THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEMS FOR THE REGIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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Introduction

The aim of the report is to present the regional security systems (RSSs) in South East Europe (SEE) and to analyze their contribution for the regional security. The main research tasks are formulated as follows: a) presenting the concept of regional security; b) analysing the characteristics of the Southeast European region; c) presenting the role of several regional security systems for ensuring security in all its dimensions in South East Europe.

There are many definitions about security. In a very broad sense it can be defined as absence of threats to something valuable. These valuable things – tangible or intangible refers to all spheres of the public life that is why the security at national and international level has many aspects such as: political security, economic and financial security, social security, energy security, military security, environmental security etc. This paper presents the contribution of the RSSs for all of these aspects of the security at regional level.

The focus is on the regional security. This report considers "region" as a given geographic area and especially South East Europe, encompassing a certain number of states which show similarities in regard to their historical, economic, political, social and cultural development.

Region and Regional Security

The concept of region is broad. Actually there is still no clear definition of the term "region". Due to its multifaceted nature, it certainly has natural, cultural, economic, political, and social dimension. At the same time, this term occupies a wide range of phenomena from small parts of countries to huge continental interstate formations (Vukovic, Kochetkov, 2017, p. 76). No matter the level regional differentiation can be based on geographic, economic, political, cultural or other characteristics.

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The regions can be categorized in the range of regionalization and they could be divided into:

- Micro-regions, which are usually defined as territorial units that are smaller than the state but larger than municipalities. These regions typically represent provinces in a country.
- The cross-border region, which are composed of several micro-regions and form a bigger region beyond national boundaries. Most cross-border regions are with economic tends or functional cooperation, to address specific questions and issues that are common to this region.
- Sub-regions, which consist of several states that are part of a larger macro-regional units. These regions often have specific geographic or historical roots as also a cultural or linguistic similarity. In addition, they can reflect the political and economic integration within the macro region.
- Macro-regions, represent large territorial unit consisting of a number of different states. They are similar to sub-regions because they have a common geographical and historical characteristic, but they are larger territorially. Examples of these regions are: the European Union, South-American or Southeast Asia region, etc. Countries covered by these regions have a wide range of common political, economic and socio-cultural issues (Behr and Juha, 2011, cited in Vukovic, Kochetkov, 2017, p. 79).

The OECD accepts that there are many ways to identify a region within a country: according to its administrative boundaries, whether it represents an electoral district, according to the space where people travel to work, according to the geographical features or instead economic functions, etc.

The regional approach is also applied to the study of different matters and processes at the global level. One of these matters is the security.

The regional security is a joint responsibility of sovereign states in a certain geographic, economic or political space. It is a component of international security, which includes also state security and world security (Yonchev, 2008, p. 207).

Security Features of the Southeast European Region

Several factors determine the dynamics of regional security in the Southeast European region, such as: geographic location, historical background, economic development, religious and cultural diversity, lack of strategic raw materials etc.

Geographic location – The territory of the Southeast European region is a "bridge" between Europe and Asia. The main roads between two continents passes through the territory of the countries located here. This location gives them opportunities for economic development but it puts different security challenges, such as: migration flows, organized crime etc.

*Historical background*s – The countries located in the region have the same historical heritage and face the same challenges of their contemporary development. All of them within different time of period were part of the Ottoman empire. They were liberated during the XIX and the beginning of the XX century. Almost all of them were part of the Soviet sphere of influence during the second half of the XX century. After the end of the Cold war a period of transition of their political and economic systems started. Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia have become part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), where Greece and Turkey have been members since 1952. Albania and Montenegro joined later. The countries, except Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, are the EU-member states.

Economic development – The local economies have a different degree of development. The leading economic power in the region is Turkey. This country is member of G-20. According to the World Bank's overview Turkey's economic and social development performance since 2000 has been impressive. Macroeconomic and fiscal stability were at the heart of its performance, leading to increased employment and incomes and making Turkey an upper-middle-income country. (The World Bank in Turkey, 2018, not page) The American policy in 2018 caused troubles for Turkish economy mainly related to devaluation of the local currency.

The economic indicators of the other countries have also shown an upward tendency for the past several years. Similar to 2016, GDP of Bulgaria grew by 3.6% in 2017. This trend continued in 2018. Unemployment declined from 11.3% in January 2013 to 5.0% for the third quarter of 2018.

