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V4 COUNTRIES ISSUES IN THE WORKS OF UKRAINIAN AND FOREIGN RESEARCHERS

The given article is devoted to the analysis of separate studies made by Ukrainian and Foreign researchers on formation and activity of the alliance known as Visegrad Countries. Particularly, the article is related to the brief review of the works devoted to the problem that is mentioned above.

Key words: *Visegrad Countries, Central and Eastern Europe, subregional integration, regional associations.*

Because of the historical development and contemporary international situation, it is relevant to address issues relating to the existence and activities of diverse organizations at both regional and international scale.

In particular, the prime example in this context is the association known as the “Visegrad Countries (Alliance of Four)”, which have been playing an important role in Central and Eastern Europe during the last decade of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Moreover, no less important is the fact that the alliance of the Visegrad Countries is the evident model for our country.

Therefore, it is appropriate to study the issue of “Visegrad Group”, which has not lost its relevance so far, since the time of its formation. This is evidenced by the interest in the topic among Ukrainian and foreign researchers.

Hence well-known is the fact that in the late 80ies communist Eastern Europe reached a turning point, which in turn was caused by changes in the policy of the Soviet Union, namely the reduction of military potential, the abandonment of “Brezhnev Doctrine,” which

was aimed at direct interference in the internal affairs of the satellite countries, and first attempts at democratization of the political system [8, p. 94].

The first Eastern European country where the communists lost the most votes in elections in July 1989 was Poland. Consequently, in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe have also been initiated irreversible processes that led to democratic revolutions and the fall of communist regimes. There took place development of young democracies, which embarked on the path of reforms aimed at transition of the socialist camp to political pluralism and market economy.

Because of velvet revolutions and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe formed a space devoid of Communist influence and with it the idea of reunification of all Europeans under one roof. These trends have encouraged closer cooperation between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In parallel with these processes, takes place adaptation of political, economic and legal environment of the outlined region to the standards of Western Europe. In the course of these changes, there has been some differentiation among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Depending on the success of the reforms, the leaders have become the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, which on February 15, 1991 in Visegrad signed a “Declaration of Cooperation of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and Hungary.” The purpose of the signing of this document was European integration, which entailed the formation of the so-called Visegrad Countries [8, p. 95].

Therefore, once again, it is obvious that the creation and activities of “Visegrad Four” and the European integration processes in Central and Eastern Europe attracted interest of both domestic and foreign researchers, in order to study and analyze these processes throughout the existence of the Visegrad Group.

Thus, G. Shmanko and E. Kish in their article referred to reasons for subregional integration of Eastern European countries. Authors highlighted the clear goals that have set itself “Visegrad Three” (later Four). Along the way, attention is drawn to the role of the Visegrad Countries in joining the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. [9]

Substantial in terms of the study of democratic processes in Eastern Europe is the work of N. Bokalo and S.Trochimchuk. The authors explore the social and economic relations of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe during post-communist period, present information about the state structure, etc. The study highlights the essence of the democratic process, with their emphasis on the Visegrad Group. [2]

The problems mentioned are thoroughly investigated in the digest of the international “round table”, “The experience of “Visegrad Four” on the road to the EU: Opportunities for Ukraine.” The digest is dedicated to challenging and promising aspects of Ukraine’s relations with the EU, in particular the countries of the Visegrad Group, and with it the strategy of Ukraine on the path to European integration. [5]

V.P. Gazin and S.A. Kopylov also consider certain moments of the abovementioned topics in their research. They determine the deepening of integration processes in Europe in the late 80’ies - early 90’ies of the twentieth century and analyze the processes associated with the emergence of the international community, etc. [4].

H. Zelenko in his research highlights the Visegrad Group as a variant of subregional integration. The author distinguishes the stages of existence of the Visegrad Group and highlights the reasons for the expansion of cooperation between Ukraine and the Visegrad Countries [6].

E. Kish in his monograph comprehensively examines the issue of international and regional cooperation. In particular, this issue is discussed in the light of the Visegrad Four. The author points out that the aim of this cooperation is to strengthen the states by means of attraction of their regions to the integration process. The paper also raised problems of cross-border cooperation and its role for Ukraine [7].

Analysis of the integration of the Visegrad association to the EU and NATO, the crisis of the Czech-Slovak and Hungarian-Slovak international relations and the impact of this crisis on the viability of the Visegrad Four examines in his work V.I. Andreyko [1].

An interesting viewpoint of “the Visegrad Four” as a model for cooperation between countries offers P.Vahner. The author notes

that regional cooperation requires clear concept, and draws parallels between the GUAM and the “Visegrad Four” [3].

I. Rendek devoted his research to the issue of transformation of the privatization process in a country through the prism of post-communism. The research offers the analogy that the economy of the region in the late 80-ies of XX century was in a crisis similar to the crisis of the 30’s of the twentieth century in the USA, but through a series of reforms, the introduction of a market economy, primarily through privatization, implementation of management, they have managed to overcome negative economic situation in the Visegrad Countries [13].

Researcher G .Mysezhnikov highlights the formation of the party system in the Visegrad Countries in 2005-2006. The author stresses that due to the reforms, these countries were able to overcome post-communist reverberation, and embarked on the path of democracy, the credit for which was their accession to the EU. In addition, the author points to major trends and ways of development of political systems of the Visegrad Group [12].

Work of S. Birch offers a similar study of the problem of the electoral and political system in the Visegrad Countries. The author in her article offers mainly statistical examination of the aforementioned problems, which is also very appropriate because the issue is viewed not from the traditional perspective, but using statistical methods [10].

Meaningful and interesting work that is devoted to the Visegrad Countries is the monograph of L. Lukashek. Analyzing the mentioned problem, the author gives assessment of the geopolitical situation in Central and Eastern European post-communist countries. He also sets the goal for Visegrad Four and its role in the region. Much attention he paid to the integration process and identified them as the main objectives of the “Visegrad Four” [11].

Thus, given the described works, we can conclude that the problem of the formation and activities of the “Visegrad Countries” remains relevant, as evidenced by the large number of specific studies, as well as a number of works of general character, although it is worth noting that the latter in the national historical science are not many.

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Данная статья посвящена анализу отдельных исследований украинских и зарубежных исследователей, которые затрагивают проблемы образования и деятельности объединения известного как «Вышеградская четверка». В частности, основной текст работы связан с кратким обзором трудов посвященных упомянутой проблеме.

Ключевые слова: «Вышеградская четверка», Центрально-Восточная Европа, субрегиональная интеграция, региональные объединения.

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