



## INTEGRAL SPACES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: POSSIBLE TRENDS OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION IN THE BALTIC REGION

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**Abstract.** Regional integration oriented transformations in the Baltic region, as well as the unified social, economic and technological space formation processes are described and analysed. These processes are comprehended as an important factor of further social, economic and technological modernization in the Baltic countries, as a precondition for more intensive and active integration of Baltic economic systems into the European and global economic and technological structures, as well as a knowledge-based society and knowledge economy creation factor.

The arguments determining the idea of the Baltic region community and unity, as well as opposing arguments are evaluated. The main principles of integration in the Baltic region, as well as the possible integration strategies are analysed. The unified social, economic and technological space in the Baltic region as a research area is described.

**Keywords:** integration; transformation; unified social, economic, technological space; Baltic region.

### 1. Introduction

The modern knowledge-based society and knowledge economy creation is the priority for the development processes in the European Union.

Knowledge-based society and knowledge economy creation could be defined as a *complex transformation* with the qualitatively new societal life oriented priorities. It means, that *the transformation processes* representing the new quality oriented changes in the society and in the social economic life are an important part of the political, social, economic, technological development processes in the European Union in general.

Transformation processes could be defined as an important *object* of the scientific research on the European integration, enlargement of the European Union, on the European culture and social, economic and political development in Europe.

There are some *traditional* and *the new definitions* of the transformation processes.

*The popular traditional definition of the transformation or transition processes* in the society describes

the transformation as *the complex changes from non-democratic system with planning economy into the democratic system with market economy*. This definition traditionally is used for description of the development processes in the Central and Eastern Europe during the last 15–20 years: the political, social and economic systems in the Central and East European countries were transformed into the modern democratic open societies and market oriented economies. The enlargement of the European Union, the integration of the Central and East European countries into the European Union and the spread of the NATO into the East could be defined as an especially important result of the transformation processes in the Central and Eastern Europe.

Nowadays, in the enlarged European Union, a complex process of the new transformations representing the new phase of the political, social, economic modernization emerged. The priorities of these transformations are the further activities of integration processes in the whole space of the European Union and the intensive creation of the knowledge-based society and global market oriented knowledge economy. It means,

that *the new definition* of the transformation processes, especially- transformation processes in the European Union, could be used: in this case the transformation processes could be described as *qualitatively new European society creation oriented complex changes covering all spheres of political, social, economic life and technological development in the European Union*.

An important direction of the transformations in the enlarged European Union is *the active interregional and internal regional political, social, economic and technological integration and formation of the unified social, economic and technological spaces*. This direction could be defined as *transformations oriented towards regional integration* and represents some activities towards the creation of knowledge-based society and knowledge economy in various regions of the European Union, as well as in the European Union in general.

*Regional integration oriented transformations* could be described as typical for various regions of the European Union. These transformations could be characterized as typical for the Baltic region, too: it means, that the possibilities of regional political, social, economic and technological integration and the formation of an integral social, economic and technological space in the Baltic region could be analyzed as a typical example representing the regional and interregional integration processes in various regions of the European Union and in Europe in general.

Transformations in the European Union oriented towards regional integration, including integral spaces formation oriented transformations in the Baltic region, could be defined as an important precondition for further development of qualitatively new society in the Baltic countries.

Integral space formation oriented transformations in the Baltic region could be defined as *a complicated scientific research area*. The main research priorities in this area are the following: the preparation of the concept of the Baltic region as a whole; the complex analysis of the arguments determining the idea of the Baltic region integrity and unity, and the complex analysis of the opposing arguments to this idea; the formation of regulating and self-regulating mechanisms, the social, economic, technological strategies for the Baltic region.

The following material is designed to examine these research priorities.

## **2. The Baltic region as the specific regional system in the European Union and its system indicators: centripetal and centrifugal forces**

The Baltic region including all three Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, as well as political, social and economic development processes in this region could be defined as *an important object of the scientific research and practice oriented projects* on European integration, enlargement of the European Union, the changes in the society, economy and culture in the Central and Eastern Europe, as well as future oriented relations in the system “West-East” (Baltic Postcolonialism 2006; The Baltic States... 2005; Lieven 1995; Melnikas 1997, 1999, 2002).

Development processes in the Baltic region could be defined as *an important factor of complex societal modernization in the Baltic countries and in the Central and Eastern Europe in general*.

Nowadays, in the Baltic region, a complex process of political, economic and social transformation emerged, representing the spread of democratic relations, orientation towards the priorities of the universal person's worth, and also the internationalization of political, economic, technological, social and cultural development, as well as the knowledge-based society and knowledge economy creation (Brakman *et al.* 2006; Castells 2005, 2006, 2007; Lewis 2002; Tomlinson 2002).

