



БЕЛОРУССКИЙ  
ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ  
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ЖУРНАЛ  
БЕЛОРУССКОГО ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО УНИВЕРСИТЕТА

# МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ

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JOURNAL  
OF THE BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Издается с 2017 г.  
Выходит один раз в полугодие

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2

2023

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МИНСК  
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# МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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UDC 327(476)“1991/2021”

### TOPICS OF DISSERTATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEFENDED IN BELARUS IN 1991–2021

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The author of the paper analyses topics of the international affairs dissertations defended in Belarus between 1991 and 2021 in the specialities “International law. European law”, “History of international relations and foreign policy”, “Politics of international relations, global and regional development”, and other related domains. Based on the number of dissertations and the range of topics covered, it is established that Belarus has developed a distinctive national school of international affairs scholarship since gaining its independence. After reviewing the successes and shortcomings field by field, it is concluded that historical research dominates the field, representing over 70 % of all international affairs dissertations defended. Increasing the number of doctors of science, post-doctoral and doctoral students, and defences, are identified as priorities for future development.

**Keywords:** international affairs studies; historiography of international relations; dissertation; international relations; foreign policy; international law; politics of international relations.

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#### Образец цитирования:

Гурин АВ. Тематика диссертаций по международным отношениям, защищенных в Беларуси в 1991–2021 гг. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения*. 2023;1:3–13 (на англ.). EDN: JLSWTM

#### For citation:

Huryn AV. Topics of dissertations in international affairs defended in Belarus in 1991–2021. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations*. 2023;1:3–13. EDN: JLSWTM

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## ТЕМАТИКА ДИССЕРТАЦИЙ ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫМ ОТНОШЕНИЯМ, ЗАЩИЩЕННЫХ В БЕЛАРУСИ В 1991–2021 гг.

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Анализируются темы диссертаций, защищенных в Беларуси в 1991–2021 гг. по специальностям “История международных отношений и внешней политики”, “Международное право. Европейское право”, “Политические проблемы международных отношений, глобального и регионального развития”, и смежные вопросы. На основе анализа количества диссертаций и их тематики установлено, что в постсоветский период в стране сформировалась национальная школа международных исследований, представителями которой были рассмотрены достижения и проблемы каждой отрасли науки о международных отношениях. Обоснован тезис о популярности науки о международных отношениях в определенный период, за который были защищены более 70 % диссертаций. Названы такие проблемы развития науки о международных отношениях, как незначительное количество защищаемых докторских диссертаций, уменьшение количества докторантов и аспирантов, а также нечастые защиты диссертаций по международным проблемам.

**Ключевые слова:** международные исследования; историография международных отношений; диссертация; международные отношения; внешняя политика; международное право; политические проблемы международных отношений.

### Introduction

The production and defence of dissertations, particularly doctoral dissertations, reflect the usefulness and maturity of an area of study. Over the past 30 years, Belarus' national school of international affairs scholarship has developed, showing notable progress in the number of dissertations written and completed. 160 candidate dissertations and 27 doctorate dissertations were submitted between 1991 and 2021, the vast majority of them were defended. These figures indicate that a system of training for academics of international politics has been established [1; 2]. Nevertheless, barring a few rare publications, the subjects of the defended dissertations have evaded a thorough examination. As a result, we examine the foreign policy dissertations defended in Belarus since independence.

Owing to the complexity and interdisciplinary character of the international affairs domain, dissertations in some of the following academic specialties are covered initially in this evaluation: 12.00.10 “International law. European law”, 07.00.05 (now 07.00.15) “History of international relations and foreign policy”, and 23.00.04 “Politics of international relations, global and regional development”, 23.00.01 “Theory and philosophy of politics, history and methodology of political science”, 07.00.02 “National history”, 07.00.03 “General history”, and 23.00.02 “Political institutions, processes and technologies”. To determine the research gaps and

recommend prospective areas of study, we looked at the dissertation themes in each speciality.

A radically new era in the development of Belarusian social sciences began with the turn of the 1990s. Deep changes occurred, one of which was the emergence of a national school of foreign affairs scholarship.

In the domain of the history of international relations and Belarusian foreign policy, two main study fields emerged between the 1960s and 1980s. The first covered the theory and history of European governments' foreign policy and international relations from the late Middle Ages until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second was concerned with Belarus' post-World War II foreign policy and diplomatic history. The topics have significantly broadened since Belarus gained independence to cover contemporary foreign policy of Belarus and international relations. New topics have emerged, and old ones have been examined creatively from new angles.

In addition, there was a growing demand for research in fields that were in the purview of the all-union research institutes under the USSR. For example, areas like international politics and international law were only sometimes addressed. Early research lacked a national approach and depended on sparse data and theoretical frameworks. It should come as no surprise that these scholarly fields did not achieve high degrees of sophistication and confidence until the early 2000s.

### Historical studies

The theory and history of international relations and foreign policy of foreign nations, as well as the history of international affairs, Belarusian foreign policy, and foreign relations during the Soviet era, were the primary

topics of historical research in international affairs, as previously noted.

The 1990s saw the emergence of the Belarusian academic school in the areas of international relations

theory, history, and foreign state policy. Belarusian scholars were building on the strong foundation of the Soviet era to explore previous topics and venture into new areas, such as international relations in the Far East, international security, or the emergence of a new international relations architecture in Europe. We look more closely at a few of these works below.

Dissertations in international relations in ancient, middle age and early modern history have been defended by K. A. Reviako, A. V. Martyniuk, V. I. Bobyshev, M. V. Gleb, E. A. Gurinov, A. I. Yeustratsyev, A. V. Yesman, G. A. Lastovskiy, A. A. Levshovich, A. A. Liubaya, Y. M. Moroz, P. D. Podberezkin, Y. V. Sitkevich, D. N. Cherkasov, E. K. Shimak<sup>1</sup>. Even with certain successes, these studies still fall short of creating a distinct strand of research in Belarusian international relations studies. Admittedly, a significant portion of these works such as dissertations by V. I. Bobyshev, A. I. Yeustratsyev, G. A. Lastovskii, A. A. Lyubaya, Y. M. Moroz, P. D. Podberezkin, Y. Y. Sitkevich, and A. K. Shimak deal with international relations in Eastern Europe and Russian foreign policy. This is indicative of Belarus' relatively high standard of slavist studies research, particularly at the Belarusian State University, where seven of this eight dissertations in this field were completed, including four under the guidance of A. A. Yanovsky, the head of the department of Russian history.

It appears that the subject of international relations during the interwar years (1919–1939) saw more productivity, as evidenced by the numerous dissertations,

including several doctorate dissertations, produced by V. A. Kosmach, G. G. Lazko, and N. N. Miazga (who also successfully defended a candidate dissertations). Candidate dissertations were defended by E. N. Dubrovko, I. V. Zhylynskaya, T. A. Prannik, and V. V. Repin<sup>2</sup>. N. N. Miazga's doctoral dissertation, which is devoted to the historiography of the Soviet-Polish relations in 1918–1941 as presented in the Soviet and Polish sources, is particularly noteworthy because it was the first doctoral dissertations in international affairs defended in the speciality “Historiography, source study and methods of historical research”. This is the first comparative analysis of Polish and Soviet sources for the given time frame. The author summarises the major theories and findings of historians from both states and lists the major influences on the historiography. He concludes that the historiography served the political objectives of Poland and the Soviet state, respectively, and so contributed to the resurgence of both the Russian state in its Soviet form and the Polish independent state, while also making it extremely difficult to obtain objective scientific knowledge.

There has been an abundance of research done since independence on the history of international relations from 1945 to 1990. A popular topic for dissertation research in the 1980s and 1990s, it garnered much interest from young academics between 2000 and 2010, when two doctoral dissertations (by L. V. Loiko, M. V. Straliec) were defended and several candidate dissertations by N. V. Vialichka, L. V. Gavrilov, E. O. Dubinka-Hushcha,

<sup>1</sup>Martyniuk A. V. [Austria and Eastern Europe: establishment and development of political relations and cultural contacts (13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; Reviako K. A. [The struggle between Rome and Karphagen for the world supremacy] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Bobyshev V. I. [International relations in Eastern Europe in the 30–80s of the XV century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Gleb M. V. [The evolution of the imperial idea in Great Britain in the second half of the XIX century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Gurinov E. A. [The county of Edessa in the system of the Crusader states (late 11<sup>th</sup> – mid 12<sup>th</sup> century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Yeustratsyev A. I. [Colonial policy of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Yesman A. V. [The influence of the English East India Company on the politics and economy of Great Britain, 1763–1813] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Lastovskiy G. A. [Political development of the Smolensk land at the end of the XIII–XV century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1998 (in Russ.) ; Levshovich A. A. [Forming of the united Romanian state and France (1829–1864)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Liubaya A. A. [Tatar factor in relationship of Eastern European states at the end of XVth – first third XVIth century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Belarus.) ; Moroz Y. M. [The public opinion in Russia and the problem of Anglo-Russian relations in 1907–1914] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Podberezkin P. D. [“Yur'yev tribute” in Russian-Livonian relations of XIII – middle of XVI century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2020 (in Russ.) ; Sitkevich Y. V. Russian state in relations with the countries of Eastern Europe (the last quarter of XV and mid-fifties of the XVI century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Cherkasov D. N. [The foreign policy of Burgundy in 1419–1467] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; Shimak E. K. [Russia's foreign policy priorities in relations with the Roman Curia (1469–1582)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.).

<sup>2</sup>Kosmach V. A. [Foreign cultural policy of Germany during the Weimar Republic (1919–1933)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. M. : Inst. of World History of Russ. Academy of Sciences, 1995 (in Russ.) ; Lazko G. G. [European policy of Poland (1932–1939)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Miazga N. N. [Soviet-Polish relation in Soviet and Polish historiography of 1918–1941] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.09. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; Dubrovko E. N. [The United Kingdom policy on the eastern borders of Poland (November 1918 – March 1923)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Zhylynskaya I. V. [Anglo-Soviet economic, scientific and cultural contacts in 1931–1939] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; Miazga N. N. [Rapallo's politics and Polish-Soviet relations in 1922–1926] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1996 (in Russ.) ; Prannik T. A. [The problem of the Anschluss in Austro-German relations in 1918–1932] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Repin V. V. [The Bessarabian problem in the foreign policy of the Soviet state (1918–1940)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.).

I. I. Kovyako, Y. A. Loseva, Y. S. Pavlovets, V. P. Skok<sup>3</sup>. L. V. Loiko's doctoral dissertation defended as a scientific report, is particularly noteworthy. The dissertations, which bridges two academic disciplines and draws from the author's professional and scholarly background, investigates the position and function of the Polish United Workers' Party among the Eastern Bloc's ruling communist parties, particularly in light of its status as the closest ally of the USSR Communist Party. It offers a comparative examination of the factors that contributed to the Polish socialist system's downfall as well as the party's transition into a social-democratic one.

Belarusian scholars have also been interested in the theme of international relations after the fall of the Soviet Union. They have studied a variety of topics related to world politics, including the unification of Germany and its connections with the Republic of Belarus, the role of the USA in contemporary international affairs, the emergence of a new international security architecture and the role of international organisations in these developments, European and post-Soviet integration, and other topics. Doctoral dissertations in the field were

defended by M. E. Chasnousky, L. M. Gaidukevich, and V. V. Frolov (who also defended a candidate dissertations). I. M. Aulassenka, K. B. Bencheva, O. B. Bychkouskaya, I. V. Vinokurova, A. M. Hryshel, I. V. Zuyeu, Mihub Nazar, P. A. Patapeyka, and V. V. Starychonak defended candidate dissertations<sup>4</sup>. M. E. Chesnovsky's dissertation is noteworthy. He and V. G. Shadurski were two of the first individuals to defend their doctorates in the speciality "History of international relations and foreign policy" before a specialised dissertation council in 2000. Another scholar, V. V. Frolov, has gone through every phase of his academic career, from student to doctor at the faculty of international relations of the BSU.

Between 1991 and 2021, European integration has been drawing substantial interest from Belarusian international relations scholars, such as A. A. Valodzhin, T. V. Vorotnitskaya, O. P. Rubo, A. N. Sadovskaya, and A. M. Chyzh<sup>5</sup>. Another common area for postgraduate dissertations, defended primarily by foreign nationals from Asia and Africa, is the foreign policy of Asian and African states. Ali Osam Abed Ali, Ahmad Gani Al-Kataunekh, Bao Ying, Dibo Kava Usef, Muthana Mohamed, Asad Rashidi, Feras Sallum, Sahab Ahmed Ali

<sup>3</sup>Loiko L. V. [From communism to social-democracy: transformation of the left-wing party in Poland (1970–2000)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; *Straliec M. V.* [The FRG and problems of limitation and reduction of armaments in Europe (1949–1990)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; *Kosmach E. N.* [Foreign policy of the United States of America toward Yugoslavia in 1943–1980] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; *Vialichka N. V.* [France's policy towards German question (1945–1949)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Gavrilov L. V.* [Foreign policy of the People's Republic of Poland on the "German question" between 1955 and 1970] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Dubinka-Hushcha E. O.* [Foreign policy of Denmark (1972–2012)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2014 (in Russ.) ; *Kovyako I. I.* [British policy towards the German question in 1979–1990] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Loseva Y. A.* [Cooperation between France and the Federal Republic of Germany in the field of science and higher education (1949–1919)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; *Pavlovets Y. S.* [The Yugoslavian-Albanian relations in conditions of formation of the Soviet sphere of influence in the East Europe (November 1944 – November 1948)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.) ; *Skok V. P.* [The USA and the German question (autumn 1945–1954)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.).

<sup>4</sup>Chasnousky M. E. [System transformation in the Republic of Poland (1989–1999)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Belarus.) ; *Frolov V. V.* [German policy toward Post-Soviet states (1991–2005)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.) ; *Gaidukevich L. M.* [Tourism in international relations of Central and Eastern Europe countries (1989–2009)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; *Aulassenka I. M.* [U.S. and EU policy towards regional conflicts at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; *Bencheva K. B.* [The problem of ethno-confessional relations in the Balkans (late 80s – mid 90s of the XX century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.) ; *Bychkouskaya O. B.* [Transatlantic relations in the field of international security in the U.S. foreign policy strategy (2001–2013)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., Minsk, 2015 (in Russ.) ; *Vinokurova I. V.* [International counteraction towards terrorism in 1990–2000s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Hryshel A. M.* [The activities of the right-wing parties in the domestic and foreign politics of France (2002–2012)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Zuyeu I. V.* [European direction of Switzerland's foreign policy in 1991–2016] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; *Mihub Nazar.* [NATO's advance to the East: the formation of the global anti-NATO public opinion of the Russian media (on the example of the newspapers "Pravda" and "Izvestia". 1986–1998)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; *Patapeyka P. A.* [The Northern Ireland conflict in the international relations in 1990-es] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Starychonak V. V.* [Participation of the USA in military conflicts in 1989–2000 evaluated by American public opinion] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Frolov V. V.* [The East German factor and its influence on internal and foreign policy of the FRG in the nineties] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.).

<sup>5</sup>Valodzhin A. A. [Transformation of EU and NATO relations with the states of the Baltic Sea region in 1991–2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Vorotnitskaya T. V.* [The policy of the European Union enlargement to the East from the end of the 1980s to 2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; *Rubo O. P.* [The foreign policy course of the European Union towards the People's Republic of China (1975–2016)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Sadovskaya A. N.* [The European Union policy towards the developing countries in the 1990s–2000s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Chyzh A. M.* [Energy policy of the European Union in 2006–2014] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.).

Nur, and Elmalyan Abduraof Salah are a few examples<sup>6</sup>. Another noticeable trend is the increase in dissertations defended by Chinese nationals, particularly in the early 2020s. Chinese postgraduates defended four theses between 2020 and 2023, two of which were completed during the period covered by this review.

Scholars from Belarus have also been engaged in the study of foreign policies of African and Asian states, these include N. E. Ablova, with a doctorate in the subject, and V. R. Borovoi, V. V. Voronovich, M. V. Danilovich, A. S. Dudaronak, A. S. Ioksha, D. L. Sheveliov, and M. V. Sheveliova with candidate dissertations<sup>7</sup>.

The subject areas covered in the domain of theory and history of international relations and policies of foreign states have not changed significantly since the Soviet era, but the topic range has expanded remarkably. Some themes, however, have received very little attention. These include early modern international relations, the foreign policy of European states during the Middle Ages, and international relations in the Ancient World.

The study of international relations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been rather patchy, with little attention paid to the foreign policies of the European nations that are closest to Belarus, and almost none to the theory of international relations. The majority of dissertation topics either belonged to a field of study that has been studied since the Soviet era or were primarily determined by the researcher's or consultant's academic interests. Even though more doctorates have been granted, some doctorate holders are ending their careers. Of the ele-

ven people who received doctorates during the covered period, three have passed away (L. V. Loiko, M. E. Chasnousky, and K. A. Reviako), and nearly half passed the 60-year mark (as of 2021).

The history of diplomatic relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy in Belarus has garnered increasing interest among Belarusian academics, which has led to a notable increase in the variety of dissertation topics. Scholars have focused on the early history of Belarusian statehood, examined Belarus's foreign policy in the 1920s and after 1944, as well as the foreign policies of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Rzeczpospolita, and the Belarusian principalities in the early Middle Ages. Research on the last three topics has been conducted only since the 1990s. Polish, Russian, and Soviet historiography have treated Belarusian history in a biased, one-sided manner, emphasising their states' political interests over scientific objectivity. The freedom to write without restriction about the independent foreign policies of the mediaeval Belarusian principalities did not come to historians of Belarus until the late 1980s. Interest in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's diplomatic history has shown an increasing trend, despite the dearth of dissertations on the subject. Dissertations in medieval history have been completed by A. V. Dzemidovich, A. V. Eroshevich, V. I. Kononovich, O. I. Lazorkina, S. A. Lashkevich, L. V. Mikalayeva, B. I. Sidorenko, and A. M. Yanushkevich<sup>8</sup>. Of these, eight dealt with foreign policy, diplomacy, and the structure of diplomatic services in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It must be acknowledged that eight dissertations are

<sup>6</sup>Ali Osam Abed Ali. [The foreign policy of Iraq in 2003–2014] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Ahmad Gani Al-Kataunekh. [The Jordanian's role in the peaceful process's establishment and development in the Nearest East in the 90s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Bao Ying. [Chinese-Russian cooperation in education, science, technology and youth exchanges (2003–2018)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2020 (in Russ.) ; Dibo Kava Usef. [The Kurdish question in international relations in the Near and Middle East (1918–1990)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.) ; Muthana Mohamed. [Role of the Arabian countries in the question of the establishment of the new world information and communication order in the 70–90-th years] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; Asad Rashidi. [The regional and international aspects of the strife of the Kurds for a self-determination (1980–90-s)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Feras Sallum. [The role of Syria in inter-Arab relations in the Middle East (1991–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2011 (in Russ.) ; Sahab Ahmed Ali Nur. [Iraq – USA relations (1980–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; Elmalyan Abduraof Salah. [The priorities of foreign policy of Libyan Jamahiriya (1969–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.).

