

ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

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The Baltic Sea region is one of the most interesting example of an international relation case. It covers north part of Europe and consists of nine countries having long history - over thousand years of development. There was time of war and time of peace. From one point of view you may say that the Baltic Region used to be divided into West Europe and the Eastern Europe. From another point of view you may see the Baltic Region as a zone where the West countries have met the East European countries. Contemporary, we should appreciate that we can enjoy living in peace. However, we need something more - we should collaborate with one another for preserving and improving the marine environment of the Baltic Sea, for increase of our common welfare, for being able to solve our regional problems in a peaceful manner.

The presentation is based on the research conducted at the Institute of International Relations, Warsaw University in 1992-1995 on the Baltic Region. In addition, recent events have been also considered and included if they went in line with the subject. The main research issue was the complex interdependence of environmental, political, economic and social dimensions of international relationships in the region.

Environmental issues

This paper lists the key environmental topics in the region, such as discharges and emissions from point sources and diffuse sources; discharges and air pollution from ships; combating spillages of oil and other harmful substances. These issues are presented in the context of international interest and against the background of economic impact. Data on pollution load to the Baltic Sea is provided in tables: pollution load per unit square of a basin (the Baltic Sea consists of nine basins), and land-base pollution load per unit square of drainage basing of a coastal country.

Economic issues

The economic changes in Central & Eastern European countries are shown against the background of the transformation process in the whole Europe. Although, the economic matter was foundation of the transformation process, the main role has been played by political and social issues.

The total Gross Domestic Product of the Baltic Sea countries indicates capability of the region. Both the share of population and the share of GDP in the region displays the disparate among the Baltic Sea countries. Performance of joint environmental programs provide excellent opportunities to practice regional co-operation in the field of economy. Moreover, European integration in a framework of the European Union is likely to bring the Baltic Sea region into a quite new more favourable stage. On the other hand the regional cooperation experiences would make significant contribution to the European integration practices.

Political issues

During the recent fifty years the Baltic Sea countries moved from political isolation through principles of peace existing towards close co-operation to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea. Although, the Baltic region is taken as a peripheral one, it is involved in global interests either. For example, Germany is undoubted European power, and Russia claims to be a global powerful. When Poland, probably in the nearest future, and the Baltic states, in a bit further future, join the European Union, the multinational relation in the Baltic Region would turn into bilateral one - between the EU and Russia.

While the discussion on enlargement of the NATO a clear evidence arose that Russia being unable to solve its internal economic and social problems attempts to move them on international level. That would not be favourable for development of the regional co-operation.

Ends

The regional co-operation is necessary in order to treat successfully environmental issues of the Baltic Sea, since none single state manage it separately.

The regional level is a life-size of effective joint action - the global approach is too broad and it easy losses slight differences which often may sound to the regional community as important ones.

Economic circumstances, political and social mind, and environmental requirements should be carefully considered while developing of any program of protection of the Baltic marine environment if it is due to be performed in a successful way.