The changes in the Baltic region represent *the typical trends* of the Baltic countries development processes in the context of the enlargement of the European Union, as well as in the context of the modernization processes in Europe in general. This context could be defined as *the new transformations oriented context* (The Globalization... 1997; Heywood 1997; Johnson, Turner 2006; Hofbauer 2004; Lavingne 1995; Parker 2005; Polanyi 2002).

Globalization processes, as well as knowledge-based society creation and the enlargement of the European Union are important factors of the changes in the Baltic region (Hix 2006; Johnson, Turner 2006; Melnikas, Reichelt 2004; Pollert 1999; Huntington 1998; McQueen 2001).

Perspective views toward the Baltic countries should be connected with the condition, that the transformation processes in the Baltic region should occur in stages to create conditions for the formation of *an integral social, economic and technological space in the Baltic region*.

Apart from that, that the Baltic region is *not yet* unified in the technology, economic, and social spheres, there remain the proper conditions for the formation of that type of space. These conditions allow the Baltic countries issues to be viewed as those of *system* development, especially because these issues are remarkably relevant in the context of European integration and further development of the enlarged European Union. At this point it is noted, that the more active and intensive further integration of the Baltic countries into the social, economic and technological systems of the European Union, the spread of NATO into the East, as well as further international activities and co-operation problems of the Baltic countries with the partners in the global spaces can constructively be solved only then, if the Baltic region forms a new type of *inter-regional integration and co-operation mechanisms*.

The inter-Baltic countries integration cannot be separated from the formation of a unified social, economic and technological space. It is far more detailed, comprehending the complexity and duality of the formation of such a space, to discuss the array of questions which affect the Baltic region on the basis of its' being a system, as well as on the Baltic countries unified development details.

*The multidimensional conception of the Baltic region as a whole* represents some possibilities for the formation of a unified social, economic and technological space. The main idea of this concept is *the multidimensional evaluation* of the development factors and processes in the Baltic countries.

The concept of the Baltic region as a whole is related to ethnic, social, cultural, political and economic development process *varieties*, as well as the formation of *evaluation criteria* for this region as a whole. The basic condition, which must be followed for understanding the Baltic region as a system, is that the Baltic region must be understood as *a whole* together with the characteristic differences and signs of internal conflicts. Also, these signs in the Baltic region are very clear; the analysis of these signs is a crucial link to understanding the Baltic region as a system.

Understanding that the Baltic region - the people residing and their group whole or community - expresses common real goal and unity, we can conclude that the Baltic region is a system, based on several viewpoints:

- as a whole expressing various internal and external regulation subjects,
- as people and the whole group expressing and implementing various goals and interests,

- as a political, social, economic, or other organizational whole,
- as a formally and informally structured whole,
- as a part of larger geopolitical, economic and other structures,
- as a system having real internal ties, an accumulated social culture, sharing ethnic, historical, political, and economic similarities.

The aforementioned views represent the variety of the Baltic region as a whole, reflecting aspects which show the regions unity, as well as internal conflicts necessary to its development.

In the functioning course of every system, there are two types of forces which represent themselves in various forms – *centripetal and centrifugal*. This team of forces reflects the two system development tendencies, supplementing one another, in relation to that

- the system expresses itself as a unified, constant and inseparable organism,
- the systems separate parts express themselves, to a great or lesser degree of freedom, in respect of those rules and limits which condition the goals, tasks, and interests of the general system as a whole.

The logic behind reflected conceptions of centripetal and centrifugal forces can be used in evaluation of political, social and economic development processes in the Baltic region. Assuming that political, social, and economic development as well as transformation processes, were conditioned by two rather opposing and supplementing tendencies in the past, are conditioned now and will be conditioned in the future:

- the formation of the Baltic region as a geopolitical, social, cultural and economic community, while the political, social and economic developments act as much in the Baltic region as in the separate Baltic countries is the Baltic region's *community* and the spread of the *internal integration whole* of the Baltic region,
- the development of the whole Baltic region comprised of separate Baltic countries, while ruled by political, social, and economic development is the *affirmation of every country's internal priorities* and the Baltic region as *averagely integrated* and only formally expressing the spread as separate whole communities.

Both of these tendencies are based on a real Baltic region as a geopolitical, social, cultural and economic community formation.

