beginning of XXI resolving the same objective: to push Russia

out of the Wider Black Sea region by stretching the NATO zone of responsibility till the Caspian Sea. In this sense, NATO does not fear the dangerous challenge from the unstable region. And this is in the situation, when the Russia Chief of Staff Yuriy Balyevskiy openly proclaimed in October 2006, that NATO is a cause of the worsened relations between Russia and Georgia [3], explaining the source of the bilateral crisis which put both sides on the edge of the war in Fall 2006. The EU showed another approach to the issue of enlargement during the period of EEC. The Turkey is still outside the EU and Greece was admitted for the membership only when the real political situation for democracy was elaborated in this Balkan country in the beginning of 1980-ies.

Of course, once again we must to point out, that NATO is basically a military block, when the EU is more economic, and what is in the interests of the military organization, may not be in the interests of the economic union. Anyway, the key question is arising: is it possible to be a global power without clear geopolitical ambitions? The answer is probably «yes», taking into consideration, that the EU may play a leading role in Europe without necessity of the immediate integration of such European countries, like Ukraine, into this organization. Especially, when the European integration as a process is much wider than just the EU membership. In this respect, the EU still has a lot of potential and capacity to stretch the stability and democracy across Europe, including Russia, Ukraine and other Newly Independent States. Among such acute directions and tools are the issues of civil society building, establishing rule of law and strengthening market economy in a wider European zone. By developing its Neighbourhood policy, the EU is interested in such agendas to share with its non-EU neighbors, what also could be evaluated as an expression of the EU geopolitical interest and even ambition in the Eastern European dimension. The same is true to the interest of the EU to make the visa regime with Ukraine easier and flexible in near-future, to establish the free trade zone with Ukraine, what will be possible when Ukraine obtains the WTO membership. The fact, that the EU

Neighbourhood policy may be treated as a geopolitical ambition of the EU could be confirmed by the fact, that it meets some obstacle and opposition from the side of another EU neighbour — Russian Federation. In the middle of the EU's geopolitical ambition is concentration of will, wish, decisions, challenges and risks, because the competitive ambition is meeting nearly the same level of opposition from the other side.

The case of the EU-Russian relations and Western NIS in between of them are part of the geopolitical tensions between the United Europe and Russia, even though less sharp than in between of Russia and NATO. The European integration in the core of the process basically has no global political aims, but European values to be spread in Europe as a political factor is making global and regional politics. The strength of European values oriented on democracy is the value to be implemented in Ukraine, as far as Ukraine has constitutionally proclaimed itself as a democratic country. The issue of democratic values is painful for the Russian Federation itself, what is the subject for criticism from the side of European Commission and Europarlament. When the issue of democracy is on the top of the EU-Russian dialog in connection to the so-called Russian «Near abroad», the most hot topic of contradictions is the estimation of Presidential or Parliamentary elections in Western NIS. In terms of sharing common democratic values, the EU is interested to incorporate the post-Soviet space into one democratic European chain, but refuses to act more aggressive by proposing institutional membership in order not to worsen relations with Russia. So, in this situation the EU faces some geopolitical restrictions when is trying to deal with the Russian sphere of influence.

At the same time, the EU has recently stretched its borders to the Black Sea, what will be confirmed by institutional membership of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007. Both countries went out of the political influence of Russia in 1990-ies, what damaged any source of contradiction between the EU and Russia. In the sphere of regional security the EU and Russia are developing

alike approaches: both centers of power are interested in keeping the Baltic-Black Sea region in a stability, especially when the EU has the common border with Russia in the Baltic region and strong energy interconnection. The future Novorossiisk-Burgas-Adrianopolis oil route and Northern Baltic gas pipe line between Russia and Germany will only strengthen such interconnection.