<sup>7</sup>Ablova N. E. [The CER and Russian emigration in China: international and political aspects of history (the first half of the XX century)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. M. : Inst. of Far East of Russ. Academy of Sciences, 2005 (in Russ.) ; Borovoi V. R. [Chinese policy in Central Asia (1990s – beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Voronovich V. V. [Security problems in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Danilovich M. V. [Central Asian vector of PRC's foreign policy in 2001–2013] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Dudaronak A. S. [Interstate relations between India and China in the second half of the XX – beginning of the XXI century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; Ioksha A. S. [East Jerusalem in Jordanian-Palestinian relations (1949–2006)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2011 (in Russ.) ; Sheveliov D. L. [Genesis of the question of Palestine, 1882–1917] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Sheveliova M. V. [The process of the Palestinian-Israeli settlement (1991–2001)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.).

<sup>8</sup>Dzemidovich A. V. T[he Grand Duchy of Lithuania in foreign affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Russia and Sweden in the first third of the XVII century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Belarus.) ; Eroshevich A. V. [Influence of Napoleonic wars on public-political life of Belarus (1799–1815 years)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2003 (in Belarus.) ; Kononovich V. I. [Diplomacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1480 – the first quarter of the XVI century (relations with the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Crimean Khanate)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1995 (in Belarus.) ; Lazorkina O. I. [Diplomatic

not very much over 500 years. However, they continue to indicate observable advancements in Belarusian historiography in the field of international affairs research. For instance, V. V. Shved successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, which examined the socio-political conditions in the Belarusian territories at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as how Russian foreign policy strategists and planners saw Belarus<sup>9</sup>.

The 1990s also witnessed an increase in scholarly interest in the international dimensions of Belarusian state building and the foreign policies of the Belarusian People's Republic and BSSR in 1918–1920, the interwar years, and during World War II. Although this problem field has been studied in the past, the dominant ideological and political dogmas constrained their studies. After independence, academics in Belarus were free to write on subjects that were once restricted or forbidden. O. M. Borovskaya, L. A. Kovaleva, V. G. Mazec, D. A. Mihun, T. Yu. Paulava, D. V. Romanovsky, A. V. Tikhomirov, and V. M. Tsinkevich addressed these new topics in their dissertations<sup>10</sup>. The first scholarly investigations into the diplomatic endeavours of the Belarusian People's Republic were carried out in the 1990s by V. G. Mazec and T. Yu. Paulava. A. V. Tik-

homirov studied the Belarusian emigration. Regrettably, research on those subjects came to an end in the early 2000s.

For Belarusian historiographers of international relations during the Soviet era, one of the most extensively studied subjects was Belarusian foreign policy after 1944. It was not until the 1990s and 2000s that they were able to abandon the Soviet approaches and use fresh sources and a national historiographical concept to cover this period. S. F. Svilas, V. G. Shadurski (doctor of sciences), V. V. Borisenko, O. N. Vazhnik, A. F. Veliky, S. B. Garbitsky, N. E. Dziadzichkina, L. G. Karalionak, S. V. Ksenzov, L. V. Lyakhovich, R. G. Ramanousky, and L. P. Stanishevskaya (candidates of sciences) conducted dissertation research on Belarusian relations with foreign nations during the USSR<sup>11</sup>.

Among these scientists, U. E. Snapkouski stands out as the first Belarusian historian to critically examine in-depth Belarusian foreign policy initiatives between 1944 and 1953. His dissertation, defended in 1993, examined Belarusian diplomacy from the republic's acquisition of foreign policy powers to the start of a new chapter in the development of Soviet diplomacy and foreign policy following Stalin's death in 1953. He documented the BSSR's

service of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the foreign policy mechanism of Rzeczpospolita in 1600–1697]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.); *Lashkevich S. A.* [The diplomacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in relation between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian State (1586–1598)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2014 (in Belarus.); *Mikalayeva L. V.* [Organisation of the foreign policy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the late XV – mid XVI century]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Belarus.); *Sidorenko B. I.* [The lands of Eastern Belarus in the

<sup>9</sup>*Shved V. V.* [Social and political life of the lands Belarus (1772–1863)]: diss. ... doctor of science (history): 07.00.03. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Belarus.).

<sup>10</sup>*Borovskaya O. M.* [Belarusian issue at the Soviet-Polish negotiations 1918–1921]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2015 (in Belarus.); *Kovaleva L. A.* [Foreign policy activity of Soviet Belarus in 1919–1929]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1993 (in Russ.); *Mazec V. G.* [Belarusian National Republic: proclamation and activity (1918 jar)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1995 (in Belarus.); *Mihun D. A.* [German policy applied to Belarus (1914–1922 years)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.03. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.); *Asipovich A. I.* [BSSR and Great Britain: proletarian solidarity and humanitarian, economic, scientific, cultural contacts in 1921–1938]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.); *Paulava T. Ya.* [BNR foreign-policy activity in 1918–1920]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.03. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.); *Romanovsky D. V.* [Foreign trade ties of BSSR with foreign countries (taking as an example the activity of Gostorgbel in 1922–1931)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2003; *Tikhomirov A. V.* [Belarusian emigration, the 90s of the XIX century – 1917]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1994 (in Belarus.); *Tsinkevich V. M.* [Political relations between the BSSR and the Polish Republic in 1921–1929]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.).

<sup>11</sup>*Svilas S. F.* [Byelorussian SSR activity in UNESCO (1954–1964)]: diss. ... doctor of science (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.); *Shadurski V. G.* [Cultural links of Belarus with the nations of Central and Western Europe (1945–1990)]: diss. ... doctor of science (history): 07.00.05. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.); *Borisenko V. V.* [Participation of Belarus in foreign economic relations of the Soviet Union (1971–1985)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2001 (in Russ.); *Vazhnik O. N.* [The BSSR and the Polish People's Republic: economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties in 1949–1979]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.); *Veliky A. F.* [Exchange of population between of BSSR and Poland in 1944–1946]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2002 (in Belarus.); *Garbitsky S. B.* [Belarus and Czechia: economical, scientific and technological, cultural relations (the late 40s of the XX<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2015 (in Russ.); *Dziadzichkina N. E.* [Foundation and development of the science collaboration of the Science Academy of the BSSR (the second half of the 1950s – 1980s)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2009 (in Russ.); *Karalionak L. G.* [Belarus and Great Britain: economic, technical-scientific and cultural contacts in 1970–2003]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.); *Ksenzov S. V.* [Cooperation of the Belarusian SSR and Eastern European countries (based on the material of socio-political organisations of Belarus, the 80s)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.01. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 1992 (in Russ.); *Lyakhovich L. V.* [France and Belarus: economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties in 1971–1999]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.03. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.); *Ramanousky R. G.* [The participation of Belarus in UNESCO's activities (1984–2001)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.15. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Belarus.); *Stanishevskaya L. P.* [Belarus in Soviet-Bulgarian relations in the agro-industrial sphere (70–80-ies)]: diss. ... PhD (history): 07.00.02. Minsk: Belarus. State Univ., 1992 (in Russ.).

involvement in the UN and its specialised agencies, its stance on matters of global security, and its contributions to relations between the USSR and Poland<sup>12</sup>.

The 1991 Declaration of independence opened up a new area of study for academics in Belarus: the country's foreign policy as an independent nation. This topic area has been studied by several researchers. A. V. Rusakov (doctoral and candidate dissertation), V. M. Matsel (doctoral dissertation), B. Khmelinsky (doctoral dissertation), B. A. Ganbarov, A. I. Gordeychik, A. P. Gross, I. I. Dorniak, D. A. Kryvashei, K. A. Krivichanina, E. V. Navoschik, A. V. Selivanov, Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani, and D. V. Yurchak are a few more names we could mention in addition to those already mentioned<sup>13</sup>. B. Khmelinsky and Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani are the foreign nationals among them.

A. I. Gordeychik (1998) defended his candidate dissertation "Political and economic relations of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1990s" the first in independent Belarus in the field of history of international relations and foreign policy. With a focus on the particular formats, the international political context, and the military-political aspects, it outlines the major trends in the political, economic, and

military ties between Russia and Belarus from December 1991 to April 1996.

Themes and subject areas in the historical studies of Belarusian foreign policies have changed. Like with the general history of international relations, however, several issues and topics such as Belarus' foreign policy during the early Middle Ages, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet era, as well as Belarus' bilateral relations with specific foreign nations seem to require more in-depth study. While much research has been done on Belarus' participation in the UN and its specialised agencies, Belarus' involvement in other organisations, especially regional ones, has been far less researched, at least as of 2021. An additional area that needs further investigation is Belarus' economic diplomacy. The quantity and quality of academic research do not appear to increase in proportion to the growing number of candidates in the sciences. After their defence, some science candidates will reduce their research efforts, or switch to new fields (like the political sciences). In the field, two dissertations are pending defence. The heads of some scholarly schools defended their candidate dissertations during the Soviet era.

### International law and politics domain

There were relatively few studies conducted in Belarus during the Soviet era in the fields of law and international politics as distinctive areas of international affairs scholarship. Only after independence were postgraduate courses offered in this area; these were taught primarily at Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus, and the Belarusian State University. The first dissertations were written by the end of the 1990s, and the subject areas

that these specialities covered were gradually defined. Dissertation defence councils were also formed.

Some key problem areas in the speciality "International law. European law" were the theory of international law, sectoral regulations, law of international organisations, and international integration.

Research in the theory of international law is crucial in laying the groundwork for national approaches to the study of international law. Notably, no doctorates have been defended in this field, and the bulk of the dissertations were completed before 2014. Candidate

<sup>12</sup> Snapkouski U. E. [Foreign policy activity of the Belarusian SSR (1944–1953)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Academy of Sciences of BSSR, 1992 (in Russ.).

<sup>13</sup> Rusakov A. V. [Germany in the foreign policy of Belarus (1990–2015)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.); Khmelinsky B. [Public movement in Poland for good neighbourliness with Belarus (1991–2006)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Belarus.); Matsel V. M. [Policy of the Republic of Belarus in East and South Asia (1991–2002)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. M. : Diplomaticeskaya akademiya MID Rossii, 2005 (in Russ.); Ganbarov B. A. [The Republic of Belarus in Azerbaijan foreign policy in 2001–2012] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2013 (in Russ.); Gordeychik A. I. [Political and economic relations of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.); Gross A. P. [International activity of public associations of the Republic of Belarus. 1991–2010] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2016 (in Russ.); Dorniak I. I. [Belarusian and Polish economical and cultural collaboration in 1999–2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2010 (in Russ.); Kryvashei D. A. [Development of cultural relations of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Central and Western Europe (1991–1996)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1999 (in Russ.); Krivichanina E. A. [Scientific and technical cooperation of Belarus with the NIS and EU (1991–2000)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2010 (in Belarus.); Navoschik E. V. [Belarusian-Swedish relations (1991–2017)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2019 (in Russ.); Rusakov A. V. [Belarusian and German relations in 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.); Selivanov A. V. [Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and international organisations on establishing of the national system of refugee protection] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.); Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani. [Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Belarus (1991–2013)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.); Yurchak D. V. [The state-political and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine from 1991 till 2011] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2014 (in Russ.).

dissertations have been defended by R. R. Galstyan, A. F. Douhan, A. V. Zharsky, E. V. Konnova, E. B. Leanovich, M. V. Loiko, T. N. Mikhaliyova, V. M. Strachuk, T. Y. Ushakova, and A. V. Shchukin<sup>14</sup>. The national application of international standards has been the focus of the theses by A. I. Zybailo, A. V. Barbuk, and V. Yu. Kalugin, and it is currently a major area of study in the theory of international law<sup>15</sup>.

Sectoral regulation has been the most prolific area of international law in terms of dissertation production, with two doctoral dissertations defended between 1991 and 2021.

A. F. Douhan explores in her doctoral dissertation the concept of regional collective security mechanisms as distinctive features of international relations at the present stage. Some of the outcomes of this work include an updated definition of the legal framework governing coercive actions by regional organisations, a detailed analysis of the idea of a collective security system, an explanation of the conditions for the application of UN Charter chapter VIII, and a list of the justifications and possible formats for cooperation between regional organisations and the UN and other regional organisations.

In her doctoral dissertation, V. N. Talochka presents the following main findings: a general framework for a mechanism for national application of international

economic law, as well as several useful recommendations for amending national legal frameworks of international economic relations generally, including those relating to Belarus<sup>16</sup>.

The candidate dissertations by Andre Victor, K. V. Istomenok, O. M. Starovoitov, E. V. Syagrovets, Hazem Nouredin ibn Safi, and Kibret Aredo Shimelis are concerned with international legal cooperation<sup>17</sup>. International cooperation in combating crime as a subfield of sectoral regulation addressed by N. O. Moroz, V. V. Merkushev, S. I. Mukashov, and I. V. Fisenko in the candidate dissertations they defended<sup>18</sup>.

International law scholars were particularly interested in the law of international organisations and international integration, as evidenced by the number of defences between 1991 and 2021. I. A. Barkovskij, A. V. Velichkovsky, E. A. Deikalo, A. M. Shirmont, A. L. Kozik, D. G. Kolas, V. B. Korzun, Yu. A. Lepeshkov, E. S. Rudko, V. Kh. Seitimova, and H. V. Simonian defended candidate dissertations in subject areas related to law drafting activity in the EU and the CIS, the work of international judicial bodies and the status of international civil servants<sup>19</sup>.

Since Belarus gained its independence, significant numbers of studies in international law have been conducted, laying the groundwork for the rise of a national

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<sup>15</sup>Barbuk A. V. [Direct application of the norms of international treaties in national legal systems] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.) ; Zybailo A. I. [Implementation of the norms of international law in the Republic of Belarus] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Kalugin V. Yu. [Implementation mechanism of international humanitarian law] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.).

<sup>16</sup>Talochka V. N. [International economic law and the implementation of its norms in the national legal system (on the example of the Republic of Belarus)] : diss.... doctor of science (law) : 12.00.10. Saint Petersburg : Saint Petersburg State University, 2013 (in Russ.).

<sup>17</sup>Andre Victor. [Progressive development and modification of diplomatic law] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1997 (in Russ.) ; Istomenok K. V. [The status of a diplomatic courier and diplomatic mail in the context of international law-making of the Republic of Belarus] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; Starovoitov O. M. [International legal protection of the rights of the child] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; Syagrovets E. V. [Participation of the Republic of Belarus in the formation of the institute for international protection of women's rights] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; Hazem Nouredin ibn Safi. [Legal protection of victims of armed conflicts] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1993 (in Russ.) ; Shimelis Kibret Aredo. [International legal regulation of foreign economic activity of developing countries: on the example of African states] : diss.... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.).

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school of international law scholarship in the face of multiple difficulties. However, there do not seem to be enough doctoral dissertations in the field right now (just two have been defended) for a school of this kind to start up. The examination of the dissertations defended reveals that young scholars continue to play a very small role in academic supervision and that only a small number of advisors oversee all of the postgraduates and degree seekers in the field. Many young scholars of international law believe that there are not enough opportunities for them to advance academically in the field, which leads them to choose other areas of law like constitutional law, administrative law, or even political science that seem more promising in terms of dissertation defence. Finally, there are still many gaps in the scholarship that need to be filled. Even when a topic has been studied by a scholar from the Soviet Union or Russia, it still matters from a Belarusian perspective.

Like international law, the study of world politics in Belarus dates back to the early 1990s. International politics research was less systematic, even when compared to more general political science subject areas, while decades of research in international law led to the establishment of academic traditions and institutions. Nevertheless, four doctoral dissertations have been defended, demonstrating an impressive overall performance. Of these four doctorate holders, three are still working as academics while the fourth, Y. V. Matusevich, has since passed away.

Researchers in the political sciences have shown particular interest in the theory of international relations, regionalisation, and globalisation; the function of regional alliances in international relations and global

politics and the place of the Republic of Belarus in these domains.

Yu. M. Malevich, A. A. Plashchinsky, and A. L. Shevtsova defended dissertations in the theory of international relations between 1991 and 2021, basing their works in large part on specific country cases<sup>20</sup>.

Scholars like Azghar Abdi, G. Y. Volkov, and V. M. Grynyova have studied the nature and characteristics of globalisation as a phenomenon of world politics and international affairs and a subfield of the theory of international relations<sup>21</sup>.

In his doctoral dissertation, S. A. Kizima discusses the geopolitical aspects of nation-state formation in the context of globalisation. He then uses his research to suggest changes to the Belarusian social development model. In addition to outlining some of the key characteristics of contemporary globalisation, he discusses the intricacies of nation-building in the era of globalisation<sup>22</sup>.

Y. I. Malevich examines how globalisation affects the understanding of human rights across civilisations and how this understanding might promote just and cooperative relationships within the international community of states. As geopolitical interactions change, with implications for Belarus' foreign policy, she argues that the UN should adopt new global solutions to protect human rights<sup>23</sup>.

The candidate dissertations of P. A. Barakhvostov, M. J. Verameyeu, E. A. Dostanko, I. S. Kuznetsova, and A. V. Shevchenko discussed the function of regional alliances and associations in international affairs<sup>24</sup>. Many of them focussed on the European Union, seen as the most developed example of interstate integration to date.

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<sup>20</sup>*Malevich Yu. M.* [Reflection of the principles of the concept of human rights in the foreign policy doctrines of the United States (70–80-ies)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.01. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1995 (in Russ.) ; *Plashchinsky A. A.* [US foreign-policy strategy of leadership: formation and development] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Shevtsova A. L.* [The influence of internal political regions of the nation state in its foreign policy (on the example of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2014 (in Russ.).

<sup>21</sup>*Asghar Abdi.* [Modern cultural globalisation: the dynamics and political consequences (for the Islamic Republic of Iran)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; *Volkov G. Yu.* [The subjects of globalisation and their influence on the national state] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2011 (in Russ.) ; *Grynyova O. N.* [The policy of neutrality in the context of globalisation] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.).

<sup>22</sup>*Kizima S. A.* [Development of the nation-state under conditions of globalisation: geopolitical aspect] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.).

<sup>23</sup>*Malevich Y. I.* [Evolution of conceptual approaches to human rights in the context of globalisation] : diss. ... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.).

<sup>24</sup>*Barakhvostov P. A.* [The Eastern Partnership Initiative in the EU foreign policy in 2009–2017] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Verameyeu M. J.* [State sovereignty transformation under the conditions of European Union integration] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Dostanko E. A.* [The European community of states as international system: restructuring at the edge of XX–XXI centuries] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; *Kuznetsova I. S.* [The European Union common security and defense policy: conceptual and practical aspects] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2011 (in Russ.) ; *Shevchenko A. V.* [Interstate integration the strategic direction of the Commonwealth of Independent States development] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.).