### 3. Arguments determining the idea of the Baltic region community and unity

The basic reasons in favour of the idea of the Baltic region as a *geopolitical, social and economic community* are the following:

1. The shared *geography* of the Baltic countries, signifying the similarities and unity of the Baltic countries in the geographic respect.
2. The similarities of *historic culture* of the Baltic countries, expressing that:
  - the historical development of the Baltic countries has accumulated many similar factors and facts, indicating analogous reasons as well as clear connections in time,
  - the societal development of the Baltic countries is based on mentality, tradition and living style similarities,
  - the same historic cultural environment was based on very similar *historical* events, indicating a common cultural history of the Baltic countries within the effects of the former; they were especially those which were related to this region's development in the Russian Empire until 1918, as well as those related to this region's development in the USSR from 1940 until 1990.
3. The shared *political* development of the Baltic countries, expressing that the Baltic countries unified and continue to unify along as much real as imaginary *external* dangers; these dangers were and remain to be related to potential political, economic and cultural environment invasions and aggression in view of the Baltic countries (the Baltic community has experienced many painful historical lessons in relation to negative views towards any aggression or invasion with respect to them: this experience expresses itself as a unifying factor of the whole Baltic region, and has special political meaning); external danger is one of the basic Baltic countries' political, and military defence co-operation stimuli,
  - the Baltic countries at this time have similar political goals relating to relations with the larger and more influential world countries and international organizations; these political goals include, first of all, guarantees in the areas of security and stability, and they are the Baltic region's motive for political unity,
  - the larger and more influential of international political subjects view towards the Baltic region is essentially understood as a unified international political, economic and military defence object.
4. The shared *economic* development of the Baltic countries indicates that
  - the Baltic countries show a very similar natural, technological, legal, social, cultural, political, and other factors of their economic development: in view of the world economic structure, within the whole Baltic region a very similar economic structure exists, and all the Baltic countries need, essentially, the same level of economic development (especially similarities in work load and quality, as well as in work culture), and it is characteristic of all the Baltic countries, essentially, the same economic reforms as well as economic development problems,
  - any large modern economic or technological program can be successfully implemented taking only the *whole* Baltic region: any of the Baltic countries is too small for the implementation of a large project, and their markets are too small, therefore, realistic economic or technological advancement in various economic spheres must take place in *all* of the Baltic countries simultaneously (at this point, it is noted that an attempt to localise large economic or technological projects in the separate countries at the same time would also cause their ineffectiveness: only the implementation of a complete set of projects can be comprehended as a modern economic criteria viewpoint toward an effective result),
  - the Baltic region is valued as a united international economic situation.
5. The common *social* background of the Baltic countries indicates that
  - the Baltic countries communities' social structures, cultural levels and ethnicity show great similarities,
  - social problems are characteristic of the Baltic countries, relating to the spreading social differentiation and polarization in society, and also problems relating to the fact that the Baltic countries' social structure and cultural levels are inadequate for a forming economic structure and the extent of economic declines (the Baltic countries, in their social structural respect, are not ready for drastic economic and technological changes).
6. The shared *problematic* tendencies of the Baltic countries and their development in the view of European integration and international co-operation indicates that the Baltic countries raise problems relating to tendencies of the new European integration and international co-operation: these problems

are *general* to the whole Baltic region, including those in the areas of economic and social development and require a view which takes the Baltic region as a *whole*: the aforementioned problems are the following:

- the problem of political, economic and humanitarian *support* in the Baltic region is related to the fact that there must be that real and effective *initial* support for European integration and international co-operation conditions, upon which opportunities would be created for further spread of international integration orientation processes,
- the spread of the *sphere of influence* of the larger world countries and political and economic organizations or other change problems directly affect the Baltic region as a whole.

The aforementioned, as well as some other reasons reflect on the most important arguments allowing that the Baltic region should be regarded as a clear geopolitical, social, cultural, and economic community. It is also noted that the opposing arguments cannot be ignored, indicating arguments that oppose the possibilities of the Baltic region being a community and a whole.

#### 4. Opposing arguments to the idea of the Baltic region being a community

The major arguments opposing the Baltic region community as a whole are:

1. The *geographic* variety of the Baltic countries, indicating the formation of separate geographic conditions affecting geopolitical, economic, as well as strategic military situations; the geographic variety of the separate Baltic countries is not as clear as the similarities, however, the existing differences can objectively be used to oppose the community of the Baltic region and the idea of unity.
2. The *historic cultural* differences indicate that particular Baltic countries amassed various differing historic cultural traditions, existing in the past and currently within the societies mentalities development:
  - separate nationalities rule the different Baltic countries, having separate cultures, languages, and traditions,
  - within the Baltic countries, there is an inconsistent variety of Christian *culture* development: this indicates variations in Christian mentality within the Baltic region,
  - within the separate countries and regions, there have been unequal effects of various *russifica-*

*tions, polonizations, germanizations, scandinavizations*, and or other similar influences, which are the basis of differences in ethnic cultural integration,