The most evident regional problem and contradiction: situation in Moldova and Transnistria. Both the EU and Russia has different approaches to the issue of Transnistria. At the same time, both Brussels and Moscow are interested in peaceful resolution of the conflict between Chisinau and Tiraspol, though Brussels is basically concerned by protection of its boundaries in South-Eastern Europe, when Russia is playing a long-term geopolitical game in the post-Soviet space. In this issue the foreign policy of Romania towards Moldova may be crucial in identifying future EU-Russian relation in the Wider Black Sea and neighboring regions. Anyway, the geopolitical appearance of the EU on the Black Sea shores makes the EU as a new regional player with the stabilization mission, what must be accepted positively for the security conditions in the region.

In this respect the EU may play a new stabilizing role in the region in order to escape the center-power tensions between the USA and Russia and keep the local conflicts in the Wider Black Sea region at least in the «frozen» conditions. Here Russia may play on the EU-US contradictions, including the NATO dilemmas, dependency of the EU on Russian energy and more than cautious attitudes of the EU towards inviting Black Sea Newly Independent States from the Russian sphere of influence into the United Europe. Russia may use the passive Black Sea dimension of the EU policy in the regional deterrence by banning American penetration into the Wider Black Sea region.

At the same time, rapprochement of the EU and Russia has another background. The interdependence of Russia and the EU on Russian oil and gas and the EU financial possibilities to

buy Russian energy makes both sides as important partners for the long-term period. Ukraine plays the key role in connecting Russian gas with the European market. The gas transit crisis between Russia and Ukraine at the end of 2005-beginning 2006 showed a deep threat for the energy security in Europe. The EU was shocked by the temporal instability in the gas supply, what made the EU to think more about its energy security. And not only in the direction of possible diversification of energy dependence on Russia, especially when it is quite hard to find the alternative sources in the situation, when the energy consumption will be constantly increasing in the future. In this case the EU is interested to have a stable transit of Russian gas via the territory of Ukraine in the future. Obviously, the EU will be interested to negotiate pragmatically with Russia directly, taking non-economic interests on the back stage of relations with Russia and other NIS. Lack of geopolitical ambitions in front of the economic pragmatism may lead to the most unpleasant scenario for Ukraine, when the EU promises Russia not to give Ukraine membership perspectives, not intervene into Russian-Ukrainian relations and «close eyes» on the level of democracy in Ukraine. In its turn, Russia guarantees stability of the Russian gas transit via the territory of Ukraine. A weakening of the EU «democratic pressure» to push democratic reforms in Ukraine, may create the perfect outside conditions for strengthening non-democratic sides of any Ukrainian regime, which, under this scenario, becomes untouchable for the EU and Russia inside Ukraine; Ukraine plays on the side of Russian international interests. In this scheme the EU strengthens its energy security, will not be bothered by Ukrainian claims for membership anymore, Russia keeps Ukraine in its sphere of influence up to sharing and privatizing Ukrainian gas and oil transport systems, non-democratic Ukrainian regime makes its business under cover on the pragmatic basis both with the EU and Russia. Such scenario is less favorable for the democratically oriented Ukrainian society and Ukrainian Eurooptimists, which are not interested to have Ukraine as just a passive object of pragmatic negotiations between

the EU and Russia by sacrificing the freedom and democracy for the material stability of post-Soviet oligarchs and energy security of the EU at any price. At the same time, such scenario has a strong potential to become more realistic (and hope not the only one) in near future.

The issue of interconnection between Russia and the EU in the sphere of providing energy security in a broad scale will also be the test for the EU on its ability to act as a global player, because the issue of Russian gas and oil touches upon not only energy itself. The task to create a stable European energy security architecture in Europe including Russia and other NIS will be increasing its influence on political, economic and military equilibrium in a whole Trans-Atlantic area. The process of «widening» and especially «deepening» of the EU in forthcoming years, the dividing line between «old» and «new» Europe as well as the future role of the USA and Russia in Europe is highly dependent on the common approach of the EU to the issue of providing European energy security. In this sense, one should pay more attention to the risk, that the EU is under a threat of poor maintaining the common approach to the future energy security. Energy ambitions of some EU leaders, namely Germany, may create complications in identifying the EU common foreign and security policy towards the EU outsiders: Russia, Ukraine and the US. That is why the European Commission published on 8 March 2006 a Green Paper on developing a common, coherent European Energy Policy, which is aimed at developing the common approach for all EU members. [4] The unresolved instability on the European energy market may weaken the EU's regional and global positions, because it is problematic to pursue the balance of power with Russia and the USA when defending European positions on regional and global levels. When Russia (as well as USA) is acting as a one single player with the one adopted strategy and tactics, the EU — which «is not one, it is many» — is far away from the homogeneity in decision making, especially in foreign policy. The famous EU democratic collegiality towards any acute international agenda may not work