When it comes to the number of dissertations completed, the role and standing of Belarus in contemporary international relations and world politics was presumably a favoured topic area among academics. It was covered in the candidate dissertations of A. A. Gorelik, D. V. Halubnichy, S. A. Lomov, D. N. Liubkin, A. S. Pisarchyk, V. A. Sakovich, A. V. Sviridov, and V. O. Serebryakov, as well as in the doctoral dissertations of E. V. Matusевич and R. O. Esin<sup>25</sup>.

In his doctoral dissertation, R. O. Esin outlined potential directions for Belarus' cross-border cooperation with European nations, identified political variables that could influence those directions, and offered doable suggestions to develop those partnerships with the EU. The author addressed the regional aspect of Belarus' cross-border cooperation with European states for the first time in a political science dissertation, proving its multidimensional nature and documenting its evolution in the framework of dynamic integration processes in Eastern and Western Europe.

Although the studies show a great deal of advancement in the political science understanding of world

affairs, the development of a national scholarly school of political theory in the field of international relations is still incomplete. One explanation is a degree of fragmentation among researchers, the majority of whom work as public administration practitioners. A specialised research unit might help advance the field's understanding of Belarusian international relations politics.

Another significant field of study that merits discussion in this review is the historiography of international affairs studies. In this field, only a single degree work (the candidate of sciences thesis by A. V. Huryn) has been successfully defended<sup>26</sup>. It was the first historiographic review of research on international affairs and foreign policy conducted by Belarusian academics, many of which covered the years since 1991. By examining the historiography of various historical contexts and eras, historians have also made a valuable contribution to the study of a few chosen areas of international affairs. The historiography of the early modern and modern eras of history is covered in V. A. Astroha's dissertation, which serves as an example of such work<sup>27</sup>.

## Conclusions

After reviewing the subjects and the number of dissertations defended between 1991 and 2021, we can conclude with confidence that Belarus has developed a distinctive academic school in international affairs since gaining its independence. This finding is supported by dissertation statistics: in the historical, legal, and political science specialities, 27 doctoral 160 candidate dissertations on international affairs were submitted for defence. Of these, the vast majority were successfully defended: 21 out of 27 doctoral dissertations and 104 out of 160 candidate dissertations (representing 78 % and 65 % of the dissertations submitted, respectively).

International affairs research has fared noticeably better than it did during the Soviet era.

However, a review of the dissertation subjects across the sciences reveals that each field faces a variety of issues. Expanding the scope of topics is a challenge in the field of historical sciences, while for the legal and political sciences filling the scholarship gaps and raising the number of defences are the priorities.

Most dissertation topics in the history of international relations belonged to a field that has been researched since the Soviet era, or they were either based on the researcher's or consultant's academic interests.

<sup>25</sup>Esin R. O. [The policy of trans-border cooperation of the Republic of Belarus in the European perspective: the regional dimension] : diss.... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; Matusевич E. V. [National and state interests of the Republic of Belarus in the context of the globalisation process] : diss.... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Halubnichy D. V. [The Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union in the geostrategy of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2020 (in Russ.) ; Gorelik A. A. [Contemporary foreign policy activity of Belarusian Parliament] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.02. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2016 (in Russ.) ; Lomov S. A. [The geopolitical aspect of the national security of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2008 (in Russ.) ; Liubkin D. N. [Cooperation between Republic of Belarus and the European Union for ensuring border security] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2021 (in Russ.) ; Pisarchyk A. S. [Global challenges of modernity: impact on the national state and its foreign policy priorities (on the example of the Republic of Belarus)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Sakovich V. A. [Impact of globalisation and integration upon social-political alternative of states, undergoing transformation (on the pattern of Republic of Belarus and Republic of Moldova)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; Sviridov A. V. [Geopolitical space of Belarus in the context of globalisation: the informational and political dimensions] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Serebryakov V. O. [Economic diplomacy in foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus (on the example of the states of South – East Asia)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2021 (in Russ.).

<sup>26</sup>Huryn A. V. [Studying of the history of international relations in Belarus in the period of the years 1980–2003] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Belarus.).

<sup>27</sup>Astroha V. A. [The study of modern and contemporary history of foreign countries in Belarusian historiography (1919–1991)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02, 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Belarus.) ; Astroha V. A. [The study of modern and contemporary history of foreign countries in in Belarus in interwar period (1921–1941)] : diss. ...doctor of science (history) : 07.00.09. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1996 (in Russ.).

Some academic schools may eventually face a crisis because the majority of doctors of science have already reached retirement age and the number of doctoral dissertations is increasing slowly. The issue is made worse in the legal and political sciences by the absence of a strong foundation of research established during the Soviet era.

Ironically, one challenge for the future is the rising number of international degree seekers and postgraduates under one consultant. A consultant is only permitted to supervise up to five postgraduate students or degree seekers at a time under the current regulations. However, after their defence, the majority of interna-

tional degree holders depart home, which means they do not contribute much to research in Belarus.

Proposing future research topics would be a challenging task. In comparison to other fields like domestic history, law, politics, or institutions, international affairs studies still comprise only a small portion of research, despite tremendous advancements in the field. For example, each defence in the speciality “International law. European law” is a noteworthy academic event because there are typically only 1.23 defences held annually.

Many of these issues can be resolved, it seems, by encouraging young scholars to defend more dissertations, particularly doctoral theses.

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Received by editorial board 12.02.2023

UDC 338.48

## OUTBOUND TOURISM FROM SOVIET BELARUS AS A NEW BATTLE LINE IN THE COLD WAR DURING THE KHRUSHCHEV'S THAW

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This article explores the use of outbound tourism during the Khrushchev's thaw as a Cold War propaganda tactic for publicising the Soviet project abroad. Despite a threefold rise in tourist numbers, the primary goal of outbound tourism during the thaw years was the same as in the preceding years. The Soviet tourist was expected to build the USSR's international image and standing with their appearance, words, and actions, and their mere presence was supposed to demonstrate the freedom of movement they enjoyed at home. The Belarusian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Minsk branch of the agency "Intourist", the Central Committee of the CPSU's commission for trips abroad, and the tourist and excursion division of the Belarusian Republican Council of Trade Unions all handled the organisational and technical aspects of outbound tourism. The international youth tourism bureau "Sputnik" created in 1958, was also vested with a similar function. The study reconstructs the institutional and organisational-legal landscape, the volumes and geographic scope, and also the forms and features of Soviet outbound international tourism in 1955–1968, using archive materials, published sources, and post-Soviet and Western historiography. By employing a non-institutional, anthropological approach, the author was able to take into account not only the actions of the bodies that organised Soviet citizens' travel abroad but also the political and ideological significance of these journeys, as well as the hidden behaviours of Soviet tourists during the Cold War.

**Keywords:** BSSR; outbound tourism; Cold War; ideology; propaganda; touristic services.

## НА ТУРИСТСКОМ ФРОНТЕ ХОЛОДНОЙ ВОЙНЫ: ВЫЕЗДНОЙ ТУРИЗМ В БССР ЭПОХИ ОТТЕПЕЛИ

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Анализируется использование иностранного выездного туризма в БССР как одного из инструментов популяризации советского проекта за рубежом в период холодной войны. Основная миссия выездного туризма времен оттепели сохранила преемственность с предыдущим периодом, однако она реализовывалась в условиях многократного увеличения туристских потоков. Советский турист должен был своим внешним видом, словами и поступками поднимать престиж СССР, а сам факт его поездки доказывал, что в Советском Союзе есть свобода перемещения. Все организационно-технические вопросы выездного туризма решались комиссией по выездам за границу при ЦК КПСС, минским отделением организации "Интурист", Белорусским обществом культурных связей с зарубежьем, а также туристско-экскурсионным управлением Белорусского республиканского совета профсоюзов. С 1958 г. эту же функцию выполняло бюро международного молодежного туризма "Спутник". На основе архивных документов, опубликованных

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### Образец цитирования:

Гужаловский АА. На туристском фронте холодной войны: выездной туризм в БССР эпохи оттепели. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения*. 2023;2:14–24 (на англ.).  
EDN: MPNLXK

### For citation:

Huzhalouski AA. Outbound tourism from Soviet Belarus as a new battle line in the Cold War during the Khrushchev's thaw. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations*. 2023;2:14–24.  
EDN: MPNLXK

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источников, постсоветской и зарубежной историографии реконструируются институциональные и организационно-правовые аспекты, объем, география, формы и особенности советского выездного зарубежного туризма в 1955–1968 гг. Использование неинституционального антропологического подхода позволило рассмотреть в контексте холодной войны не только деятельность организаций, отправлявших граждан СССР в зарубежные туры, но и политико-идеологическую составляющую этих поездок, а также теневые практики советских туристов за рубежом.

**Ключевые слова:** БССР; выездной туризм; холодная война; идеология; пропаганда; туристическое обслуживание.

## Introduction

The 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) set new directions for the deepening of international tourism exchanges by postulating the idea of peaceful coexistence of two world systems and rejecting the dogma of the inevitable onset of a new world war. The Soviet government viewed sending tourists overseas as a component of its foreign policy initiatives, and the tourists themselves were seen as a means of promoting the USSR, their country of origin. Like with inbound tourism, the economic benefits of outbound travel were only a side motive.

Several historians of international relations have explored the increase in interactions between inhabitants of Soviet Belarus and citizens of other nations between the mid-1950s and early 1960s. V. G. Shadurski chronicles the exchange of people and ideas in literature, film, theatre, and visual arts during the Cold War [1, p. 63–146]. I. M. Awlasenka highlights various Belarusian writers' discovery of the West and

their use of creative techniques to portray it negatively among Belarusians [2, p. 136–187]. G. F. Shapoval depicts the growth of widespread international tourism in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as a phenomenon in Belarusian tourist history [2, p. 109–122, 141–151]. A. F. Vyaliki explores the reasons and preconditions of Polish repatriation from Soviet Belarus in the late 1950s in a comprehensive study that includes quantitative data [4].

Outbound tourism, however, has received insufficient attention as a distinct socioeconomic and politico-geographic phenomenon in Soviet Belarus during the Khrushchev's thaw, as follows from the examination of this literature. According to the sources and materials discussed here, outbound tourism in Soviet Belarus was an essential aspect of sociocultural communication. It was another battle front in the ideological war for the Belarusian Communist Party, to which it was devoting an increasing amount of resources and a rising number of people.

## The “iron curtain” goes up

After a CPSU Central Committee resolution of 25 April 1955, the first international trips by Belarusian tourists took place. Initially, they were to Communist countries, including the German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Czechoslovakia, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the People's Republic of China. In the first year of the mentioned resolution, 125 Belarusians travelled to these destinations. The Belarusian Society of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Minsk branch of the agency “Intourist”, the CPSU Central Committee commission for trips abroad, and the tourist and excursion division of the Belarusian Republican Council of Trade Unions were in charge of the technical and organisational details of these visits. In 1958, the international youth tourism bureau “Sputnik” was established and vested with similar functions.

At full price, the tours were not cheap. A 12-day journey from Minsk to Romania costed 1179 roubles in 1958, and a 12-day visit to the GDR costed 1400 roubles. A 12-day trip to Western Europe would have the cost nearly twice as much. A 29-day boat journey across Europe costed between 4000 and 5400 roubles, depen-

ding on the cabin class. However, the top performers were eligible for reductions<sup>1</sup>.

Republican and regional trade union councils were some of the bodies in charge of completing the paperwork for the border crossing permission. Trade union committees assessed the applications from candidates for overseas travel and chose workers and students in the best standing, as well as those who were trustworthy on political, moral, and life grounds. These criteria were used to choose the first Belarusian State University students to go to socialist countries in 1958. According to the letters of recommendation, Henadz Buraukin was in charge of the university radio, and an active member of the student theatre. He also composed and performed poetry in the working collectives. A. Mihailov was a modest and disciplined student who was a member of the faculty of history trade union bureau. V. Sidortsov, a student of the same faculty and trade union representative, was doing well on exams and performing in a folk instruments orchestra<sup>2</sup>.

Prospective tourists to capitalist countries were subjected to a comprehensive background check. They needed outstanding recommendations, pristine records,

<sup>1</sup>National Arch. of the Repub. of Belarus (NARB). Fund 265. Inv. 7. File 15. Sh. 61, 82.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. File 12. Sh. 209 ; Ibid. File 13. Sh. 46, 124.

and, in most cases, good histories of travel to people's democracies. They were also obliged to fill out a long questionnaire regarding their families, employment, relatives overseas, and parents who resided in nazi-occupied territories, as well as provide health information. People of Jewish ancestry faced particular challenges.

Tourist group lists were to be finalised five to six weeks before departure, and visa applications had to be submitted to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at least three weeks in advance. The groups were designated leaders and given instructions on correct behaviour before departure. The orientation typically continued after the delegations arrived at their destination, and they were greeted by a Soviet embassy officer. On the more "difficult" trips, a KGB officer accompanied the party.

In 1956, 24 Belarusians sailed aboard the cruise ship "Pobeda", hired by agency "Intourist", with 376 other Soviet tourists. They had all gone through the long and rigorous selection process, as well as the time-consuming paperwork and orientation, but their efforts paid off. From 4 to 30 July 1956, guests aboard the ship "Pobeda" visited Stockholm, sailed via West Germany's Kiel Canal, explored Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and the Hague, and visited Paris after disembarking in Havre, and continued to Naples, Rome, Athens, and Istanbul<sup>3</sup>.

The cruise was outwardly a leisure activity with free time. However, its designers saw it primarily as a tool of ideological indoctrination directed at foreigners and tourists alike. That explains the socio-professional makeup of the Belarusian travellers. The Soviet tourist was supposed to represent the new Soviet citizen, and the bulk of those selected were professionals. I. Melezh, a well-known Belarusian novelist, was named group leader for the Belarusian tourists on the cruise ship "Pobeda".

In contrast to many of their counterparts from capitalist nations Soviet visitors would devote their leisure time to creative endeavours and personal development. Academician P. Ragavy gave a presentation about the historic Pompeii to the other tourists. Academician Kh. Goreglyad, with whom he shared a cabin, was taking photographs for his scientific collection. L. Bessmertnaya, a professor at the Belarusian State Conservatory, and M. Godneva, a researcher at the Institute of Biology of Academy of Sciences of the BSSR,

augmented their coin collections. Writers I. Melezh and V. Zub kept literary diaries to document their experiences. Aspiring head of the Belarusian Communist Party Central Committee's department of propaganda S. Pavlov, a graduate of the faculty of philology journalism programme at the Belarusian State University, also used his free time to hone his literary abilities<sup>4</sup>.

I. Melezh wrote that every port in Western Europe had a friendly welcome for Soviet tourists. Right there on the dock, they struck up discussions, made jokes, took photographs, performed songs, and exchanged trinkets with the visitors. Throughout the tour, I. Melezh never experienced a single objection to their presence. Stockholm's plethora of vehicles, bicycles, and items from all over the world, as well as its attractive architecture and the perseverance of the Swedes, all left an impression on him. He also wrote about the historic structures in Naples, Athens, and Istanbul, as well as the canals, charming residences, and stunning architecture in Rotterdam, the Hague, and Amsterdam<sup>5</sup>.

The Society for the dissemination of political and scientific knowledge organised a meeting with the cruise participants on 23 August 1956, at the Felix Dzerzhynsky club in Minsk. According to the reports, the discussion met a high standard, ideologically and politically. The society's deputy chairman V. Antonishyn, wrote to the Secretary of the Belarusian Communist Party Central Committee T. Kiselyov: "No hostile ideas were expressed, and bourgeois culture was not magnified. The comrades correctly understood their task and accurately presented the facts about their journey"<sup>6</sup> (hereinafter translated by us. – A. H.).

After the mid-1950s Belarusian tourist groups travelled to multiple socialist and capitalist countries. The press gave significant attention to these visits. Newspaper's pieces were illustrated with photographs of tourists' departure from the Minsk railway station, like the departure of a tourist group to Czechoslovakia in 1955. However, the look of the Belarusian tourists on the streets of foreign cities often took the locals by surprise. N. Kavriga, a student from Minsk who travelled with a group to Czechoslovakia, noticed that their countrymen were dressed out-of-date, and stood out from the locals by their manners. N. Kavriga wrote that on several occasions, the locals looked at her countrymen with surprise and confusion<sup>7</sup>.

### The birth of mass tourism

The organisation of international tours, however, was not always up to the mark. For example, the tourist groups organised by the Belarusian Republican Council

of Trade Unions in 1958 were routinely below the anticipated size. In April, the group of Belarusian tourists who travelled to Warsaw numbered 5 instead of 34. In May

<sup>3</sup>Macveev N. [Through the eyes of foreigners] // *Maladosc'*. 1956. No. 11. P. 5 (in Belarus.).

<sup>4</sup>Ragavy P. [Around Europe] // *Rabotnica i sjaljanka*. 1956. No. 11. P. 12–14 (in Belarus.).

<sup>5</sup>Melezh I. [Sheets of the notebook] // *Polymja*. 1956. No. 10. P. 117–134 (in Belarus.).

<sup>6</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 47. File 425. Sh. 67.

<sup>7</sup>Kawguga N. [About taste and tactfulness] // *Chyrvonaja zmena*. 1958. 9 March. No. 48. P. 3 (in Belarus.).

only 4 tourists travelled to East Berlin instead of 30; in July only 15 tourists out of 30 visited Bulgaria, and four out of 14 went to Great Britain. Furthermore, the lists of tourists from Minsk usually arrived too late for Mos-

cow's approval. In his memoirs, writer I. Shamyakin remembers three boring days in 1959 which he spent with another Belarusian writer Maksim Tank (fig. 1) waiting for their papers to be processed in Moscow<sup>8</sup>.



Fig. 1 Maksim Tank in New York (1960).  
Source: Belarus. State Arch.-Museum of Lit. and Art  
(BSAMLA). Fund 25. Inv. 25. File 74. Sh. 3.

The first international tourists from BSSR had few factory workers and hardly any collective farm employees among them. Conversely, there were a lot of housewives. Many tour groups consisted mostly of women, attracting ironic comments and jeers from foreigners. One commentator of the time jokingly advised ill or pregnant women to travel with the trade unions. Inadequate tourist preparation was also a common complaint. It was said that most were unprepared to engage in deep intellectual debates, and knew too little about the country they were visiting<sup>9</sup>.

The situation reportedly improved little in 1959, when only 520 Belarusian tourists travelled abroad. As a result, the 1959 target for outbound tourism from Minsk was fulfilled by only 70 %, and from the regional cities by 46 %. Rules for group formation were sometimes bypassed. The dynamic changed little in 1960<sup>10</sup>.

The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in Moscow finally took notice. Its resolution of 24 April 1961 "On serious defects in the organisation on foreign tourism in the Belarusian Republican Council of Trade Unions", identified several shortfalls in the performance of the Belarusian trade union bodies and organisations and important deviations from both qualitative and quantitative criteria. The document named several instances

when "untrustworthy comrades" from the BSSR were selected for inclusion in the tour groups, and spent their time abroad speculating or drinking, instead of publicising the success of the 7-year plan, as they were expected. For example, an engineer from the Minsk Bearing Plant No. 11, who was visiting Hungary with his spouse in June 1960, sold a wristwatch and a camera for local currency. According to the document, workers of Mogilev's factory "Strommashina" displayed similar behaviours<sup>11</sup>.