- within the particular Baltic countries and regions, there have historically been different economic structures, various business priorities, and there have existed many different viewpoints through various societal levels towards economic, social, and political conditions: this shows a rather clear difference within the Baltic region (these differences, in part, support differences between historic, political, economic, and social life traditions),
  - the separate Baltic countries and regions have historically formed very different *ethnic* resident structures,
  - a rather different national community territorial dispersion was and still is characteristic of the separate Baltic countries and regions: the dispersion throughout the Baltic region territories was and remains incongruous, as much in the quantitative respect as in the social leveling respect; the ethnic resident structure, as well as the differences in national community territorial dispersion support rather clear historic cultural distinctions between the Baltic countries,
  - the particular Baltic countries and regions differ rather drastically in their community *social* structures, and this supports long-term residential formation of traditions.
3. The *political* differences in the Baltic countries indicate that:
    - the specific political features are characteristic of every country, proving that the difference in political goals and regulations is not consistent with the political orientation of the Baltic region community as a whole,
    - the orientation of the larger and more influential of the world's countries toward the Baltic countries may differ little: these differences could be due to many reasons relating to the variety of their interests in the Baltic countries: the existence of those differences also indicates the differences in politics between the Baltic countries in general,
    - the Baltic countries, as a part of their region and as international political and economic subjects, are in fact *competitors*: the political competition between the Baltic countries shows that the region does not display itself as being a unified system.

4. The *economic* specificity of the Baltic countries indicating that they have, in the economic respect, in the view of one another, clear *competitive* positions, which were created by the following surroundings:
    - the Baltic countries continue to maintain similar economics and economic structures: it is necessary for a particular nation's economies that their branch structures, production force development level, labour productivity and quality, specialization, as well as manufactured product assortments be very similar; this similarity greatly continues to limit the domestic economic addition and co-operation possibilities and at the same time creates conditions for the appearance of stiff competition as much within the Baltic region, as abroad,
    - the Baltic countries have not had a tradition of economic co-operation: as much up until soviet times (until 1940) as under the USSR conditions, the internal economic co-operation in the Baltic region was very little (during USSR times, every Baltic republic had many economic ties with various USSR regions, including those beyond the Baltic region, however those economic ties were formed and kept working exceptionally under the USSR central planning and controlling mechanisms); the lack of experience and traditions for creating and keeping internal economic ties within the Baltic region expresses itself as one of the preconditions for the current economic competition between the Baltic countries,
    - the very obvious current competition between the Baltic countries expresses that each nation strives to represent the economic requirements of the whole region and to attract potential investments for those projects and programs, which essentially would conceal the necessity for use of the Baltic region as a whole: in this respect, it is noted that the Baltic countries compete amongst themselves as investment, as well as economic support attractors for the Baltic region,
    - the real working economic development stimulating mechanisms in each of the Baltic countries, are largely geared towards co-operation with Western countries, rather than towards co-operation within the Baltic region: this greatly limits the partnership and co-operation of the Baltic countries, at the same time, strengthening interregional competition; this competition, being that of the interregional partnership and co-operation are not developed, negatively affects the possibilities of the Baltic region as a whole, to successfully compete in worldly markets.
  5. The *social* specificity of the Baltic countries indicating that each country's communities display a rather clear isolation.
  6. The *problematic* peculiarities with respect to European integration and international co-operation, indicate that in each Baltic country, there exists a priority of very clear directly related problems, and general Baltic region or Baltic community problems are not always considered priority.
- One of the characteristics of the Baltic region, influencing the integration process problems and complexity of the region as a whole, is that none of the Baltic countries has abilities and basis to be the *leader* of the integration process, and more so of the Baltic region:
- in the *quantity* respect, (territory, number of residents, natural resources, amassed capital, national products, military and economic power, scientific technical potential, and other parameters evaluating quantity) all the Baltic countries are more or less similar and are seen as weak countries, with small economic and productive power,
  - in the *quality* respect, (quality bases representing the community, quality of life, economic level, policy regulations, transformation and reform effectiveness, world image, and other quality indicators) all the Baltic countries are also seen as very similar and not having any basis to lead with respect to the others.
- The lack of having a leader country in the Baltic region is due to fact that the integration process creates a lack of *attraction nuclei*, which would be the basis for mobilizing and goal-driven integration process efforts.