in situation, when the clash of interests inside the EU between particular EU members is a result of manifesting concrete national interests in energy sphere. At this stage, the EU members prefer to jump from the EU level of collegiality with its restrictions against egoistic (in a positive natural meaning) national interests to the bilateral level to make deals there, especially with the non-EU members. In this sense, on the one hand, the common power of the EU on the international level is decreasing, sometimes initiating inside crisis of relations, on the other, the positions of the concrete EU country may be strengthened separately both inside and outside EU.

Recently developed energy relations between Russia and Germany are the bright example of the above mentioned case. The close «energetic» relations between Germany and Russia on the issue of creating new direct gas line in the Baltic region without evident Ukrainian involvement, worries also Poland, three Baltic states and Sweden. The further rapprochement of Russia and Germany (which became already traditional for the last 6-7 years) in the frame of Shtokman deposit [5] and strengthened energy tandem Germany-France in October 2006 [6], may deepen the dissatisfaction inside the EU on the line «Old Europe»-«New Europe,» which became evident time ago over the disputes on the US role in Europe and in the world as a whole. In a result, the close relations between Germany, France and Russia, especially in the energy field, will provoke the US and its «New» European supporters to destabilize the rapprochement of this three.

The «New Europe» which is in favor for the American political and military presence on the European continent will be interested to support all American initiatives to counter-balance the «Old Europe»-Russian initiatives. Ukraine will also be interested to develop its relations with the USA in order to strengthen its chances to join NATO, especially when the political situation in Ukraine will be in favor of NATO membership and when the EU, basically led by Germany and France, will prefer to sacrifice Ukrainian anticipations to become the EU member in favor of stable energy

relations with Russia as the guarantee that Ukraine remains in the Russian sphere of influence. Turkey will also be interested to have the USA as deeper in the Black Sea region as possible to counter-balance Russia and the EU, especially after anti-Turkish manifestation of France, which is directed against potential EU and current NATO member.

Anyway, the EU has taken a challenge in order to strengthen its positions as a global power time ago and by means of enlargement and wider integration proves it acts as a powerful attracting pole for the international community. The lack of the global strategy is a natural factor for the international organization, which consists of 25 strategies. At the same time, it is not a problem, but rather an opportunity for the EU to be one of the leaders of the world, which is full of clashes. It may be against tasks of the common foreign and security policy of the EU, but it is involved into global and regional competition with other global powers. Ukraine may be seen as a state, kind of a geopolitical puzzle for the EU, which strongly contributes into geopolitical subjectivity of the EU being in between Russia, on the one side, and NATO and US, on the other. By concentrating on Ukraine, the EU may intervene into the global competition of the USA and Russia. Paradoxically, but the EU is already involved and it does not matter whether it is active in integrative initiatives with Ukraine or staying passive, refraining from any constructive political steps in relations with Kiev. In the first case, the EU is supporting the Western dimension of the Ukrainian foreign policy by opening the EU membership perspective in the eyes of Ukraine, helps the US to push the NATO agenda for Ukraine and assists Ukraine in getting away from the political orbit of Moscow. In the second one, the EU silently ignores the Western intentions of Ukraine and strengthens ties of Kiev and Moscow on bilateral level. The global agenda is also in hands of Brussels and it is its responsibility which scenario to choose.

Annotations

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