In response to the criticisms from Moscow, the authorities in Minsk began to form professionally oriented tourist groups. As expected, its members would effectively promote new management and organisational practices in socialist manufacturing industries and agricultural production. In 1962, 19 out of 30 international tourist groups from the BSSR were selected according to their profession. Large enterprises established a reserve from which candidates for foreign travel were chosen. Travellers were expected to give a presentation for their peers after their return, and group leaders submitted reports for the tourism and excursion division of the trade unions which it reviewed regularly<sup>12</sup>.

In the 1960s, the number of international tourists from Soviet Belarus increased, and so did the number of

<sup>8</sup>Maksim Tank. [On the stone, iron and gold]. Minsk, 2012. P. 24 (in Belarus.).

<sup>9</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 489. Sh. 19–21.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. File 520. Sh. 221–224.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. File 541. Sh. 22.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. File 570. Sh. 288.

countries they visited. Mikhas Lynkov published a series of pieces based on his remarks from his visit to India<sup>13</sup>. “I have travelled a lot across the world, especially in the previous six years. I have been to eleven European nations, Canada, and the United States”, – wrote another writer, Janka Bryl, in 1962<sup>14</sup>. Vital Volsky could be seen not only “beyond Berezina, Naroch, and Polesye, he could also be seen in Stockholm, Rome, Brussels, and the African savannahs”<sup>15</sup>. Frequent travellers could also be found outside of the literary circles. Y. Klimchenko, a worker at the Minsk Tractor Plant, visited Paris, Am-

sterdam, Berlin, Dresden, Rome, Milan, Florence, several other cities in Western Europe between 1958 and 1963, travelling as a tourist<sup>16</sup>. Some countries remained off-limits to these tourists, including Israel, vilified by Soviet propaganda.

Despite all efforts, there were always fewer international students from the BSSR than visitors from other countries over similar periods. For example, the Belarusian Republican Council of Trade Unions sent 950 international tourists from the BSSR in 1963, while receiving 1557 visitors from Communist nations<sup>17</sup>.

### Cream of society

Following M. Khrushchev’s example, party and government officials in the Soviet republics increased their participation in foreign affairs. Foreign travel was an unacknowledged privilege of the nomenklatura. Initially reserved for the higher ranks, it was gradually extended to the middle and lower positions. For example, in 1956, the first secretary of the Belarusian Communist Party’s Central Committee K. Mazurov visited Great Britain as a member of the Soviet delegation, attended the World exhibition in Brussels, participated in the Swedish Communist Party congress in 1958, took

part in the UN General Assembly session in New York in 1960 (fig. 2) and went to the Belgian Communist Party congress in 1964<sup>18</sup>. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the BSSR, K. Kiselyov went on a holiday to Hungary with his wife. He had been invited by his Hungarian counterpart, E. Sik, to facilitate cordial friendships between the Soviet and Hungarian peoples<sup>19</sup>. Likewise, A. Zawadzki, the head of the State Council of the Polish People’s Republic, invited V. Kozlov, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Belarus, for a visit<sup>20</sup>.



Fig. 2. Petrus Brovka among the Belarusian delegation at the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York.  
Source: Lit. Museum of Petrus Brovka. KP 13653.

The Belarusian officials’ formative years were under J. Stalin’s harsh rule, and many found it hard to believe that honest work and exclusive travel offerings were

compatible. In 1958, representatives of the republican ministries visited the International spring trade fair in Vienna, the Exhibition of industrial textiles and carpet

<sup>13</sup>Lynkov M. [Under the sun of India] // LiM. 1957. 26 Jan. No. 8. P. 4 ; 13 Feb. No. 13. P. 4 ; 16 Feb. No. 14. P. 4 ; 20 Feb. No. 15. P. 4 ; 23 Feb. No. 16. P. 4 ; 27 Feb. No. 17. P. 4 (in Belarus.).

<sup>14</sup>Janka Bryl. [Thoughts in the road] // Polymja. 1962. No. 12. P. 105 (in Belarus.).

<sup>15</sup>Bojka U. [Tireless traveller, inspired worker] // LiM. 1961. 5 Sept. No. 70. P. 3 (in Belarus.).

<sup>16</sup>Kononova N. [In a strange world] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1963. 4 Aug. No. 182. P. 2 (in Russ.).

<sup>17</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 650. Sh. 32–33.

<sup>18</sup>Mazurov K. [Memories, speeches, interviews]. Minsk, 1999. P. 329 (in Russ.).

<sup>19</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 570. Sh. 286.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. File 545. Sh. 175–179.

products in London, the National electrical engineering exhibition in London, the International spring industrial and trade fair in Utrecht, the International technical fair in Copenhagen, the International spring fair in Frankfurt am Main, the National exhibition of construction machinery and equipment in Munich, the International agricultural fair in Strasbourg, Finnish industrial fair in Helsinki, the International motor show in Geneva, and many other events, under a plan approved by the Belarusian Council of Ministers<sup>21</sup>. In 1959, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Nature Protection, F. Prokudin, was dispatched to an environmental seminar on a cruise ship departing from Basel and chartered by its organisers<sup>22</sup>.

Belarusian academics rediscovered the value of international exchanges for the progress of science and research, and the Soviet Union's scientific links with other nations deepened. Academics from Belarusian universities and the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR travelled abroad to give lectures, attend conferences and seminars, and act as consultants. Director of the Institute of History of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences I. Kravchenko was among the first to travel internationally for the 3<sup>rd</sup> congress of the International Association of Sociologists in Amsterdam in August 1956<sup>23</sup>. Later in October, head of the Belarusian department for the archives A. Azarov travelled to Florence for the International congress of historians archivists in Florence<sup>24</sup>. Head of the Belarusian Polytechnical Institute's department of architecture A. Voinov attended

the 11<sup>th</sup> International architectural exhibition in Milan and participated in a tour of Italian cities after its closure<sup>25</sup>. Head of department of the history of Belarusian State University U. Sikorski travelled to the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the global conference "University today" in July 1965 in Dubrovnik, a famous tourist destination. After presenting the achievements of the Belarusian education system, he toured "...the famous places and scenic parts of the Adriatic coast, visited Cetinje, the ancient capital of Montenegro, viewed the historical monuments of Sarajevo, and appreciated the bliss of the hot southern sun and warm Adriatic Sea"<sup>26</sup>.

In the summer of 1958, the international youth tourism bureau "Sputnik" dispatched around 100 top students of Belarusian universities to Bulgaria, East Germany, and Romania, tasked with spreading the truth about the life of the Soviet people among their peers in other countries<sup>27</sup>.

Fans of the Belarusian sports club "Torpedo" travelled to an international skiing event in Finland, opening the door for mass sports tourism<sup>28</sup>.

Members of the Belarusian Union of artists learned about the other nations imaginatively. During their foreign tour, they painted landscapes in nature and also toured European art museums. As a result, their conception of socialist realism was challenged by what they saw. An exhibition hosted by the art museums of Minsk and Moscow after their return in 1962 featured works by I. Akhremchyk, B. Malkin, S. Gerus, V. Stelmashonak, E. Krasovski and S. Selikhanov among others<sup>29</sup>.

### The winds of the Cold War

Belarusian tourists were closely supervised throughout their visits, including by their group leaders (selected from among the activists of the Communist party, Komsomol, or the labour unions), and sometimes they were escorted by KGB officers. The group leaders prepared in-depth reports for their management on the internal political situation of the countries visited, perceptions of the USSR abroad, and tourist behaviour. Some of these reports resembled spy novels. For example, the leader of the Belarusian group sailing around Europe on the steamship "Pobeda" wrote to K. Mazurov on 21 November 1956: "In Paris, a man approached a group of our comrades. He introduced himself by his last name and claimed he was a Russian who fled the Soviet Union in 1951. He said he hated the Soviet Union and accused the Soviet authorities of murdering his father in 1937.

He attempted to get our comrades to read anti-Soviet newspapers. Here is one fascinating detail. We arrived in Paris. Although the Parisian newspapers had not written about our visit, he was waiting for us at the hotel, and the details of our arrival were fully known to him, as it became clear during a conversation. Later in Athens, anti-Soviet leaflets were distributed again as the buses were approaching the Acropolis... A British warplane passed the cruise ship at deck level in a sweeping flight in the Dardanelles Strait. A police boat with its lights off was seen on the right side as the boat was leaving the port of Piraeus after sunset. Unexpectedly, the boat swerved left and struck the steamship's stern with its nose"<sup>30</sup>.

F. Baranov, secretary of the Communist Party's Grodno regional committee wrote in a report to K. Mazurov

<sup>21</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 462. Sh. 151–152.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. File 602. Sh. 43.

<sup>23</sup>Kravchenko I. [Ten days in Holland] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1956. 18 Nov. No. 269. P. 3 (in Russ.).

<sup>24</sup>[Belarusian scientists at the international congress] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1956. 29 Sept. No. 228. P. 2 (in Russ.).

<sup>25</sup>[Soviet architects in Italy] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1957. 13 Nov. No. 267. P. 4 (in Russ.).

<sup>26</sup>Sikorski U. [On the shores of the Adriatic] // Zvjazda. 1965. 5 Sept. No. 210. P. 4 (in Belarus.).

<sup>27</sup>[Tourist trips abroad] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1958. 13 June. No. 136. P. 2 (in Russ.).

<sup>28</sup>[Belarusian tourists vent to Finland] // Zvjazda. 1957. 22 Feb. No. 45. P. 4 (in Belarus.).

<sup>29</sup>[Artists about abroad] // Polymja. 1962. No. 8. P. 192 (in Belarus.).

<sup>30</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 53. File 59. Sh. 57–58.

about a “vast network of retail businesses” in Poland’s Bialystok voivodeship that thrived during the Homulka thaw: “There are multiple private shops along with state and cooperative ones. Their prices are twice as high, but their products are of superior quality. The zloty has weak buying power.

There are 450–480 active churches in the area. The priests are calling for 45 more to be built. Atheistic agitation is not widespread. Optional lessons in religion are offered at schools. In the Polish United Workers’ Party, attending church after a party meeting is considered normal practice. After the well-known October incidents, fewer people have been joining the party.

Out of the 300 collective farms active in the voivodship before the Polish United Workers’ Party’s 8<sup>th</sup> plenum, roughly 30 have remained. The Socialist youth organisation’s draft programme urges the Polish youth to combat Stalinism as their primary responsibility”<sup>31</sup>.

The basic rules of conduct of soviet citizens travelling to capitalist and developing countries and the basic rules of conduct of Soviet citizens travelling to socialist countries set strict guidelines for tourist behaviour. Tourists were forewarned that Western secret services might be watching their every step. They were cautioned against exploring the city on their own, visiting stores, restaurants, and other places of entertainment, starting conversations with strangers, exchanging addresses with them, and making independent contacts.

Typically, Soviet tourists interacted with locals during scheduled meetings with members of left-leaning political parties, public groups, and labour unions. At these gatherings, Belarusian visitors were expected to tell their audiences about their country’s achievements in building a new communist future for all its citizens. This included the discussion of social security enjoyed by the Soviet people, including the absence of

unemployment, free healthcare and education, and free summer camps for children. During his 1959 visit to the United States, the Soviet state’s leader N. Khrushchev gave an example of such advocacy when he shook hands with the Belarusian emigre D. Zastupnevich, a worker at the machinery “Mesta” and said that Minsk has become a great and attractive city today and D. Zastupnevich probably would not recognise it.

Frequently, however, the questions, comments, and actions from the audience disrupted the standard routine of these staged events, or “directed tourist performances”, as A. Gorsuch referred to them in her graphic metaphor [5, p. 13]. Tourists were made to feel uneasy, uncomfortable, and sometimes frustrated. L. Proksha, editor of the newspaper “Voice of the Fatherland”, recalls one such uncomfortable incident at the opening of the World exhibition in Montreal in 1967. As D. Polyansky, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR was addressing the visitors to the Belarusian pavilion, emigre writer K. Akula cried out “Free Belarus!” and tossed a bundle of flyers into the crowd<sup>32</sup>. When delegates from the twin cities of Minsk and Nottingham met on British soil in 1965, the visitors from Minsk deviated from the standard plan and went on a counteroffensive, attacking the lack of maternity leave for British women and the rising cost of public transport in the UK<sup>33</sup>.

Visits to plants, factories and agricultural businesses were essential elements of any tour programme. Tourists were expected to treat them as opportunities to present the advantages of socialist production. Frequently, however, the reality differed from the plan. For example, the delegation of Belarusian textile workers was impressed by the superior organisation and working conditions at a textile mill they visited on their journey to Norway at the end of 1962<sup>34</sup>.

### Tragedies in the consumer’s paradise

Sometimes, the encounter with Western realities changed the lives of Soviet tourists with occasionally catastrophic results. One such incident occurred in August 1961 while a group of writers, painters, academics, journalists and other intellectuals was on a 12-day visit to France. The tour had been organised by agency “Intourist”, which appointed V. Kravchenko, a 45-year-old author and editor-in-chief of the children’s magazine “Biarozka”, as the group leader. B. Merkulov, a student at the Academy of Social Sciences under the Central Committee of the CPSU, was the head of the group, and an officer M. Repich was the KGB representative.

The group arrived in Paris. The director of the Yanka Kupala Theater V. Brovkin was impressed by the abundance of goods in the stores and complained

that Soviet tourists were too poor and could not afford a thing. The situation quickly went out of control. V. Brovkin frequently separated from the group to attempt visits to night clubs and start conversations with foreigners. He sought private meetings with the Paris television studio’s artists to ask about the pay and working conditions for artists in Paris. He also asked about the cost of an apartment in Paris in case he might decide to stay. Finally, when a tour guide in the Louvre, a Russian immigrant, observed that Ilya Repin is unknown in France, he agreed with him enthusiastically.

After a consultation, B. Merkulov and M. Repich decided to send K. Brovkin back to Minsk without delay. On 24 August, V. Brovkin and Vasil Vitka, the editor-in-chief of the children’s magazine “Vjasioka”, were placed on

<sup>31</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 469. Sh. 258.

<sup>32</sup>BSAMLA. Fund 92. Inv. 1. File 273. Sh. 151–152.

<sup>33</sup>Shydlovski A. [The dialog of friendship] // Zvjazda. 1965. 10 Feb. No. 33. P. 3 (in Belarus.).

<sup>34</sup>Kalinin G. [In the country of blue fjords] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1962. 18 Dec. No. 295. P. 3 (in Russ.).

a flight from Paris to Moscow. Vasil Vitka's behaviour did not raise any objections. The whole group was sad because of the incident. As they began their bus tour around France, V. Kravchenko expressed deep concern about Vasil Vitka and V. Brovkin being sent back. He even asked B. Merkulov to send him to Minsk as soon as possible. He was depressed the whole time, according to accounts from the other tourists<sup>35</sup>.

On 27 August the tourists arrived in Cannes and checked into the hotel "Moderne". V. Kravchenko oversaw the check-in process as the group leader. He went to his room on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with the artist E. Tikhonovich. As E. Tikhonovich later recounted, as soon as they opened the door, V. Kravchenko went to the restroom and he heard a strange scream from there minutes later. "When I entered the bathroom, I saw him sitting on the grating of the open window. He was leaning back, and there was an odd smile on his face, – remembers E. Tikhonovich. – Kravchenko threw himself down through the bars as I attempted to grab him. He died in 30 minutes after landing on the cement roof of the adjacent hotel cafe"<sup>36</sup>.

The French police investigating the death found V. Kravchenko's farewell letter, later published by the French newspaper "Jour": "I cannot consider myself a communist any longer. On this tour, I found the true meaning of freedom, but I cannot betray my homeland by staying behind and asking for asylum. The only way

to end this drama is by death. I bring my most sincere regrets and apologies to my family, my country, my wife and children"<sup>37</sup>.

The incident was also investigated on the Soviet side, sparking a debate among the intellectuals in Minsk and also in the Belarusian emigrant circles. The investigation found that V. Brovkin and V. Kravchenko should not have been sent abroad in the first place. V. Brovkin's father was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for anti-Soviet propaganda in 1941. In 1942 K. Kravchenko's wife was became forced labourer in Nazi Germany, where she later married a British army officer.

Additionally, V. Kravchenko had had an active neurological condition since 1949. The investigation's findings led to the dismissal of the KGB officer in charge of screening the group members, and doctors were instructed to be more stringent when examining candidates for foreign travel<sup>38</sup>.

Overseas travel was thus more than just a once-in-a-lifetime chance to peer behind the "iron curtain", but also a test of one's worldview that not everyone could pass. First-time tourists from Soviet Belarus had multiple misconceptions about living abroad. For their entire lives, they had been targeted by the Soviet propaganda's negative portrayals of the West. The tourist's encounter with the concepts, values and realities of the West created cognitive dissonance and resulted in psychological discomfort.

### Living up to the honour and trust

Tourists' accounts about life over there were published in the media and used as propaganda tools in negative portrayals of the West. For example, the newspaper "Chyrvonaja zmena" launched the column "Travel notes" in 1955, and the magazine "Maladosc" started the section "Around the world" in 1956. Likewise, the newspaper "Sovetskaya Belorussiya" featured the column "What the tourists say" in 1958. The Society for the dissemination of political and scientific knowledge launched a public lecture series called "The world map".

I. Orlov and A. Popov have summarised some of the most common propaganda clichés about the West: that the world's workers and peasants look to the life of the Soviet citizens with hope and view their wealthy classes with hostility and fear, that most people in the West are poor, their social problems are neglected, and their future is uncertain that material wealth and comforts are illusory and enjoyed by a very small proportion of the Western population [6, p. 258].

For example, one Belarusian tourist described the situation in 1962 France as pre-revolutionary. He wrote: "The wealthy French are dreaming of France's return to its former glory. They overeat, drink to excess, and want to live in the old way. They ignore the proletariat's struggle, as their newspapers are filled with stories of weddings, divorces, and scandals in aristocratic families. Their clubs run jazz and striptease shows. But no one can stifle the voices of the people"<sup>39</sup>. V. Polyakov wrote about his visit to the Benelux nations: "A Dutchman with an average income eats meat once a week, substitutes butter with margarine, and drinks low-fat milk"<sup>40</sup>. Other columnists who travelled around Europe wrote about "the weary, exhausted workers of Istanbul", "the huts of Alexandria hit by the bombs launched from British and French planes", and "the squalid slums on the outskirts of Cairo"<sup>41</sup>.

Returning Belarusian tourists routinely criticised avant-garde art displayed in Western museums of contemporary art. Z. Azgur, whose social standing and resources were sufficient to travel to the West relatively freely,

<sup>35</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 556. Sh. 196.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. Sh. 198.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. Sh. 206.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid. Sh. 199.