### **5. The formation of the regulating and self-regulating mechanisms for the Baltic region as a system**

The understanding of the Baltic region's development problems is permanently tied to the formation and implementation of those *regulating and self-regulating mechanisms*, which are designated to guarantee the effectiveness of the region's complex geopolitical, social, cultural and economic system spread. The formation and implementation of these mechanisms require the naming and evaluation of the most important regulating *subjects*, whose interests, in respect of the Baltic region as a system, raising *goals* could be the content for forming a regulating process and regulating mechanisms. This means that the essential question is the comprehension and naming of the regulating subjects and their sought-after goals and interests, as well as the

most significant regulating subject priority goals and interest evaluation (Parsons 2001; Muenkler 2005).

The variety of regulating subjects and their goals and interests in the Baltic region is an important factor of the formation of regulating and self-regulating mechanisms for the integration in the Baltic region. Any geopolitical, social, cultural and economic system development goals, as well as their primary interests, one way and another, represent those *real regulating subjects*, which form and realize the *real development strategy*. In this sense, it is very important to comprehend the whole of those economic, political, as well as other structures, organizations, and institutions (formal and informal), which actually fulfill, or have the potential to fulfill, the functions of the *Baltic region's development regulating subjects*.

The real and potential regulating subjects in the Baltic region are various, and are classified according to many criteria.

The classification of the regulating subjects best reflects the variety of classifications upon whose basis it would be possible to describe the subjects, considering their goals and interests and various characteristics. For this reason, it would be best to single out the most important regulating subject goals and interests according to *indicator groups* and classify the subjects on the basis of goals and interests.

The most important goal and interest indicator groups of the subjects are considered to be the following:

1. Indicators, representing the *spatial* characteristics of regulating subject goals and interests:
  - goals and interests forming within and affecting the region,
  - goals and interests affecting the region which form outside of the region,
  - goals and interests forming in and affecting different parts within the region.
2. Indicators, representing the various *natures* of goals and interests:
  - political goals and interests,
  - military strategic goals and interests,
  - economic goals and interests,
  - social, cultural and other goals and interests.
3. Indicators, representing the *global* expression of goals and interests:
  - goals and interests of various global levels and dimensions,
  - local goals and interests of various levels and dimensions (the local goals and interests can be chosen on the basis of various criteria).

4. Indicators, representing the expression of goals and interests *in time*:
  - constant or long-term goals and interests,
  - one-time or short-term goals and interests,
  - regularly or irregularly expressing goals and interests.
5. Indicators, representing *formal and informal* goals and interests:
  - formal and informal goals and interests of various formal structures,
  - goals and interests of various informal structures.

Regulating structures can also be classified by other indicators as well.

It is necessary to notice that the naming and evaluating of the region's regulating subjects, including the question of comprehending the primary development goals and interests, is very *complicated*. This is related to various factors, including:

- that the Baltic region expresses various political and economic forces, which rather markedly affect the whole region as much as the separate countries; these forces distinguish the differences and the contrary of their goals and interests, therefore, these forces' large scale activity would cause the *instability*, and various *internal conflict risks* of the Baltic region's geopolitical, social, cultural and economic systems,
- the real regional development regulating subjects essentially represent those true political, economic and social *minorities*, in most cases, however, they are able to convince the majority portion of society that they are able to represent the society's majority: this creates situations where the factual goals and interests do not coincide at all with the declared goals and interests, and this could strengthen the opposition between various societal groups, leaders, and members; all this increases the danger of social confrontation and polarization,
- the regulating subjects of the Baltic region which condition the development can actually be, or are, related to various political and economic forces, working on a more *global* scale than just the Baltic region; this means that various realising goals and interests can express themselves as *reflections* of the actual more global goals and interests,
- that among the actual regulating subjects, there can also be various *informal* structures; this circumstance complicates the comprehension of the expressing goals and interests, and the evaluation of the development of the Baltic region as a system,

- that various marked views of the separate Baltic countries exist – ethnic, political, economic and other; this is due to the rather wide belief that various *local* natures can appear in the separate Baltic countries.

The circumstances presented reflect the variety of geopolitical, social, cultural and economic system regulating subjects and their goals and interests; comprehension of the latter supports the complexity of evaluation problems on the whole of regulating subjects, as well as the seriousness of the problem of solving the questions of the Baltic region's political, economic and social development regulation.

Every geopolitical, social, cultural and economic system development's condition is the effective functioning of regulation and self-regulation mechanisms. This condition is also true in the case of the Baltic region: this means that it is necessary to comprehend the most important appropriate regulating and self-regulating mechanisms formation and improvement *principles*.