The World Bank has predicted an economic growth in the Western Balkans countries in 2018. Kosovo and Albania are expected to grow at 4.0%. At 3.8%, Montenegro's growth is projected to be 1 percentage point higher, although still lower than previous year. Growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to be stable at an estimated 3.2%. The analysis points out that Serbia's economy rebounded to 3.5% growth after last year's weather-related slowdown. Macedonia's growth also rebounded to 2.5%, as investor confidence was restored (Western Balkans Regular Economic Report, 2018, p. 4).

Religious and cultural diversity – The region is not only a border between two continents. Its geographic location makes it a border between the two main religious in the world – Christianity and Islam. This fact is a crucial determinant of the security and stability of the region. Many of the conflicts in the past and the contemporary frozen conflicts are based exactly on this religious and ethnic heterogeneity.

Strategic raw materials – The countries located in the region are not rich of the strategic raw resources. They are dependent on the natural gas supplies from other countries, mainly Russia. One of their strategic causes is diversification of the energy resources.

Regional Security Systems in South East Europe

The states in the Southeastern Europe participate in several regional organizations, which play an important role for the development of the region and for the ensuring its security. These organizations have different number of members and scope of influence. Some of them (e.g. NATO, OSCE) are really very powerful and covers a vast territory including SEE whereas others (e.g. The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, The South-East European Cooperation Process) encompass only the countries in the Southeast European region.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a political and military alliance of countries from Europe and North America founded in 1949 after the signing of the Washington Treaty by the first 12 member states. During the era of the Cold War its main goal was to contained Soviet geopolitical and military expansion.

Since the end of the Cold War, similar to UN peacekeeping activity, the NATO has undergone a major transformation due to the collapse of the bipolar model of governance of the world and the emerge of new and unpredictable threats to the security of its members. In 1994, the Alliance established the "Partnership for Peace" program and 25 countries from Central Europe and Central Asia were associated to it. The increase in the number of members is another aspect of the changes (Dimitrov, 2015, p. 44).

Today, having 29 member states, the Alliance provides a unique link between the two continents, enabling them to consult and cooperate in the field of defence and security, and conduct multinational crisis-management operations together.

The NATO has been actively involved in the processes in the South East Europe since the beginning of the early 90-s of the XX century. The NATO's earliest engagement with the region dates back to the Oslo Ministerial meeting in June 1992, in the early stages of the Bosnian war. At the Ministerial, NATO foreign ministers expressed their willingness to support, on a case-by-case basis, some peacekeeping tasks under the responsibility of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the precursor to the OSCE), by contributing assets and expertise. (Watkins and Gligorijevic, 2007, not page) Then the Alliance participated in several initiatives, such as: Operation Joint Endeavour (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo Force (KFOR). One of the NATO's most controversial operations in the region, despite the declared humane motives, remains the Allied Force Operation in the spring of 1999.

Spanning the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok *the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)* has 57 participating States. It makes it the biggest regional security organization nowadays.

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, taken place in the late 60-s and in the early 70-s of the past century, was a predecessor of the OSCE.

Its establishment was related to the international security challenges after the end of the Second World War, arising from the confrontation of the USSR, on the one hand, and the USA and its allies, on the other. (Dimitrov, 2015, p. 77) The historian Prof. Jordan Baev calls the CSCE a unique forum of the representatives of 35 States, which had the responsibility to formulate the principles and mechanisms for building a new regional system of collective security and for gradually overcoming the post-war division between Eastern and Western Europe. (Baev, 2010, p. 245)

From 1 January 1995 the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was named Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Since the early 90-s, the CSCE/OSCE has been actively engaged in the issues of peace, security and the process of democratization in the South East Europe. Special attention is given to the countries located in the Western Balkans – Albania and the republics of the ex-Yugoslavia – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia and the autonomous region of Kosovo, which proclaimed its independence in 2008.

During these years the presence and the activity of the OSCE generally have had a positive impact on the achievement of peace and security in the region. For the realization of its objectives it has implemented various mechanisms in the three main dimensions of security – military, political, economic and environmental and human rights. Together with other international organizations or alone, it participates in initiatives aimed at increasing stability in the region (e.g. Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and different so called "field operations" in the republics in ex-Yugoslavia).