<sup>39</sup>Ponomarev V. [France in front of the lens] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1962. 9 Dec. No. 288. P. 4 (in Russ.).

<sup>40</sup>Polyakov V. [In Belgium and Holland] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1959. 19 May. No. 115. P. 2 (in Russ.).

<sup>41</sup>Shcheglova V. [Homeland is the most precious thing] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1958. 26 Sept. No. 226. P. 3 (in Russ.).

left this account about his visits to Italian museums in 1965: “I am happy that Soviet art remains grounded in the traditions established by the greatest masters of realism, and rejects the overtures of the abstractionists”<sup>42</sup>. Literary critic A. Adamovich commented on his visit to the pavilion “50 years of world art” at the 1958 Brussels world exhibition: “This modernist display seemed to me like a twisted mirror, that reflected man and nature in a most unseemly manner... I was delighted to see how the visitors’ faces brightened up as they entered the pavilion with Soviet art”<sup>43</sup>. N. Krasnova, a secretary of the Belarusian Young Communist League (Komsomol), commented on M. Chagall’s painting “Bouquet and flying lovers” in London’s Tate Gallery: “Only a liar or a madman could have painted it”<sup>44</sup>.

Yet despite all efforts, the tourists’ exposure to Western realities challenged these cliches and sometimes

dispelled them. Later in his life, novelist I. Shamyakin gave the following account of his encounter with the Americans in the 1960s: “We envied their country’s wealth. We were critical, but still envious”<sup>45</sup>. Belarusian actor and playwright E. Romanovich remembered his stay in the a Paris budget hotel “Brabant” in 1956: “The beds are large; they are not simple beds, but some kind of platform for sleeping, and also for jumping and rolling. They look like boxing rings”<sup>46</sup>. As the pressure of ideology weakened during the thaw years, N. Vorvulyov, solo singer of the Belarusian Opera and Ballet Theatre, wrote about the high standard of service in British restaurants, hotels, and shops, and even described the use of an X-ray machine to help customers try on their shoes<sup>47</sup>. Famous chess player K. Zvorykina left a highly positive account of her visit to the Netherlands<sup>48</sup>. In turn, Yanka Bryl wrote a complementary review on his trip to Canada<sup>49</sup> (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Maksim Tank and Janka Bryl' in Paris (1960).  
Source: BSAML. Fund 25. Inv. 1. File 71. Sh. 33.

Rector of the Belarusian Agricultural Academy I. Garkusha, was surprised at the small number of villages he saw on his visit to Sweden at the end of 1962 with a Soviet delegation. The academician wrote: “Lonely, isolated farms are scattered across the land”. He believed this isolated way of life left an imprint on Swedish society and psychology, where “the notion of private property has exceeded normal human bounds”. The relative merits of Swedish farms were difficult to discuss in the Soviet press then, especially in comparison

with the Belarusian collective farms. However, even his objective description of a 300-year-old Swedish farm let through by the censors betrays the scholar’s surprise and envy. I. Garkusha was well aware of the horrors of the socialist modernisation of the Belarusian countryside. He said: “For several centuries, this Swedish farm had been passed on from the great-grandfathers to the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, without a single transgression on its boundaries. Even the original buildings have been preserved”<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Azgur Z. [The sun is Italian guide] // Polymja. 1965. No. 7. P. 159 (in Belarus.).

<sup>43</sup> [4<sup>th</sup> writer’s congress. Discussion over P. Brovka’s report] // LiM. 1959. 18 Feb. No. 14. P. 4 (in Belarus.).

<sup>44</sup> Krasnova N. [Three weeks in England] // Znamya yunosti. 1956. 26 Sept. No. 188. P. 3 (in Russ.).

<sup>45</sup> Shamyakin I. [Thoughts on the last stretch]. Minsk, 1998. P. 268 (in Belarus.).

<sup>46</sup> BSAML. Fund 243. Inv. 1. File 259. Sh. 11.

<sup>47</sup> [A mounth in England] // Maladosc’. 1956. No. 4. P. 8 (in Belarus.).

<sup>48</sup> Zvorykina K. [With camera in Holland] // Maladosc’. 1956. No. 12. P. 12 (in Belarus.).

<sup>49</sup> Janka Bryl’. [On the Western side of the planet. From Canadian memories] // Belarus. 1960. No. 3. P. 10–14 (in Belarus.).

<sup>50</sup> Garkusha I. [In Shweden] // Sovetskaya Belorussiya. 1963. 4 Jan. No. 3. P. 3 (in Russ.).

Belarusians had difficulty sticking to the ideologies they had imparted, not least because of the culture shock they experienced when visiting the shops. Financial and customs restrictions put in place in the 1950s were meant to check the spirit of consumerism slowly spreading among tourists. Tourists to socialist countries could exchange only 30 roubles which they could use as pocket money to buy postcards or souvenirs. The limit for the capitalist countries was 25 dollars. However, some tourists could not exchange even those small amounts. In May 1963, I. Sorokin, a star singer from the Belarusian Opera and Ballet Theatre, was dispatched on a train tour to Turkey without any foreign currency<sup>51</sup>.

The state had a monopoly over foreign exchange transactions, and tourists from Soviet Belarus brought goods from their country to sell on the black market or exchange for other goods. Stringent customs rules

restricted the export of items like jewellery, cameras, radios, cigarettes, vodka, or caviar, which many tourists bypassed in the desire to acquire expensive imported goods that also had a high symbolic value at home. Vasil Bykaw who attended the 1965 European society of writers congress, recounted with great humour how he had helped his colleague V. Aksyonov get through the Italian customs with a load of cigarettes<sup>52</sup>.

Group leaders often noticed and reported extreme consumerist behaviour among tourists. The arrival of high-end Western consumer products during the Cold War era challenged the Soviet Union's image as a forward-looking nation. Tourists risked serious sanctions for speculation and other unethical behaviours after their return. Belarusian poet and translator Yazep Semyazhon was one of the tourists punished in 1960 for selling a bottle of vodka to a Belgian during a stopover in Antwerp<sup>53</sup>.

## Conclusions

Poet Vasil Vitka, wrote in 1960: "Few people today would view a visit to Europe or America and their return home as something unusual". With hindsight, this observation now appears to be an understatement. International travellers, especially to capitalist countries, had the respect and envy of many Belarusians who had no such opportunity. Foreign travel not only changed the lives of tourists but also became a mark of high social standing. The division between the elite minority who could travel abroad, and the great majority whose movements were restricted to their place of residence, employment and a modest resort inside the country, was one of the cleavages that emerged in the Belarusian society during the Khrushchev's thaw, as it did in the rest of the Soviet Union. "Ersatz travel" in public lecture rooms, movie theatres or on television, was a much safer way to meet the people's needs for travel

in terms of ideology. One of the most widely watched programmes on Soviet television at the time was the "Travellers club".

Despite restrictions on international travel and the ideological pressures surrounding it, not every visitor to the West returned home with the belief that the communist utopia was around the corner. Travellers' experiences, even from visits to Socialist states, did a lot to dispel the Soviet ideological cliches. Tourists from the BSSR saw greater levels of political and economic freedom in the countries they visited, and some attributed to these freedoms the high standards of living enjoyed by the majority. Their accounts, supplemented by other information, such as from the "enemy" radio broadcasts, eventually altered the collective consciousness of Soviet Belarusians and challenged their perception of the world as shaped by J. Stalin's propaganda.

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<sup>51</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 73. File 238. Sh. 48, 51.

<sup>52</sup>Bykaw V. [How I was a smuggler] // LiM. 1966. 1 Jan. No. 1. P. 4 (in Belarus.).

<sup>53</sup>NARB. Fund 4p. Inv. 62. File 541. Sh. 187.

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*Received by editorial board 12.02.2023*

UDC 325.1(48)

## THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES' INFLUENCE ON DOMESTIC POLITICS IN NORTHERN EUROPE

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The study considers the political implications of a soaring Muslim community in Northern Europe, often viewed as a model for the rest of the European Union. It is shown that massive immigration challenging the foundations of the Scandinavian welfare state and its multiculturalist policy, and some aspects of the Scandinavian experience are also of practical significance to Belarus. The thrust of the argument is that multiculturalism is failing, and Scandinavia should begin to look for other alternatives.

**Keywords:** Muslims; Northern Europe; Scandinavian countries; diaspora (community); migrants; refugees; multiculturalism; political parties.

## ВЛИЯНИЕ МУСУЛЬМАНСКОЙ ДИАСПОРЫ НА ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ В СТРАНАХ СЕВЕРНОЙ ЕВРОПЫ

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Мусульманская диаспора рассматривается как фактор, влияющий на политические процессы в странах Северной Европы, которые считаются эталонными для Европейского союза. Исследование позволяет сделать вывод, что массовый приток мусульман-мигрантов и стремительный рост исламской диаспоры стали серьезными вызовами основам социального благополучия и идеологии мультикультурализма скандинавского общества. Анализ опыта стран Северной Европы в данной сфере имеет практическое значение для Республики Беларусь. Основной вывод работы заключается в том, что политика мультикультурализма, по сути, оказалась неэффективной, а североевропейским странам следует искать иной путь социального развития.

**Ключевые слова:** мусульмане; Северная Европа; скандинавские страны; диаспора (сообщество); мигранты; беженцы; мультикультурализм; политические партии.

### Introduction

To begin with, we adopt the commonly acknowledged academic definition of the well known term “Muslim issue” in relation to the Muslim diaspora within the European Union.

One characteristic that sets apart modern Western Europe is a substantial Muslim population. Islam has become a crucial element in the European Union, upending the principles of multiculturalism and marking

### Образец цитирования:

Потапейко ПО. Влияние мусульманской диаспоры на политические процессы в странах Северной Европы. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения*. 2023;2:25–32 (на англ.). EDN: LHCEIY

### For citation:

Patapeika PA. The Muslim communities' influence on domestic politics in Northern Europe. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations*. 2023;2:25–32. EDN: LHCEIY

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a new chapter in the history of this geopolitical conglomerate. The Muslim community invariably has an impact on the political equation and the political power dynamic.

The Scandinavian nations are unique in that they have relatively recently come into contact with immigrants from Asia and Africa from very different racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and a distinct civilisational code. Examining how the Islamic discourse has affected politics in Northern Scandinavia is the goal of this research. The study's relevance is increased by our exploration of the interactions between Muslim communities and the host populations.

Scholars from Northern Europe and elsewhere have studied the difficulties affecting Muslim communities in the Scandinavian countries. The first thorough compilation of information on European Islam is the Oxford handbook of European Islam<sup>1</sup>. The Yearbook of Muslims in Europe offers up-to-date information on Muslim populations across 46 nations.

This study of Islam in Northern Europe benefits from the contributions of numerous scholars. The works of

multiple academics, including B. A. Jacobsen<sup>2</sup> (a specialist on Islam in Denmark), J. Nielsen [1], A. Carlbom [2], S. Meret (a researcher on Muslim relations with radical right-wingers) [3], and G. Larsson (a writer on Islam in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and the Baltic countries, were consulted) [4]. V. Kinsella<sup>3</sup>, K. Fangen<sup>4</sup>, and K. Vogt<sup>5</sup> have investigated the interactions between Muslims and the Norwegian host society, while J. B. Simonsen has focused on Islam in Northern Europe [5]. Researchers T. Pauha and J. Konttori<sup>6</sup> have studied Muslims in Finland, while K. Loftsdottir examines how Icelandic society views minorities in general and Muslims in particular [6]. The website of the Danish embassy in Lebanon<sup>7</sup>, publications from the US State Department<sup>8</sup>, the Pew Research Centre<sup>9</sup>, and Statista portal<sup>10</sup> are all excellent resources.

Russian scholars of Islam's influence on Scandinavian political processes include D. A. Nechitailo [7] and Archimandrite Augustin [8]. The works of the Belarusian author I. V. Kotlyarov [9] on migration to Europe are also pertinent, although overall interest in the topic is low among Russian and Belarusian scholars.

### Communities of Muslims in Northern Europe

Muslims from former colonies were drawn to the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands, among other former colonial powers. Significant Muslim populations, however, were unusual for the Nordic nations – with the possible exception of Finland, where a small number of “Finnish Tatars” has lived since the 1800s.

The Nordic nations have long portrayed themselves as strongholds of liberal values, including multiculturalism. However, the rise of the Muslim community presented a major challenge, first fuelled by the demand for inexpensive labour and then by the flow of refugees. The appearance of a sizable ethnic-confessional minority sparked discontent among a significant segment of the indigenous populace, with some political ramifications, including the emergence of right-wing parties hostile to immigration.

Many Scandinavians see Muslims as *the relevant other*, which has created a *us vs. them* mentality<sup>11</sup>. Political forces that support anti-Islamic rhetoric in the sociopolitical agendas of their states have found fertile ground in these sentiments.

These shifts have also changed the mindset of the Muslim communities. Some, especially their younger members, have increasingly been drawn to radicalism. Given the large number of Muslims from Northern Europe joining jihadist paramilitaries such as ISIS, it is clear that jihadist ideas are gaining popularity. A significant part of the diaspora is struggling to fit in with European society and feels increasingly alienated<sup>12</sup>.

On the bright side, Muslim communities have successfully integrated into their host societies. They are living better lives with better incomes, and more and

<sup>1</sup>The Oxford handbook of European Islam / J. Cesari (ed.). Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. 896 p.

<sup>2</sup>Jacobsen B. A., Vinding N. V. Denmark // Yearb. of Muslims in Eur. 2020. Vol. 12. P. 97–119.

<sup>3</sup>Kinsella V. Attitudes towards Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.lifeinnorway.net/attitudes-towards-muslims-islamophobia/> (date of access: 12.02.2023).

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<sup>12</sup>The Oxford handbook of European Islam / J. Cesari (ed.). Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. P. 124.

more of them are well-educated and qualified for professional roles. Scandinavian Muslims are gaining traction in the political and social spheres, taking seats in legislatures, city councils, and other positions of authority. Public channels of communication between Muslim communities, the general public, and the authorities have been established. Radical Islamism is rejected by the diaspora's traditionally powerful mainstream religious organisations [8].

The Muslim issue differs greatly amongst Northern European nations. As an example, Sweden maintains it as a stronghold, while Denmark has rejected it. Beyond fringe far-right factions, this rejection has reached the political mainstream, which is already using anti-Islamic rhetoric. Conversely, Norway follows a moderate approach [7], balancing between a commitment to multiculturalism and the rise in anti-Muslim sentiments. Although the Muslim populations in Finland and Iceland are too small to foment intolerance, there has been a discernible rise in hostility, which is mostly due to the media<sup>13</sup>.

Every country under review (except Iceland), has passed several noteworthy milestones associated with rising tensions with Muslims. A few examples are the Prophet Muhammad caricatures that were published in Sweden and Denmark in 2005 and 2007, the Utoya massacre that occurred in Norway in 2011, and the attack on a crowd in Turku (Finland) in 2017 by a Moroccan refugee<sup>14</sup>.

Like in most of Europe, the Muslim populations in its North are concentrated in large cities, frequently creating separate neighbourhoods that eventually become ghettos. One famous example is Copenhagen's Norrebro neighbourhood, which is almost exclusively home to Muslims<sup>15</sup>. Muslims make up roughly 45 % of Malmö's population in Sweden<sup>16</sup>, while the Danish Muslim community is located in the Copenhagen agglomeration. In Finland, Helsinki and other major cities (Turku, Tampere, etc.) are home to a significant portion of the Muslim population, while in Iceland, almost all Muslims reside in Reykjavik [6, p. 57].

Sunni Islam predominates in the diaspora throughout these nations, as in the rest of the Islamic world.

However, there are additional factors, such as the growing Salafist movement and the sizeable populations of Shia Muslims in Denmark<sup>17</sup> (above 13 % in 2010) and Norway<sup>18</sup> (up to 19 % in 2011) [10, p. 9].

Many see Islam as not just another religion, but as an aggressive ideology that threatens civilisational norms, social structures, traditional values and the civilisational code. A large part of the populace believes that multiculturalism is in decline and has lost credibility [3, p. 124].

Three waves of Muslim immigration have occurred in the countries under review. The first wave, mostly made up of labour migrants and their families, arrived in Denmark in the 1950s and Sweden and Norway in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, there was a smaller-scale influx to Finland<sup>19</sup>.

The second was primarily composed of refugees from Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran, the former Yugoslavia, and the Middle East. It affected most of Northern Europe in the 1980s, reaching Finland in the 1990s. In 2010, Muslims made up about 1 % of the population in Finland<sup>20</sup> and about 3 % in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway<sup>21</sup>.

Since there are no official statistics on religious affiliation in Northern Europe, estimates of the Muslim population and its various denominations are imprecise and subject to wide variations. The default classification of migrants from primarily Muslim countries as Muslims results in an overestimation of the Muslim population. In a 2008 Danish survey, only 79 % of immigrants from Muslim countries identified as Muslims, with the remainder adhering to other religions or being atheists<sup>22</sup>. Relying on mosque registration figures is equally flawed, in Norway, for example, in 1980, only 10 % of Muslims were registered<sup>23</sup>. The official estimates in Finland, which are based on registered Islamic communities, also do not accurately represent the larger Muslim population. As a result, the 2021 census significantly undercounted the Muslim population, showing 20.8 thousand people (0.37 %) as opposed to an estimated 120–130 thousand<sup>24</sup>. Estimates of the Muslim population in Iceland vary from 1.3 to 3 thousand highlighting the difficulties in accurate quantification<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>13</sup>Jacobsen B. A., *Vinding N. V.* Denmark...

<sup>14</sup>Vogt K. Who are Muslims in Norway...

<sup>15</sup>Jacobsen B. A., *Vinding N. V.* Denmark...

<sup>16</sup>Malmö sees lowest crime stats in 17 years: new figures [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.thelocal.se/20190118/malmo-sees-lowest-crime-stats-in-17-years-new-figures> (date of access: 11.11.2022).

<sup>17</sup>Vogt K. Who are Muslims in Norway...

<sup>18</sup>2010 Report on international religious freedom [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4cf2d0a2c.html> (date of access: 18.04.2022).

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<sup>20</sup>The Oxford handbook of European Islam / J. Cesari (ed.). Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. P. 409.

<sup>21</sup>2010 Report on international religious freedom [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4cf2d0a2c.html>. (date of access: 18.04.2022) ; Religious composition by country, 2010–2050 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050> (date of access: 21.12.2022).

<sup>22</sup>The Oxford handbook of European Islam / J. Cesari (ed.). Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. P. 402.

<sup>23</sup>Fangen K. Why did Muslims become the new enemy in Norway and Europe...

<sup>24</sup>Religious composition by country, 2010–2050 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050> (date of access: 21.12.2022.)

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

The events in Syria drove the third wave of Muslim immigration, which began in 2010 and peaked in 2015. As of 2017, the percentage of Muslims was 8 % in Sweden, 4.5–5 % in Denmark, and 3.4 % in Norway. In Finland, it was estimated to be five times larger than the official figure of 0.37 %<sup>26</sup>. Iceland continued to be an exception, not having seen any immigration waves [6, p. 62].