The following are considered to be the most important formation and improvement mechanism principles:

1. The *bio-, social- and cultural ecological changes* principle of the region's development, expressing:
  - that the Baltic region must be comprehended as a complete *biosocial ecosystem*, integrating various biological and social subsystems which exist in the region; this comprehension could guarantee that the Baltic region will be viewed as a geopolitical, social, cultural and economic community, and this could be the basis for the implementing of the effective regulating and self-regulating mechanisms,
  - that the regional biosocial ecosystem development direction and effectiveness is due to a specific unique *community culture*, whose basis is the implementation of the *adaptation* of people, community, and surrounding biological and social environment, expressing various changes in the environment and community: thanks to the community culture, the regulating and self-regulating means are regulations towards biological, social environment, and community protection and preservation, as well as change; the community culture could cause internal *harmony* and *biosocial balance* in the region,
  - that the accumulated *biosocial culture*, integrating *unique* biological and social cultures, must be protected and preserved, expressing the unity, continuity, irreplaceability, and internal harmony of the Baltic region's biosocial content,
2. The *humanitarian and democratic* principles of the region's development, expressing:
  - that the development regulating and self-regulating mechanisms must be unconditionally geared towards the general human-valuing priorities; the comprehension and implementation of the latter must be the basis to activate regulating functions and to perform self-regulating acts in all political, social and economic development directions,
  - that it is necessary to base regulating and self-regulating mechanisms on actual, and not artistic or "demonstrative" democratic statutes: the implementation of democratic statutes must be related to *unity of legal duty and responsibility*, including that actions must guarantee *harmony* and *balance* of goals and interests, which represent various groups within the society,
  - that regulating and self-regulating mechanisms must be spread by such means that forced means be eliminated from the practice: in this sense, *non-forcible* democratic priority statutes can be mentioned,
  - that the region development's humanization and democratization must include all political, social, cultural and economic development directions.
3. The *innovative changes and intellectualization* principles of the region's development express:
  - that the regulation and self-regulation mechanisms must be oriented towards all innovative modernization and improvement of science and technological advances, as well as the newest technological basis,
  - that the regulating and self-regulating mechanisms must promote the intellectualization of the community, implementation of a high qualification level, and the formation of those types of social and economic structures which would be geared towards a culture of high-level labour and life, work load and quality improvement and overall betterment of living standards: it is necessary to implement regulation and self-regulation means allowing the creation of modern production and service areas, via high innovation, technology, and qualification indicators.



The listed principles express essential statutes, affecting the formation of the region development's regulating and self-regulating mechanisms and their further spread: it is important to base and effectively target various regulating and self-regulating *methods*, as well as to complete various regulating and self-regulating *functions* during the practical creation, improvement and realization. From the Baltic region's aspect, the target means of *strategic planning, projection, and programming* have special priority, attempting to solve actual *integration process promoting and spreading* assignments: it is these means which could be the basis to directionally regulate and control the development of the geopolitical, social, cultural and economic systems.

## 6. The problems of strategic planning and programming of the Baltic region's integration process

Among the development regulating and self-regulating problems within the Baltic region as a system, there are those which are exceptionally related to *strategic planning, programming, and complete projection method* targeting, and also with the planning and implementing of the region's modernization plans, programs and projects, based strategic transformation ideas could be realized (Hofbauer 2004; Melnikas 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002; Osteuropa... 1995; Politische... 2000; Brakman *et al.* 2006). By the by, among the latter, there are those which directly affect the *internal* regional integration, as much as the region's integration into European and world structures.

Formulating the essential region integration processes and their strategic planning, programming and projection affecting statutes, attention is directed towards the facts:

- that the Baltic region as a geopolitical, social, cultural, and economic system internal integration and this system's integration into European and world structures' development content, within, there must be *compromising* decisions, balancing the region's *community* as much as each country's *uniqueness and complete autonomy origins* accumulation,
- that integration process development affecting the region must act in *natural* forms, limiting themselves only to *voluntary* target methods and means,
- that strategic plans, programs, and complete projects must accumulate whole means, with which, after implementation, concrete modernization and advanced transformation results could be reached with respect to political, economic, social, cultural or other views,
- that the internal regional integration could be comprehended as an *essential and critical stage* for the Baltic countries and region for further more intensive and active integration into European and world structures,
- that that the internal regional integration could be a sufficient means, designed to reduce negative results, that at this time in the region's development, the primary expressing tendency is one of *cordon transit type development*, reflecting the ideas of the region as being within the "East–West" cordon transit zone system: this idea expresses the view of the region as a cordon for the West, protecting the West from the East, and vice versa, as well as a "bridge" (or corridor) between the East and the West; the internal regional integration could speed up the autonomous Baltic development and modernization, and real strengthened independence.

The presented statutes could be evaluated by preparing and implementing *various thematic* strategic plans, programs and projects; in this case it is necessary to understand that strategic decisions which affect the region's political, economic, social and cultural development are especially important.