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is a multilateral political and economic initiative, which started with the signing of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the region, on 25 June 1992. With the entry into force of its Charter on 1 May 1999, BSEC acquired international legal identity and was transformed into a full-fledged regional economic organization – the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (OBSEC). Today the Organization has 12 member states

Under Art. 3 of the Charter of the OBSEC the mission of the organization is:
- to act in a spirit of friendship and good neighborliness and enhance mutual respect and confidence, dialogue and cooperation among the member states;
- to further develop and diversify bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the basis of the principles and rules of international law;
- to act for improving the business environment and promoting individual and collective initiative of the enterprises and companies directly involved in the process of economic cooperation;

- to develop economic collaboration in a manner not contravening the international obligations of the member states including those deriving from their membership to international organizations or institutions of an integrative or other nature and not preventing the promotion of their relations with third parties;
- to take into account the specific economic conditions and interests of the member states involved;
- to further encourage the participation in the BSEC process of economic cooperation of other interested states, international economic and financial institutions as well as enterprises and companies.

In accordance with the agreed principles for attaining a sustained growth of their national economies and the social well-being of their peoples, the member states cooperate in the following areas: trade and economic development; banking and finance; communications; energy; transport; agriculture and agro-industry; health care and pharmaceutics; environmental protection; tourism; science and technology; exchange of statistical data and economic information; collaboration between customs and other border authorities; human contacts; combating organized crime, illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and radioactive materials, all acts of terrorism and illegal migration, or in any other related area.

The South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) was initiated in 1996 at the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SEECP held in Sofia, Bulgaria. The aim of this regional cooperation forum is strengthening the good-neighborly relations among all participants from South East Europe (SEE), and transforming this region into an area of peace, security, stability and cooperation, with the main goal of full integration of SEE into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

The Charter on Good-Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in SEE, adopted by the heads of state and government of the participating countries in Bucharest in 2000, is the essential document of the SEECP. According this document the main objectives and mechanisms of cooperation are: a) enhancement of political and security cooperation, b) fostering economic cooperation and c) enlargement of cooperation in the fields of human dimension, democracy, justice and combating illegal activities.

The enhancement of political and security cooperation are based on:
- promotion of an intensive political dialogue, through regular meetings of the Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Political Directors of the participating countries, as well as sectorial inter-governmental meetings on subjects of common interest, as it may be decided;
- encouragement of the inter-parliamentary dialogue, of the direct contacts among the representatives of the civil society, non-governmental organizations and cultural and scientific personalities;

- enhanced regional cooperation in the field of security, including the South-East European Defense Ministerial framework and the Multinational Peace Force -South-Eastern Europe as instruments for building confidence and security in the region;
- conclusion between the participating countries of multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements, as well as the promotion of domestic measures to overcome the existing potential for conflict;
- exchanges of views conducting consultations and, as appropriate, taking joint initiatives on matters relevant to the stability, security and good-neighbourly relations in the area, including the implementation of the 10 principles of the Helsinki Final Act;
- promotion of confidence building measures in the area and, in particular, the normalization of the relations between all participating countries. While preserving and building upon the existing arrangements, examination within the SEECP mechanisms or in other relevant fora of proposals and ideas for additional measures in order to respond to specific regional needs for prevention of conflicts and easing of tensions, including observation missions, peace-keeping operations or crisis management activities;
- active participation to the efforts developed by the international community aiming at consolidating stability and security in the South-Eastern Europe, both in the planning and implementation phases.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is another framework for regional cooperation which is closely related to the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). This framework engages RCC participants from the South East Europe, members of the international community and donors on subjects which are important and of interest to the SEE, with a view to promoting and advancing the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the region.

Within the framework of the general political guidelines set by the SEECP, the RCC works to develop and maintain a political climate of dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance and openness towards cooperation, with a view to enabling the implementation of regional programmes aimed at economic and social development to the benefit of the people in the region.

Conclusion

Several regional organizations with different number of member states have impact on the security of the Southeast European region. All of them apply a comprehensive approach to security. It is not only a military matter but it is also a matter of economic development, energy independence, political stability, protection of human rights etc.

The main initiatives of these organizations are aimed at fostering dialogue on the main challenges for the region, consolidation of positions and cooperation between states. That is why the role of these RSS will increase in the future due to the different interests of their member-states and the need of negotiations and combining efforts.

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Abstract

The Southeast European region is a highly interesting subject of study in regard to the security. It has a lot of specifics, which are determined by its geographic characteristics, the historical development of the countries located in it and in its immediate proximity, their current socio-economic development, and above all their ethnic, religious and cultural background. The purpose of the report is to present the main regional security systems (RSS) and their contribution to the regional security.

Key words: security, regional security, regional security systems

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