The ethnic makeup of Muslim communities in Northern Europe was dramatically changed by the arrival of Syrian refugees. By the early 2010s, Somalis, Afghans, Iraqis, Pakistanis, and Turks (including many Kurds) constituted the largest Muslim communities in Denmark<sup>27</sup>. Similarly, in 2009, the largest groups in Sweden's diaspora were Turks and Iraqis, followed by Iranians, Bosnians, Albanians, and Somalis [4, p.123]. Somalis slightly outnumbered Pakistanis in Norway, while the natives of Iraq, Iran and Turkey trailed far behind<sup>28</sup>. Turks and Somalis made up the largest ethnic groups in Finland, closely followed by Iranians and Albanians (Kosovars)<sup>29</sup>. Albanians and Bosnians led Iceland's small diaspora, followed by Turks, Pakistanis, and Arabs<sup>30</sup>. By 2020 Syrians had become the second most populous Muslim in Denmark (after Turks)<sup>31</sup> and third most numerous group in Norway<sup>32</sup> (after Somalis and Pakistanis). In Finland, Syrians numbered over 50 %<sup>33</sup> of the Muslims, and in Sweden, up to 25%<sup>34</sup>.

There is a pattern to how Muslim communities form in Northern Europe [11, p. 18]. Family reunification occurs after the initial labour migration, which is mainly from Turkey, Yugoslavia, and some Arab countries. Governments only encourage family members to immigrate when they impose restrictions on immigration and the labour force they invite. The second wave of immigration followed, consisting primarily of refugees fleeing crises or unrest in countries like Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and other places during the 1980s and 1990s. Among other things, the diaspora institutionalises, becomes more involved in the affairs of their new home, and constructs mosques and Islamic schools. A third wave of Muslim migration was spurred by the refugee crisis of 2010, which put pressure on Scandinavia's welfare states, worsened the housing and

employment markets, and ultimately heightened tensions and animosities.

The crisis of the traditions and principles that once guided the Scandinavian peoples has been linked to these tendencies. Birth rates have reached all-time lows, in Norway, for instance, there were 1.7 children for every woman in 2018 (down from 2.9 in 1960). Meanwhile, Muslim communities continue to have high birth rates (4.4 among Somalis in Norway)<sup>35</sup>. The church serves as yet another example. In the past, the national Evangelical-Lutheran churches – the Danish People's Church, the Church of Sweden and Norway, the ELC of Finland, and the Church of Iceland – dominated the Scandinavian religious landscape. But in these countries, Islam has emerged as the second most popular religion, and the original churches have consistently seen a 1.5 % annual decline in the number of their parishioners. Just 2–3 % of people regularly attended these churches in 2010 [8].

When compared to the declining trend in traditional Scandinavian societies, the practice of religion in the Islamic communities is remarkably different. A Norwegian poll from 2022 found that 46 % of Muslims pray every day<sup>36</sup>. The percentage of Muslims in Denmark who pray five times a day rose from 37 % in 2006 to 50 % in 2018<sup>37</sup>. Mosques have proliferated, a sign of the Muslim diaspora's explosive growth and increased religious engagement. Mosques are relatively new in the region, the first one was built in Denmark in 1967, in Norway in 1972, in Sweden in 1976 and in Iceland in 2009. In Finland, the first Finnish Tatar mosque opened as early as 1942<sup>38</sup>. The numbers have significantly grown since then. There are more than 170 mosques in Denmark<sup>39</sup>, between 173 and 300 in Sweden (the exact number is unavailable) [12], and 40 active mosques in Oslo alone in Norway<sup>40</sup>.

According to J. S. Nielsen, by 2011, some mosques had transformed into hubs for the promotion of jihad [1, p. 178]. The Muslim community is becoming more radicalised; in the 2010s, more than 300 people from Sweden, up to 125 from Denmark, about 70 from Norway, and more than 50 from Finland (none from Iceland<sup>41</sup>) joined jihadists in Syria. Clashes between Muslim

<sup>26</sup>Pauha T., Konttori J. Finland...

<sup>27</sup>Religious composition by country, 2010–2050 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050> (date of access: 21.12.2022.)

<sup>28</sup>Vogt K. Who are Muslims in Norway...

<sup>29</sup>The Oxford handbook of European Islam / J. Cesari (ed.). Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. P. 399.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. P. 405.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. P. 199.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. P. 502.

<sup>33</sup>Pauha T., Konttori J. Finland...

<sup>34</sup>Jacobsen B. A., Vinding N. V. Denmark...

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Survey: Muslims in Norway are more religious than Christians [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://sciencenorway.no/christianity-islam-ntb-english/survey-muslims-in-norway-are-more-religious-than-christians/2177054> (date of access: 12.04.2023).

<sup>37</sup>Jacobsen B. A., Vinding N. V. Denmark...

<sup>38</sup>Pauha T., Konttori J. Finland...

<sup>39</sup>Jacobsen B. A., Vinding N. V. Denmark...

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Fangen K. Why did Muslims become the new enemy in Norway and Europe...

youth, local anti-Islamic groups, and law enforcement occurred in the early 2000s, Norrebro (2007) and Malmö (2008)<sup>42</sup> are two examples. Critics of Islam in Sweden claim that after a wave of Muslim refugees arrived in the middle of the 2010s, there was an increase in crimes, including incidents involving firearms and rapes<sup>43</sup>. The wearing of face-covering clothing by women has provoked acrimonious disputes.

With their increasing prominence in the social and political agendas of the region, the growing Muslim communities in Scandinavia have become a source of contention. According to a 2008 survey, 43 % of Danes thought Islam was incompatible with Danish culture and values<sup>44</sup>. According to later surveys conducted in 2017, two-thirds of respondents thought Muslims would never be able to fit in and would even be a threat to Denmark's cultural identity [5]. A 2017 survey found that 34 % of Norwegians had unfavourable opinions of Muslims, and 39 % saw Islam as a threat to their culture<sup>45</sup>. By 2020, 52 % of respondents said Islam was totally or partially at variance with Norwegian values. According to a 2018 Pew Research Centre survey conducted across 15 European states, 62 % of Finns thought Islam went against Finnish values<sup>46</sup>.

Politicians have responded to these sentiments by enacting immigration restrictions. Over 100 restrictive immigration measures were implemented in Denmark between 2015 and 2019 by the centre-right government of L. L. Rasmussen, setting the precedent for other countries. Denmark now has some of the strictest immigration, naturalisation, and asylum laws in all of Northern Europe. Its 2017 law forbidding the wearing of face-covering clothing is a recent example [5].

In the region, Denmark is notable for being an important centre of right-wing anti-Islamic populism. With immigration at the forefront of debate, the trend gained momentum in the 2001 parliamentary election, which signalled the majority shift to right-wing and centre-right parties for the first time in 100 years. Initially, the Progress Party (*Fremskridts partiet*, FrP), which finished second in the 1973 parliamentary elections behind the Social Democrats, led the anti-Islamic political agenda. Eventually, the party's popularity declined, primarily due to internal conflicts, and it was eliminated from the Folketing in the 2001 election. After the FrP split up in 1995, the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF) was founded and garnered most of the electoral support of its predecessor. It made its

Folketing debut in 1998 and placed second in 2015. In exchange for tougher immigration laws, DF later supported the minority government, which was a liberal-conservative alliance. In the 2019 election, it came in third place [12].

Displeased with DF's incoherence, its voters began to defect [3, p. 124]. In 2015, a newly established political party called the New Right (*Nye Borgerlige*, NB) focused much of its platform on criticising Islam. In the 2019 election, it picked up 4 seats and the DF group lost 16. Furthermore, in 2017 a more radical party known as the Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*) emerged, headed by R. Paludan, who was well-known for his anti-Islamic views. Despite being forbidden and missing the Folketing, this party further damaged DF [12].

In 2022, the former minister I. Støjberg – who also expressed anti-Islamic views – founded the party of Danish Democrats (DD). DD finished in fifth place in the election of 2022. Together, DD, DF, and FrP secured 25 out of a total of 179 seats<sup>47</sup>.

In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats (SD) are building their political agenda around disparaging the Muslim community. In the 2022 parliamentary election, SD secured the second position and aligned itself with the centre-right government<sup>48</sup>.

With a strong humanistic agenda and a moderate paradigm historically, Scandinavian politics saw a dramatic change after the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015. This was a change from the social democrats' long-lasting domination since World War II when they were able to hold onto power by putting a strong emphasis on the *folkhemmet* (people's house) concept and providing extensive social guarantees.

Political discourse changed as a result of the 2015 refugee crisis, with even the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SSDP) modifying its discourse due to worries that the welfare system might implode. In this setting, SD presented itself as a distinct political force in favour of immigration controls. Interestingly, one of the party's well-known representatives is an immigrant from Iran, highlighting its dedication to inclusivity and dispelling stereotypes of racism. Even with these initiatives, some Swedes still see SD through the prism of their previous beliefs, illustrating the difficulties in changing the public's perceptions [12].

D. L. Tomson identifies four key stages in the development of the SD [12]. Between 1988 and the mid-2000s,

<sup>42</sup>Malmö sees lowest crime stats in 17 years: new figures [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.thelocal.se/20190118/malm-sees-lowest-crime-stats-in-17-years-new-figures> (date of access: 11.11.2022).

<sup>43</sup>New report highlights attacks on 39 Swedish mosques in 2017 [Electronic resource]. URL: [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se) (date of access: 08.11.2019).

<sup>44</sup>2010 Report on international religious freedom [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4cf2d0a2c.html> (date of access: 18.04.2022).

<sup>45</sup>Kinsella V. Attitudes towards Muslims and Islamophobia in Norway ...

<sup>46</sup>Religious composition by country, 2010–2050 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050> (date of access: 21.12.2022.)

<sup>47</sup>Folketingsvalg tirsdag [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.dst.dk> (date of access: 07.06.2023).

<sup>48</sup>Val till riksdagen – Slutligt valresultat – Riket. Valmyndigheten [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://resultat.val.se/val2022/slutlig/RD/rike> (date of access: 06.06.2023).

the party was still in its infancy and had very little influence. During the second stage, which began in 2005 with J. Akesson's appointment as chair, SD made a determined effort to break away from its far-right image. Notably, SD was successful in elections, at least at the local level. In the third phase, SD won seats in the Riksdag in the elections in 2010, and its number of parliamentary seats increased steadily. The fourth phase began following the 2015 refugee crisis when SD took advantage of public discontent to boost its standing in the 2018 election. SD claims to speak for the average person and uses "alternative media" to highlight Muslim-related issues as a symbol of the failures of left-wing policies [12].

Sweden tightened its immigration laws at the same time. Starting in November 2015, checkpoints were implemented at seaports, especially those that received refugees arriving from Denmark. Some benefits for asylum seekers and families looking to reunite were removed. The Scone region outlawed the wearing of face-covering clothing in schools in 2019. In 2016, a law backed by the SSDP, which was in power at the time, provided made temporary residence the only status available for refugees on admission. As a consequence of this policy change, the number of asylum applications decreased from 112 thousands in 2016 – with a 60 % acceptance rate – to 35 thousand in 2018, with a 32 % acceptance rate [12].

C. Hagen, who led the Progress Party from 1978 to 2006 has been a member of parliament since 1974, and a leading figure in Norway's anti-Islam movement for several decades. However, the Norwegian Democrats, who were established in 2002 following their split from the Progress Party, currently hold the most radical anti-Islamic position. This party has seats in local councils but is not represented in the Storting. Founded in 2008, Stop Islamisation of Norway (SIAN) is the biggest anti-Islamic organisation in Norway. It organises protests against mosque activities and portrays Islam as a political ideology that is totalitarian and in violation of Norway's constitution. Although its activists have burned the Quran in public on several occasions (a practise allowed by Norwegian law as an expression of free speech), SIAN denies any animosity towards Muslims in general<sup>49</sup>.

The Finns Party, the main anti-immigration political force in Finland, is comparable to similar parties in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The Finns Party finished in second place in the April 2023 Eduskunta election with seven out of 19 ministerial positions<sup>50</sup>, they joined the conservative coalition government in June.

The fact that Iceland has no political party dedicated to addressing immigration issues is indicative of how little importance migration has in the nation [6, p. 59].

Concurrently, there has been an increase in political participation among Muslims. In addition to local councils<sup>51</sup>, Muslims are represented in the parliaments of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The establishment of Muslim political parties has proven difficult, notwithstanding prior initiatives like the Nuance Party in Sweden (Partiet Nyans) and the Democratic Muslim Association in Denmark. Danish Democratic Muslims blended Islam with liberal values, but they were swiftly ejected out of politics by low electoral support. In 2014, there was yet another failed attempt to establish a Muslim political party in Denmark. The 2019 announcement of Sweden's Nuance Party called for the recognition of Islamophobia and the criminalisation of abusing the Quran. Experts draw comparisons between Nuance Party and the Dutch party DENK [12]. However, considering that the party's best showing in the 2022 election was 2.4 % in a small number of constituencies, its chances of winning a seat in the Riksdag are minimal. Differing perspectives among the diaspora impeded the formation of a political party in Finland.

Muslims in Scandinavia have historically backed political parties on the left and centre-left. All of Sweden's parliamentary parties, including the Christian Democrats and SD, have Muslim members of parliament. There are currently six Muslim MPs in the Norwegian Storting, three of whom are Labour Party members and one each of the Liberal Party, Conservative Party, and Socialist Left Party. There are currently five Muslim MPs in Denmark, two of whom are from the Social Liberal Party. The first Muslim MP was elected to the Folketing in 2001. Neither Finland nor Iceland has any Muslim members of the legislature.

## Conclusions

The facts and findings of this study show a discernible trend: the traditional concepts of *folkhemmet* and multiculturalism face escalating challenges in light of the increasing influx of Muslim migrants, and

the severity of issues is becoming more pronounced with larger migration numbers. Notably, Iceland, with a small Muslim community, exhibits a virtual absence of antagonism between Muslims and the broader society.

<sup>49</sup>Bangstad S. Islamophobia: what's in a name? Analysing the discourses of Stopp Islamiseringen av Norge [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://brill.com/view/journals/jome/5/2/article-p145\\_2.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jome/5/2/article-p145_2.xml) (date of access: 24.07.2023).

<sup>50</sup>Parliamentary elections Finland – 2023 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/EKV-2023/en/tulos\\_kokomaa.html](https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/EKV-2023/en/tulos_kokomaa.html) (date of access: 08.06.2023).

<sup>51</sup>Denmark in Lebanon [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://libanon.um.dk/en/about-us/aboutdenmark/muslimsdenmark> (date of access: 11.03.2023).

The mainstream political parties in Northern Europe can no longer dismiss the growing complexities associated with immigration or relegate anti-immigrant parties to mere populist margins, especially considering their substantial electoral standings in some countries. Responding to these parties and the intricate challenges posed by immigration demands a coherent ideological approach from the mainstream.

When considering the Muslim diaspora, it seems that its growth trajectory will remain constant, partly due to a high birth rate. In a more extreme case, Muslims could number as much as 25% of the population in a nation like Sweden in several decades. But whether this prediction comes true will depend on several variables, in-

cluding how stringent immigration laws are, how quickly Muslim birth rates fall, particularly for generations of European-born Muslims, and where the newly arrived Muslims choose to settle.

In this context, some groups depict Islam as the *other*, claiming in a nutshell, that Islam is an ideology of totalitarianism inimical to liberal secular democracy, a demographic threat that has the potential to turn the diaspora into the dominant group and that a socio-religious structure of lesser importance than that of the West.

Conclusively, the political elites often exploit the threat posed by Islam to the Scandinavian nations' identity to hide the underlying socioeconomic problems.

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Received by editorial board 12.08.2023

## THE MEANING, ORIGINS AND RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION SOVEREIGNTY

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Increasingly, national mechanisms for ensuring information sovereignty have been gaining significance in Russia and Belarus, given the widespread use of the Internet in daily life, the growth of online audiences, and the integration of IT into many aspects and new areas of social interactions. The importance of information sovereignty was amplified by the progress of digital integration, and also by the activity of international organisations. For example, national security is mentioned as one of the tenets of digital integration in the Eurasian Economic Union's fundamental objectives for the advancement of the digital agenda until 2025. The primary focus of the information security concept now being created in the Union State is the members' territorial integrity. There has not been a common, widely accepted Concept of information sovereignty to date, calling for a comprehensive academic review of the underlying phenomenon in the modern state. An academic examination of information sovereignty and related topics, including their historical development and current understandings, is presented. We analyse the theoretical and normative interpretations of information sovereignty as they relate to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, and derive various insights that enhance the understanding of information sovereignty as a unique concept in political science, clarify its attributes and the three stages in the evolution of its understanding.

**Keywords:** information sovereignty; concept; doctrine; genesis; national interests; information security; threats; challenges; risks.

## ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫЙ СУВЕРЕНИТЕТ: ПОНЯТИЕ, ВОЗНИКНОВЕНИЕ, АКТУАЛЬНОСТЬ

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В условиях возрастающего влияния интернет-технологий на повседневную жизнь, непрекращающегося расширения сетевой аудитории и проникновения цифровых технологий в новые сферы общественного взаимодействия особое значение приобретает создание в Республике Беларусь и Российской Федерации национальных механизмов, которые позволят гарантировать в этих государствах информационный суверенитет. Важность обеспечения и защиты информационного суверенитета возрастает в связи с процессами цифровой интеграции в рамках международных объединений. Например, Основные направления реализации цифровой повестки Евразийского экономического союза до 2025 года указывают в числе принципов цифровой интеграции сохранение национальной безопасности государств-членов. Разрабатываемая в Союзном государстве Концепция информационной безопасности направлена на защиту суверенитета и территориальной целостности участников Союзного государства. На сегодняшний день нет единого мнения о понятии "информационный суверенитет". В связи с этим возникает необходимость в научном

### Образец цитирования:

Иванцов АВ. Информационный суверенитет: понятие, возникновение, актуальность. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения.* 2023;2:33–38 (на англ.).  
EDN: MAWCKQ

### For citation:

Ivantsov AV. The meaning, origins and relevance of information sovereignty. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations.* 2023;2:33–38.  
EDN: MAWCKQ

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исследовании феномена информационного суверенитета современного государства. Исследуются вопросы о понятии информационного суверенитета, его возникновении и актуальном состоянии. По результатам анализа теоретических и нормативных подходов к осмыслению информационного суверенитета в Республике Беларусь и Российской Федерации сделаны выводы, позволяющие получить полное представление о таком понятии, как “информационный суверенитет” (является отдельной категорией политической науки), его характерных признаках и трех временных этапах его развития.

**Ключевые слова:** информационный суверенитет; концепция; доктрина; генезис; национальные интересы; информационная безопасность; угрозы; вызовы; риски.