The internal regional integration and the region's more intensive and active integration into European and world structures course and results are influenced greatly by *political* integration problem solving.

As it is known, there are *formal* integration oriented structures which exist in the Baltic region currently (Baltic Assembly and other structures of this nature and level). The creation of these structures and the improvement of their further activities is an important action for the *organization and regulation* of the integration processes. At this point it is noted that the presence of such formal structures, and their whole range of actions, could in the future become an effective organizational mechanism, that could discern the intensive spread of integration processes in various political, economic, social, cultural development directions.

Evaluating the political and military strategic integration problems and possible solutions, attention is given to several rather important regional political and military strategic development situations:

1. The political and military strategic integration should be comprehended parallel to two alternative criteria view:
  - when the region's (as a whole) integration occurs, orienting the content and forms towards

- those statutes which are the primary at this point in time within the larger world countries and international organizations' policies: in this case, the region's political and military strategic development, and most importantly, the Baltic region's security would be very much *dependent* upon the larger world countries' policies and their decisions, in respect of the Baltic region ; in this situation the region's security would depend upon essentially *external* actions,
- when the region's (as a whole) political and military strategic integration occurs and is very *mobile*, orienting towards such statutes which are first of all, not essentially dependent,
  - of external actions: in this case the region, in respect of its political and military strategic development, could gear itself so that it would become *autonomous* and *little or less dependent upon the external* political and military strategic situation actions; in this case the Baltic region security would depend more upon their own policies, of course, not completely disregarding the effects of external actions;
2. The Baltic region integration in the political and military strategic respect should be based on gearing towards *strategic decisions* which have long-term perspectives, are acceptable to all the Baltic countries, and are coordinated amongst themselves, affecting those types of questions such as:
- the Baltic region's, as a *modern community* satisfying the European standards, really socially more active and intensive integrating into the European and world structures, *development vision* (this vision should be an ideal considering realistic implementation),
  - the region's political and military strategic development mission in respect of biosocial conditions concerning the region,
  - the region's political and military strategy goals, and possible forms of implementation,
  - the *diagnosis* relating to the region's biosocial atmosphere in the view of political and military strategy, and possible *scenario* variations, upon whose implementation the security of region would be guaranteed.
3. Baltic region integration requires not only the formation of a *common* political development, and legal and economic system spread, but also the regulation of military doctrine and defence systems, and the *harmonization* of all these common regulations, to guarantee that:
- on the one hand, that every countries' *sovereign* regulations and real goal possibilities for the realization of their political and military strategic development be guaranteed,
  - on the other hand, that a separate country cooperation and partnership level be reached, that the region would function as a unified, internally *harmonized* system, in terms of their *common* political and military strategy development regulations;
4. The region's integration requires intensive formation and implementation of various integration-quickening projects; among these examples:
- projects, designed to *unify and harmonize* all the Baltic countries' political, economic, legal, military and other systems and structures *on the basis of legal norms and methods*, relating them to those of European Union, as well as NATO standards,
  - projects designed to unify, harmonize and integrate various regulating *information support* systems, as well as *technical and technological equipment, service* and other systems: this unification, harmonization and integration creates preconditions for the guarantee of the mentioned systems' supplementation, and (most importantly) to seek that every system's potential could be used in any extreme situation as a *reserve or additional* potential giving assistance to another Baltic country: these projects are especially important in respect of military, legal, and other systems,
  - projects, relating to various means in *international* political and military development spheres: participation in various international peace-keeping actions, international joint organizations and other similar projects in the context of the United Nations and NATO activities,
  - projects, relating to the preparation of specialists and the expansion of their qualifications, experience, scientific studies and other means relating to political, military strategic development and to their development in the near future.

The listed, and other relating situations are valued through the understanding and solving of the region's political and military strategy integration problems.

Every country seeks its *economic* development. Especially the direction of the economic development, its content, and results, the ability to solve actual problems, and the formation and implementation of economic strategies are conditioned not only by the

economic situation in the Baltic region, but also largely by the political and social situations and their more intensive and active integration possibilities into European and world structures.

Evaluating the economic development prospects in the Baltic region, it should be noted that the only alternative (without exception) for all the Baltic countries must be *inter-regional economic integration and a regional integration into European and worldly economic structures and markets*. In this sense, the integration processes are valued as the region's economic development basis.

Many problems raised concerning the region's economic integration are related to the political development of the region: these questions touch upon the formation of political prerequisites necessary for the spread of economic integration. However, next to these types of questions, another very actual set is those which are related to the solution of the economic content and the evaluation of the nature of the economic atmosphere, especially those of priority conditions:

1. The Baltic region's economic integration should be related to the *specializations* of the separate Baltic countries, their *co-operation and partnership ideas*, indicating that:
  - the region's and each country's economic development should be based on *long-term economic strategies and programs*, accounting for the separate specializations and economic co-operation and partnership principle content and form; they should orient themselves as much to their own economic development priorities as to those of the whole region, taking into account the different specialization, co-operation and partnership regulations,
  - every country's economic priorities should represent each and every one of that country's economic branches and spheres, with which that country must, is, or can be a *leader* in the whole region and with which there is an amassed potential for further development,
  - each country's specializations could make the *whole region* more powerful in respect of economic structures which would be oriented towards the large markets of many countries and would be powerful in the high quality of product and high level of production capacity, allowing them to be competitive in international markets, in turn, activating the economies of the Baltic region; inter-regional economic internationalization would allow the dismissal, or lessening, of the primitive internal competition in the smaller markets,

- there should be the creation and implementation of a corresponding economic branch and sphere development *promoting* mechanisms, oriented toward internal co-operation and partnership through the whole region; there should also be created mechanisms for a system which would *harmonize* the region, oriented toward the equal stimuli of the region.
2. The economic integration of the Baltic region should first of all be oriented toward the necessary economic and social problem solution, among which the following are noted:
    - a complete *production sphere* and *production potential modernization* of 'high' and new technological implementation basis for the whole economic system, orienting production branches toward world market competition levels and large export potential product production displaying high specialization and co-operation within the region and high quality,
    - a complete *energy system modernization*, oriented toward the fact that the region has the stable energy maintenance and that energy sources be used more prudently and effectively,
    - a complete *modernization of the environmental protection system*, so that the less negative effects on the environment could be done in the Baltic region (in the pollution sense) and that less risk of danger could come about,
    - *modernization of university and other higher education studies and professional qualification nurturing* systems.

The mentioned, as well as other conditions reflect upon the region's economic integration's very broad, complex, and opposing economic development problem panorama. Solutions to these problems are feasible only if regulations to a real and broad scale integration activity are formed.

## 7. Conclusions

Formation of the integral social, economic and technological space in the Baltic region could be defined as an important precondition for further modernization and more intensive and active integration of the national societal and economic systems in the Baltic countries into the common European and global development processes.

Formation of this integral space in the Baltic region could be comprehended as a successful case of the transformations in the European Union oriented to-

wards regional integration: regional integration oriented transformations could be defined as an important aspect of the social, economic and technological modernization in the European Union in general, and as an important factor of the knowledge-based society and knowledge economy creation.

Regional integration oriented transformations and the integral spaces in the Baltic region formation processes could be defined as *an important and a complex scientific research area*.

The main research priorities in the area of formation of the unified social, economic and technological space in the Baltic region are the following:

- the preparation of the concept of the Baltic region as a whole, including preparation and evaluation of various system indicators of the Baltic region,
- the complex analysis of the expressions of centripetal and centrifugal forces forming in the Baltic region as a system,
- the complex analysis of the arguments determining the idea of the Baltic region community and unity,
- the complex analysis of the opposing arguments to the idea of the Baltic region being a community,
- the social, economic and technological integration strategies for the Baltic region.

The basis for the formation of an integral social, economic, technological space in the Baltic region is the comprehension of this region as a whole.

The comprehension of the Baltic region as a whole is based upon the formation and implementation of political, economic, and social development regulations, and the Baltic region's as a unified geopolitical, social and economic system's development strategy preparation and realization should be understood as the principle problem of the Baltic countries' more intensive and active integration into European and world structures. The solution to these problems, requiring a deep and complete set of arguments, could be the essential basis to modernize the Baltic countries, their economic systems and societal structures.

The comprehension of the Baltic region as a whole includes these important problem areas:

- the commonality of the Baltic countries and unified activity system and the evaluation of the effects of these actions,
- the specific distinguishing features of the countries, due to their shared problems and integration difficulties,

- external and internal effects and environments, determining their integration prospects and limitations,
- the integration mechanisms and conditions for them to arise and spread,
- the mechanisms, and their dynamic possibilities, for more intensive and active integration into European and world structures by the Baltic region as a whole.

The development of the Baltic region as a whole and its effectiveness, is largely based upon how sensible and effective these development regulations are, and also the self-regulation mechanisms. Regulating and self-regulating mechanism targeting allows the programming and planning of development, and to foresee the forms of rational separate country specializations and their cooperation and ties with other countries. The basis of these mechanisms could be spread even in the inter-regional integration processes of the Baltic countries.

The systematic studies of the Baltic region as a geopolitical, economic, technological, social and cultural whole are very promising and relevant in various ways toward the direction of practical and scientific activity.

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