The term “information sovereignty” has been used by multiple writers in a variety of settings, making it challenging to assign authorship to a specific scholar. It is true that there is not a single, agreed-upon definition of information sovereignty in contemporary political science, instead, definitions range widely and are based on disparate political science theories. The aim is to review contemporary uses of the term “information sovereignty” in modern research. We look at its historical roots to know how information security has developed as a historical phenomenon, how political science has come to comprehend information security, and finally, information sovereignty suggests a definition of the term.

Many approaches to the study of information security have surfaced in recent decades and have been explored by numerous academics. For instance, A. V. Rossoshanskii discussed the major factors that turned information security into a prominent aspect of contemporary Russia’s national security [1]. Examples of data leakage that happened accidentally as a result of using contemporary electronic gadgets were considered by A. A. Efremov [2]. The antagonism among states in the information sector and some facets of state information policy, particularly those pertaining to the preservation of information sovereignty, were discussed by I. F. Kefeli and S. A. Malberg [3]. At the practical level, M. M. Kucheryavyi outlined a number of crucial themes that could possibly become essential components of the Russia’s national security and state sovereignty [4]. Information sovereignty was viewed by I. D. Levin as a component of state sovereignty, which he describes as one of the most difficult and contentious issues in politics and public and international law [5]. The phases, indicators, and protections of Belarus’ state sovereignty were examined by A. V. Shavtsova-Varfalomeeva, who also looked at the theoretical and legal underpinnings of sovereignty [6].

Exploring the origins and foundations of information sovereignty is essential to its research. Diverse perspectives on information sovereignty need to be investigated. The phrase “information sovereignty” derives from the well-established concepts of sovereignty and the sovereign state in political science and international affairs.

However, the definition of information sovereignty remains elusive and it is still hotly contested among academics, including in Belarus and Russia. Sovereignty (or *souverainete*) means supreme power when trans-

lated from either English or French [7, p. 13]. According to its conventional interpretation, sovereignty is also a political and legal reality that exists inside nation states and is primarily shaped by the dynamics of interstate relations. Sovereignty, together with its manifestations and subjects, emerged during the state-formation process. Because of this, sovereignty is distinguished by ongoing change across different historical periods of state formation.

Currently, the characteristic of sovereignty encompasses the state’s independence and supremacy, the integrity of its territory, and the unity of the people who live there. The attribute of sovereignty sets the state apart from other comparable political institutions and defines its place in society’s fundamental political structure.

There is a strong relationship between the concepts of power and sovereignty. This connection exists because those in positions of power inevitably possess unique privileges. In other words, power can be deemed sovereign if it exists inside a territory and it is not a subject to other influences or pressures. This indicates a certain sovereignty on the part of the authority bearer. According to Russian scholar M. Lebedeva, since every state possesses both economic and military might, most states are actually equal. And this implies that all nations, regardless of their size and area, are created equal before one another [8]. Despite the fact that this system is still in place today, some academics contend that in certain countries, sovereignty has reached its limit [9, p. 329–332]. Therefore, it is arguable that the concept of sovereignty can be traced to the time of the first states, which is to say in the ancient era.

Scholars like I. D. Levin have significantly advanced the theory of sovereignty [5, p. 144–146]. He defines sovereignty as a condition of total state authority connected to the monopoly and concentration of coercive power within the state. G. Grotius in his works emphasised that sovereignty is more about the ruler’s authority than the strength of the people [10]. N. Machiavelli elaborated on the methods of taking and exercising power, the functions of government, and the qualities expected of the “perfect ruler” [11]. J. Locke sought to theorise the necessity of sovereignty with his notion of inalienable rights in his theory of unalienable natural rights [12]. The conventional definition of sovereignty, according to J. Bodin, is the king’s robust and unrestricted power inside the state [13].

The French author J. Bodin made a significant contribution to the theoretical foundations of sovereignty when he first used the phrase in a broad scientific meaning in his writings in 1576. His argument suggests that sovereignty is the state's permanent power [13, p. 689–695]. This finding has been supported and expanded upon by other researchers in their publications. For example, sovereign power is described by A. V. Daisy as the sort of authority over which no other person or entity may exercise any particular control [14, p. 141–142].

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century came to an end, new perspectives on state sovereignty began to take shape. These reflected prominent trends in the evolution of state sovereignty and provided the background for the debate surrounding the principles of the emerging new international order. In the context of the sovereignty debate, there has been a significant amount of scholarly interest in the concept of strengthening relationships between states. This stance was supported in the 2002 recommendations on enhancing information security in response to recent challenges and threats made by Russian and Belarusian experts at the April 2022 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the union of Belarus and Russia on the construction of the Union State. The crucial topic of national-type authorities, to which sovereign rights may frequently be attributed, was also covered in the seminar.

The notion of sovereignty as a political science concept should be thoroughly and frequently reexamined. It is important to keep up with the latest ideas about individual sovereignty and the fundamentals of state sovereignty<sup>1</sup>. Due to globalisation, states' sovereign powers are changing and weakening. Many governments are finding that their sovereignty is less important than it once was, and some may even choose to limit their sovereignty on their own will [15].

Information sovereignty is realised inside the political framework, and political science is perhaps in the best position to answer questions and close knowledge gaps regarding the topic at hand.

It must be acknowledged that the concept of information sovereignty is recent, and originated rather later than the phenomenon of information security. Before becoming a distinct concept, information security underwent following phases of understanding.

First, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century J. Bodin develops the principle of sovereignty, defined as the absolute authority of governments.

Second, progressive developments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and other events, like wars and revolutions, broaden the territorial reach of sovereignty; concepts of popular sovereignty and the values of state equality, nationality, and non-interference become elements of information policy and the information environment.

Third, with the development of computers and the Internet, state sovereignty is seen as potentially threatened, and the idea of data technologies' sovereignty is born in late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

It is thus crucial to keep in mind that information sovereignty does not necessarily imply the independence of the state externally or domestically. The main stages of information sovereignty can be added to or changed at different time points in response to changing political environments, improvements in technology, and other factors. Here, we may suggest a few more time frames for information sovereignty:

1) the increasing demand for and knowledge of information by states, the development of nation states and the drawing of borders throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the current era's expansion of information technology and globalisation (21<sup>st</sup> century);

2) the establishment and enforcement of legal standards when the 1990s and 2000s saw the introduction of the first information security and privacy legislation, and the current era has witnessed the rise of regulations pertaining to information security and the fight against cybercrime;

3) establishment and maintenance of the national information space when the period of 2000–2010 was the era witnessed the growth of e-government and national information systems while the current era is marked by the advancement of cloud computing, the Internet of things, and the digitalisation of economic sectors;

4) the growth of the national information economy from the 1990s to the 2000s, when the first national IT enterprises were founded, to the present day, when startup ecosystems, digital marketing, and technology incubators have emerged;

5) strengthening information security from the 1990s to the 2010s, computer viruses, phishing, were among the top concerns and in the present day, institutions of public authority, businesses, and people have been strengthening their digital defences;

6) collaboration with international organisations when the 2000–2010s saw the creation of the first worldwide information security standards, and the current age has been marked by the growth of international legal and technological collaboration in the area of information sovereignty.

The role, scope and function of information sovereignty may certainly be rethought in light of the worldwide technological developments that have a direct impact on the condition and evolution of modern states and societies in the information realm. In addition to increasing information warfare and the advent of hybrid wars, the worldwide technical and technological revolutions that are taking place in the modern world give rise to new dangers, difficulties, and threats to governments'

<sup>1</sup>Political science // Encyclopedic dictionary / U. I. Aver'yanov, A. P. Afanas'ev, V. S. Glagolev, I. I. Kravchenko, B. S. H. Nadinov, I. N. Puzin (eds). Moscow : Izd-vo Mosk. kommerch. un-ta, 1993. P. 288–292 (in Russ.).

information security and information sovereignty. Notable developments include the rising significance of communication in the exercise of state power, the competition for public opinion in the information sphere, and the rise of a novel phenomenon – hybrid wars – that stems from the extensive use of information influence technology on national information domains. We will go into more depth about these in our subsequent works.

Databases are becoming more prominent in state-to-state rivalry, providing useful information about these states' organisations and businesses. Meanwhile, the use of military force is waning somewhat since it is increasingly thought that obtaining intelligence through advantaged access is preferable to open combat [16]. The integrity and security of the state system are now threatened in new ways [17].

The Russian author M. Kucheryavyi noted that nations' transparency to information flows is what gives rise to the debate on information security, given the way national borders are eroding in a more expansive digital realm. States, societies, and even individuals may become less secure as data analysis, collection, and processing are getting easier [4].

Notably, the digital sphere poses fresh challenges to the way government tasks are carried out in the information age. This involves giving public authorities access to sufficient and trustworthy data pertinent to their purview. Information security is already starting to seem like a vague concept. The fundamental tenets of the UN Charter and other treaties are now binding for all governments.

The words "information sovereignty" are imprecise as they may be used in a variety of situations (legal, political, etc.) and interpreted differently by various people, such as academics from Russia and Belarus. Crucially, there are no specific definitions of information sovereignty in the political sphere other than the theories of individual scholars who have lately addressed the subject, such as M. M. Kucheryavyi [4], I. N. Panarin [18] and others.

Sovereignty is defined as two things in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus: first, as the ultimate authority to govern (both declare the (multi-ethnic) people to be sources of power and holders of sovereignty), including the right to choose their own political, economic, and social systems, and second, as complete autonomy and freedom from outside interference.

The preservation of national interests in cyberspace and national control over information resources, such as data, software, and hardware, are implied by information sovereignty. Consequently, countries endeavour

to maintain their technological autonomy, prevent data breaches, and thwart cyberattacks.

As we may conclude from the above examples, information security is a political science concept that refers to a functional aspect of the sovereignty of a modern state. It is characterised by the existence of institutions able and willing to manage information in the interest of national security.

For many states today, information sovereignty is a crucial component of national security, and comprehending this idea aids in the development of appropriate information technology policies and strategies by state authorities.

For instance, Belarus recently developed its Concept of information security<sup>2</sup>, approved by the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus, while Russia has had a comparable document, the Information security doctrine<sup>3</sup>, since 2016. In para 8 of the Concept of information security of the Republic of Belarus, information sovereignty is understood as "the inalienable and exclusive supremacy of the right of the state to independently determine the rules of ownership, use and disposal of national information resources, to implement an independent external and internal state information policy, to form a national information infrastructure, to ensure information security". The Information security doctrine of the Russian Federation does not define or use the term directly in the section "Terms and definitions", or elsewhere throughout the document. Only section 4 "Strategic goals and main objectives of information security" refers to it indirectly in the passage calling for "protection Russia's sovereignty in the information space by conducting an autonomous and independent policy in pursuit of the national interests in the information realm". Nonetheless, both texts stress how crucial information is in both Belarus and Russia.

Information sovereignty of Russia and Belarus rule mostly address the following three elements: the state's ability to control information within its borders, its capacity to defend itself from outside information attacks, and its capability to influence the information landscape in other countries.

From a jurisprudential perspective, information sovereignty refers to the state's ability and authority to regulate its policies both domestically and internationally. The foundation of such policies is upholding international law, respecting human rights, and the will of the people. From a political science perspective, already discussed above, the term refers to state sovereignty and denotes the ability of state institutions to conduct an independent information policy in the best interests of its citizens.

<sup>2</sup>Concept of information security [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://president.gov.by/uploads/documents/2019/1post.pdf> (date of access: 10.06.2023).

<sup>3</sup>On approval of the Doctrine of information security of the Russian Federation : Edict of the President of the Russian Federation of 5 December 2016 No. 646 [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.pravo.gov.ru> (date of access: 10.06.2023).

The concept of information sovereignty, which is already established in political discourse, has not received a clear interpretation in modern Russian or Belarusian scientific literature. This is understandable given the diversity of opinions regarding the concept's characteristics and meaning. It is assumed that the primary cause is the lack of clarity surrounding assessments of the changes that have taken place in the world in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly in the global information space. These changes range from the digitalisation of knowledge, databases, and data banks to new information infrastructure and technologies, as well as their use by political actors in international information exchange and rivalry, including in the most extreme forms of hybrid and information warfare.

Given how governments and societies will be impacted by global technology progress and how it will affect the extent and functional elements of their sovereignty, it surely seems plausible that the concept of sovereignty will continue to be reexamined. Crucially, communication will become increasingly important in the exercise of state power, the competition for people's hearts and minds, and the emergence of novel phenomena such as high-tech hybrid warfare, all of which will affect each nation's information space (and will be covered in more depth in our further works).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a rapid progress in information, communication, and information technology, placing the information sector in a prominent position. In light of this tendency, several other observations may be made.

1. Sovereignty remains indivisible, yet states today manifest their power and independence in a range of diverse sectors of the government and the civil society.

2. Information sovereignty, as used in political science, describes a functional aspect of modern state sovereignty, including the capacity and capability of state institutions to carry out autonomous information policies that promote national security.

3. Information sovereignty is now an open and evolving notion that encompasses many expressions of modern conflict such as information warfare and hybrid wars. Three distinct phases have led to the evolution of the concept of information sovereignty: first, J. Bodin defined it as the principle of the ultimate power of states, second, the term changed due to progressive developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wars, revolutions, and third, the rise of the Internet, and its perception as a potential threat to state sovereignty, followed by the emphasis on the sovereignty of information technologies at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4. Today, information sovereignty is a distinct component of overall sovereignty that has a close connection to a state's national security in the information domain.

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Received by editorial board 11.08.2023

## AUGMENTING THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHINESE CIVILISATION: THE WAY OF THE CHINESE DREAM

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The characteristics of China's political system are examined with special attention to the details of the socio-economic development strategy declared by Xi Jinping in November 2012 and known as "Great revival of the Chinese nation – the Chinese dream". The core of the strategy is explained from an analysis of China's consistently changing political trajectory. It is demonstrated that a key element of the Chinese dream vision is the role of the state on the international stage.

**Keywords:** global civilisation initiative; global development initiative; global security initiative; Chinese dream; soft diplomacy; Belt and Road Initiative; socialism with Chinese specifics.

## О РАСШИРЕНИИ ВЛИЯНИЯ КИТАЙСКОЙ ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИИ: ПУТЬ К КИТАЙСКОЙ МЕЧТЕ

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Рассматриваются особенности политической системы Китая. Значительное внимание уделяется специфике курса социально-экономического развития, провозглашаемого главой КНР. На основе анализа последовательно сменяемых концепций политического курса страны раскрывается сущность современного курса "Великое возрождение китайской нации – китайская мечта", который Си Цзиньпин провозгласил в ноябре 2012 г. Идея данного курса заключается в обеспечении активной роли государства на мировой арене.

**Ключевые слова:** инициатива глобальной цивилизации; инициатива по глобальному развитию; инициатива по глобальной безопасности; китайская мечта; мягкая дипломатия; инициатива "Один пояс, один путь"; социализм с китайской спецификой.

### Introduction

The revival policy, officially declared at the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), is the ideological foundation of China's current development course. It responds to the challenge of market-driven consumerist values that prioritise material success

and whose pervasiveness raises the prospect of social Westernisation and disintegration and necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of China's fundamental traditions and worldview. The nation seeks to strengthen its identity by incorporating a spiritual symbol into

### Образец цитирования:

Василевская ВЭ. О расширении влияния китайской цивилизации: путь к китайской мечте. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения*. 2023;2:39–46 (на англ.).  
EDN: JSBOJG

### For citation:

Vasilevskaya VE. Augmenting the influence of the Chinese civilisation: the way of the Chinese dream. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations*. 2023;2:39–46.  
EDN: JSBOJG

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the state's national strategy, which represents a shift from emulating the liberal-democratic Western way of life to a robust socialist system with distinctly Chinese characteristics. Historically, China's catch-up strategies were rooted in foreign ideologies such as Soviet Leninism and European Marxism. They had been integrated into Chinese ideology since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when a new culture movement gained traction amid military clashes. China's modern path emerges from the meeting of Western capitalism and Chinese Confucianism. This trajectory is marked by the revitalisation of traditional Chinese thought, a phenomenon termed the "renaissance of Confucianism" in political discourse.

China's leader, Xi Jinping, introduced the concept of the Chinese dream during a National museum exhibition in November 2012. Xi Jinping emphasised that this dream represents the resurgence of the nation and will be realised through the socialist state system. The Chinese dream expresses a desire for global equality and a shared future. As the CPC declared at its October 2022 congress, China aims to complete a new stage of modernisation by 2035, not only economically (by catching up with the middle-income countries) but also as a leading political power globally. Importantly, China's political course, based on Confucian ideology, prioritises both domestic well-being and global progress [1, p. 87]. This is consistent with the zhen principle of humanism and concern for others. Xi Jinping's "Great revival of the Chinese nation – the Chinese dream" embodies this approach, emphasising contributions to global problem-solving and addressing people's concerns. Therefore, the CPC should actively promote global advancement in addition to giving the welfare of the Chinese people top priority. China's current political agenda, centred around Xi Jinping's "Great revival of the Chinese nation – the Chinese dream", is

in line with its proactive approach to addressing global concerns and its contribution to their resolution.

Key characteristics of the modern political system in China are examined in this article. It defines the character of China's international initiatives and, in doing so, charts the development of China's current policy trajectory from inception to actualisation.

The Internet Information Centre and the Xinhua News Agency (Xinhua) are two examples of the Chinese mass media that are frequently cited in the research. The platform of State Council Press Office (china.org.cn), which provides news in eight international languages, was used to access the media excerpts. With this platform, events within the study's framework can be analysed more precisely. One of China's main information hubs, Xinhua, which ranks among the top six in the country and covers foreign policy, economy and culture, is essential to this study. Notably, reports from high-ranking government officials and policy documents primarily came from this source. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs press centre covers political developments, which, along with Xinhua, helped to form the study's empirical basis.

The research of numerous academics, including A. V. Boyarkina [2], D. V. Gurov [3], L. E. Krishtapovich [1], K. F. Lykov [4], S. V. Prosekov [5], K. V. Rudyi [6], and I. V. Turitsyn [7], provides the basis for comprehending China's current socio-economic and political course. A. V. Boyarkina investigates the views of Chinese authors regarding the notion of the Chinese dream. A theoretical interpretation of the Chinese dream is offered by D. V. Gurov, and China's contemporary political trajectory is examined through the prism of "soft power" by L. E. Krishtapovich. The application of "soft power" in China's foreign policy is examined by K. F. Lykov. I. V. Turitsyn focuses on the modernisation of China's foreign policy doctrine, while S. V. Prosekov and K. V. Rudyi examine earlier political courses in China.

## Materials and methods

The structural-functional method, comparative analysis, analytical method, and general scientific methods are used. This study is important because it provides

a thorough analysis of how China's historical experiences shaped its current political trajectory which is called "Great revival of the Chinese nation – the Chinese dream".

## Results and discussion

Many Chinese leaders have maintained China's political tradition of announcing its direction and development slogan. They have done so by articulating unique ideas such as Deng Xiaoping's socialism with Chinese specificity, Tsan Zeming's three representations, Hu Zintao's science-driven development, and Mao Zedong's new-democratic revolution [5, p. 77]. In 2012, Xi Jinping coined the term "Chinese dream" while visiting an exhibition. China's fifth-generation leader, Xi Jinping, said: "We are fully confident that the advan-

tages of the Socialist state system will become ever more obvious, and our path will ever broaden"<sup>1</sup>.

The entry of the phrase "Chinese dream" into political discourse was a momentous shift that sparked debate among the experts. The dream represents the aspirations of many generations of Chinese people and embodies the state and people's alignment of interests towards the establishment of a prosperous, politically stable, and culturally influential nation. In contrast to previous policies, the "Great revival of the Chinese

<sup>1</sup>The Chinese dream (governance) [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://russian.china.org.cn/exclusive/txt/2013-03/17/content\\_28266229.htm](http://russian.china.org.cn/exclusive/txt/2013-03/17/content_28266229.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

nation – Chinese dream” represents the first theoretical move towards bringing back a China-centric civilisation in the “new era”.

A crucial phase of China’s socio-economic modernisation took place under Hu Jintao’s leadership, distinguished by a unique political strategy that addressed social issues by emphasising national spiritual unity. Under this fourth-generation leader, the strategy, which called for a harmonious socialist society, addressed the growing social disparities (in employment, access to housing and healthcare, etc.) brought about by unchecked economic growth. The focus shifted from pursuing economic gains at all costs to reaching social equilibrium. Hu Jintao’s recognition of the prevailing social challenges encouraged him to turn to the “he” principle of Confucian philosophy, which promotes harmony [2, p. 170]. Hu Jintao’s commitment to world peace was demonstrated at the September 2005 UN summit. He made four key points in his speech to the assembly, emphasising the need to build a peaceful world for shared prosperity. In the first, “equitable security” was emphasised as a pillar for building a harmonious peace and a practical means of settling conflicts peacefully. The next initiative sought to improve global trade, financial systems, and energy markets to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium development goals. One more pillar emphasised each nation’s right to autonomous growth and cultural preservation. Hu Jintao concluded by restating China’s long-standing foreign policy approach, emphasising cooperation with all countries and guaranteeing a peaceful world underpinned by the UN. Hu Jintao was different from his predecessors in that his idea of creating a harmonious society served as the foundation for China’s current global peace and welfare-promoting ideology<sup>2</sup>. This ideological change reflected a more nuanced approach to socio-economic challenges by placing a higher priority on social equilibrium than unbridled economic pursuits. Beyond his domestic policies, Hu Jintao left behind a legacy that helped China play a larger role in promoting international cooperation and harmony in the modern era.

According to K. V. Rudyi’s research “China’s reform and openness policy in the new era”, the country’s political development can be traced back to three significant periods in its socio-economic modernisation.

China’s pursuit of an independent path and the development of an integrated set of theoretical principles characterise the first period (1949–1978). Mao Zedong’s reforms effectively tackled urgent problems of cultural crises, external pressures, particularly from Japan, and oppositional conflicts.

The second period, which spans 1978 to 2012, led China’s economy to its present prosperity. Mao Zedong’s theoretical directives came to be understood in a more nuanced way during this time. China was

able to overcome extreme poverty thanks in large part to Deng Xiaoping’s reforms. Some would argue that China’s economic miracle was overstated because its achievements are only striking when compared to the underperforming developing nations. However, Deng Xiaoping’s era – which lasted for 15 years after the end of his term in office – created the foundation for China’s current progress.

The third period, known as the revival of the nation as Xi Jinping had termed it, began in 2012 and was formally declared during the 18<sup>th</sup> CPC congress, but it in fact started when Xi Jinping took his position as the Secretary General of the CPC Central Committee [6, p. 21].

This phase saw the resurgence of national pride as well as the development of an autonomous socio-economic trajectory. The current era represents a fully developed domestic policy (socialism with Chinese specificity) in contrast to Deng Xiaoping’s era when China’s socialism was perceived as a route towards a liberal-democratic Western lifestyle or a pro-Singaporean imitation. The emphasis is now on economic development rather than economic stimulation, indicating a self-assured and clear approach to domestic policy.

Therefore, Xi Jinping’s political trajectory of contemporary China adopts a unique and all-encompassing approach. The country’s foreign policy has gained international recognition thanks to his leadership. The profound Chinese dream, as expressed by Xi Jinping, is the central theme of this journey, uniting the people in the pursuit of prosperity and well-being for the country. This dream calls for elevated spirits and consolidated national power for both the state and individual citizens. The Chinese dream is a 200-year timeframe that includes the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PRC’s establishment in 2049 and the CPC’s founding in 2021. By this later milestone, China hopes to follow the socialist path of nation-building and achieve national revival while strengthening its position in all spheres of influence. The incorporation of the great revival concept is noteworthy as it unites earlier ideologies and represents the interests of multiple generations collectively. Going forward, economic liberalisation will continue along the path set by the reforms of the 1970s and 1990s, which improved population welfare but also emphasised social stratification. To mitigate growing social inequality and promote national wealth, the leadership of the CPC envisions additional economic opening-up. Based on socialist democratic principles, this strategy of ongoing liberalisation in the political and economic spheres actively seeks to draw foreign capital to sectors that were previously off-limits [7, p. 37].

D. V. Gurov highlights in his analysis that, as Chinese scientist Wang Wei put it, the realisation of the Chinese dream depends on international integration. China must design a political path that strengthens its

<sup>2</sup>Statement of the Chairman of PRC Hu Jintao at the UN summit [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2005-09/16/content\\_2195668.htm](http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2005-09/16/content_2195668.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

active global role in light of the necessity of economic growth requiring access to foreign markets. In a world historically dominated by the American-Western model of globalisation, this assumes particular significance [3, p. 388]. Essentially, revival is about two things: improving the country's state of affairs and fortifying its culture. Their symbiotic relationship is highlighted by the interdependence of civilisation as the ultimate goal and the source of well-being. Reaching these objectives requires tackling ongoing destabilising variables on the global scene. These factors include urgent global issues like terrorism, epidemic outbreaks, and the migration crisis, and they go beyond unilateral attempts to contain China. As a result, the CPC is charged with actively participating in global problem-solving initiatives in addition to ensuring the welfare of its citizens, thereby aiding in the resolution of global issues.

Xi Jinping introduced the Global civilisation initiative in March 2023 during the event “CPC dialogue with the world” opening ceremony, which focused on political parties' roles in the modernisation of nations. In his keynote address, the Head of the People's Republic of China emphasised the value of modernisation, which any state should pursue regardless of national characteristics, in front of representatives of political parties and organisations from numerous nations. To lead the way in the process of modernising civilisations, political parties should encourage the close integration of their development with the nation's modernisation. Xi Jinping called on people everywhere to respect cultural diversity and preserve the values of innovation and continuity to prevent a clash between civilisational modernisation and cultural diversity. In addition, he stated that China will actively develop the idea of global exchanges and humanitarian cooperation to enhance intercultural understanding and create a new paradigm of cooperation founded on equality, stability, and respect<sup>3</sup>.

The report by China's ambassador to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong, contributes to the understanding of the fundamental ideas of the Global civilisation initiative and its role in the establishment of China's current political trajectory. Presented in April 2023 at the round table discussion “A unique path of success for all: China's Global civilisation initiative”, the paper tackles the problem of bringing the divided world together. Three ideological components that are essential to the initiative's central idea are identified by Xie Xiaoyong.

The first component is overcoming obstacles between civilisations and opposing ideas and attitudes such as prejudice and superiority. The initiative promotes the spread of universal principles that bind all people together: justice, equality, freedom, and peace.

The second component is accepting cultural change in the spirit of modern times and encouraging humanitarian exchange as the main means of fostering understanding between people. The project promotes the equality of different civilisations and calls for an end to ideological conflicts and the imposition of one's values through the use of different cultural models.

The third component, by advancing international integration processes that support states' economic development, the Global civilisation initiative aims to benefit economic growth in all countries<sup>4</sup>.

The initiative, formally announced during the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 19<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee in November 2021, was inspired by the accomplishments of the CPC in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Committee's Resolution “On the principal results and historical experience of the party's centennial struggle” acknowledges that China's modernisation has fundamentally changed the course of world development, especially in Chapter V. A new form of human civilisation has emerged as a result of the CPC's successfully implemented modernisation model, which has led the party to offer Chinese strength and wisdom to address global challenges<sup>5</sup>. Xi Jinping highlighted the model nature of Chinese civilisation in his speech during the CPC's centenary celebration. Advancing the pursuit of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Xi Jinping called on all countries looking to enhance their social structures to learn from China's model of revival<sup>6</sup>.

The concept of global civilisation emphasises values like equality, respect, and mutual learning among various civilisations, underscoring the Chinese experience in modernisation and portending a return to a China-centric world order. As the world navigates the challenges of rapid globalisation, political and economic change, and cultural diversity, China offers a vision for a new global order that unites efforts for the prosperity of humanity as a whole. Beijing's policy path includes the introduction of the Global development initiative by the Chinese leadership as a means of achieving this goal.

The Global development initiative, which was first presented in September 2021 at the 76<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, expresses China's desire for global development initiatives to be coordinated and macroeconomic

<sup>3</sup>Keynote speech by the PRC Chairman Xi Jinping at the event “CPC's dialogue with the world” [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20230316/a2bc0c83102e4cdea489909f82693a4d/c.html> (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>4</sup>Report by China's ambassador to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong at the roundtable “A distinct path of success for all: the China's Global civilisation initiative” [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://by.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/xwdt/202304/t20230429\\_11068856.htm](http://by.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/xwdt/202304/t20230429_11068856.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>5</sup>CPC Central Committee resolution “On principal results and historical experience of the party's centennial struggle” [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://russian.news.cn/2021-11/16/c\\_1310314781.htm](https://russian.news.cn/2021-11/16/c_1310314781.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>6</sup>Statement by the PRC Chairman at the Honorary meeting celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the CPC [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://russian.news.cn/2021-07/01/c\\_1310038413.htm](https://russian.news.cn/2021-07/01/c_1310038413.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

policies to be strengthened. Xi Jinping promised China's unwavering support to developing countries dedicated to the principles of global development<sup>7</sup>. Prioritising development, upholding the people-first principle, promoting inclusivity and accessibility for the general public, emphasising innovation, aiming for peaceful coexistence between humans and the environment, and guaranteeing practical action are the six main points that Xi Jinping outlined. China made a material commitment of 3 bln US dollars to support developing nations in their socio-economic recovery following the pandemic.

By September 2023, 70 countries had joined the group of friends, a collaborative platform that backed the Chinese initiative established in January 2022. About two hundred projects involving international cooperation have been selected for future implementation. China increased funding for the Global development initiative trust fund and established a dedicated structure with 10 bln US dollars in capital to facilitate project execution. China's commitment to achieving the objectives of the Global development initiative was further demonstrated by the establishment of a dedicated instrument for global development assistance<sup>8</sup>.

High-level dialogue on global development, an important event in the Global development initiative took place in June 2022. The Chinese leader, who was present to represent the PRC, declared the following important tasks to further the initiative:

- forging a stronger political consensus in favour of an internationally prosperous future where development is valued by all nations;
- establishing external conditions that are conducive to global development, such as limiting the unchecked spread of protectionist policies, imposing harsh penalties, and fostering polarising collaboration;
- fostering low-carbon industries, bridging the digital divide, and encouraging scientific and technological innovation as drivers of global development;
- strengthening international cooperation among developing countries and honouring the promises made by developed countries to improve international partnerships for global development<sup>9</sup>.

Crucially, China actively pursues its initiatives within the strong framework of the United Nations, which is the cornerstone of multilateralism. In international relations, a multilateral approach restrains the spread of unilateral policies, keeping the world from plunging into

a pit of confrontation. Multilateralism helps China tremendously because it creates a favourable external environment that speeds up its economic modernisation. China has maintained a strong rate of economic growth at home for many years, and it currently contributes about 20 % of the global GDP. Notably, China comes in second with a share of 15.3 % in the UN's regular budget for 2022–2024, highlighting its significant influence within the organisation. In contrast, China contributed only half as much to the UN in 2018 (7.9 %)<sup>10</sup>.

In his remarks at the high-level dialogue on global development, Xi Jinping emphasised how crucial it is to match the goals of the initiative with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development of the UN. During the ministerial meeting of the group of friends for the Global development initiative in September 2022, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi emphasised particular measures to synchronise development strategies. He provided a list of seven measures that any group of friends member nation could take to improve cooperation with UN agencies:

- 1) publicise a list of 50 initiative projects that address important areas of global development such as industrialisation, food security, and poverty alleviation;
- 2) promote the cooperation strategy for increasing food production;
- 3) ensure that the project on the globalisation of clean energy is carried out;
- 4) strengthen collaborations in customs communication;
- 5) facilitate the establishment of the World Digital Education Alliance;
- 6) work with the International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation to create an action plan for switching from plastic to bamboo products;
- 7) make the data on China's sustainable development companion project open to the public<sup>11</sup>.

UN Secretary General A. Guterres said during the ministerial meeting that China's initiative fits in perfectly with the UN's global sustainable development goals. He emphasised the importance of global participation in the initiative, particularly in light of the complex crises that the pandemic's effects are causing, including broken trade links, an increase in the number of people experiencing hunger and poverty, and escalating social unrest. In particular, A. Guterres praised China's resolve to forgo building coal-fired power plants, which is a critical step in the fight against climate change.

<sup>7</sup>On the inauguration of the Global development initiative in September 2021 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://russian.news.cn/2021-09/22/c\\_1310201357.htm](https://russian.news.cn/2021-09/22/c_1310201357.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>8</sup>On the practical results of the establishment of the group of friends of the Global development initiative [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2023-09/20/content\\_116698894.htm](http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2023-09/20/content_116698894.htm) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>9</sup>Statement of the PRC Chairman at the high-level dialogue on global development in June 2022 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20220625/edbebe540fb0406c89ed78119fef51d2/c.html> (date of access: 14.11.2023).

<sup>10</sup>UN finance: regular budget assessments by country [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/un/administrativno\\_byudzhetye\\_voprosy\\_oon/finansirovanie\\_oon/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/un/administrativno_byudzhetye_voprosy_oon/finansirovanie_oon/) (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>11</sup>On the statement of the PRC Minister of Foreign Affairs at the ministerial meeting of the group of friends in support of the Global development initiative in September 2022 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20220921/4945306f144c4f3eb0bcdea2d878fbd/c.html> (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

Recognising China's increasing contribution to the UN as a major donor, A. Guterres highlighted its proactive role in advancing multilateralism<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, China's initiatives for global development serve as essential building blocks for creating a world that is inclusive, open and prosperous. China's reform path, which is based on this kind of global order, depends on political dialogue and refraining from aggressive measures. Politically motivated military conflicts run counter to the principles of economic growth. As a result, China's leadership adopted the term "comprehensive national security" and used it in its political discourse.

The phrase "comprehensive national security" was first used by Xi Jinping in April 2014 during a meeting of the Central National Security Commission. 11 major areas are covered, including political, military, territorial, economic, informational, environmental, resource, social, nuclear, scientific, and cultural. Its main focus is on preserving world peace. Importantly, collective security and comprehensive security are not the same thing. China consistently applies non-alignment principles in its political strategy when it comes to matters of national defence [8, p. 50].

A revised white paper titled "China's national defence in a new era" was released in July 2019 and provides an overview of China's national defence policy. The document underlines that, in response to external risks, China is transitioning to a new development path after constructing a moderately prosperous society. Some sources of external risks are rising international competition and the US' unilateralism in matters of security and defence. Major nations are strengthening their cyber, space, and nuclear reserve capacities in response. Notably, the EU is speeding up security integration, Russia is bolstering its nuclear capabilities, and NATO is extending its influence in Central and East Asia. The white paper emphasises mutual understanding and acceptance of the community of common destiny of mankind among the nations in the Asia-Pacific region. Amidst internal contradictions, including challenges to territorial sovereignty and disputes over maritime and air borders, China seeks to maintain political stability and ethnic unity. The document reaffirms that since the start of its opening-up policy, China has actively pursued peace, valued peace, and opposed aggression and war. China chose to focus on improving its economic and spiritual capabilities rather than increasing its military might. It did this by voluntarily cutting its army by 4 million personnel and directing the energies of its people to overcome poverty.

The Chinese leader unveiled the Global security initiative in April 2022 at the Boao forum for Asian annual

conference, highlighting the critical connection between security and development. The initiative contends that power politics worsen global issues, challenging the widely held belief that they are good for the planet. Rather, it advocates for a change in perspective from a confrontational mindset to rational assurances of international security. During his speech at the conference, Xi Jinping emphasised the need for major powers to set an example and called for dignified conduct in the pursuit of equality<sup>13</sup>.

In February 2023, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a document entitled "Conceptual framework for the Global security initiative". The preamble recognises the difficulties that undermine worldwide co-existence, including the possibility of regional conflicts, protectionist policies, and conventional threats. China encourages countries to embrace interconnectedness, solidarity, and win-win strategies to adapt to the changing global environment. The document lists the Global security initiative's six guiding principles:

- 1) commitment to comprehensive national security (promote the use of political discourse as the main means of resolving conflicts, while honouring the security systems of each nation);

- 2) commitment to maintaining territorial integrity (adhere to the core principles of international law by refraining from overt interference in a state's domestic affairs);

- 3) commitment to achieving the goals of the UN Charter (consider the devastation caused by international conflicts and work towards the UN Charter goals);

- 4) commitment to legitimate security interests (recognise the illegality of upholding the security of one nation at the expense of another);

- 5) commitment to peaceful conflict resolution (establish productive channels of communication and consultation to ease tensions and deal with underlying issues);

- 6) commitment to upholding security address both conventional and unconventional threats which are becoming visibly interconnected (in the world of today)<sup>14</sup>.

Paying close attention to the guiding principles of China's global security initiative is essential to comprehending the initiative and its role in strengthening international security. These six tenets serve as useful directives for nations interested in enduring peace. China's security concept is remarkably different from the liberal Western one, which tends to emphasise unbridled power expansion. Crucially, the tenets of the Chinese initiative are not centred on material might. The Global security initiative should be widely acknowledged as

<sup>12</sup>UN Secretary General on China's role in international cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/12750787> (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>13</sup>Statement of the PRC Chairman Xi Jinping "Joining forces to overcome the challenges in the name of a better future" at the opening of the 2022 annual Boao Asian forum conference [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20220421/b9636a7570754147aca06d32e1d3a991/c.html> (date of access: 14.11.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>14</sup>Global security initiative concept paper [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221\\_11028348.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221_11028348.html) (date of access: 14.11.2023).

a means of countering the confrontational mindset that underlies geopolitical conflicts in Europe and the Asia – Pacific region, particularly in light of growing challenges that exacerbate intolerance threats.

China's initiative is a consistent step towards its ongoing commitment to a modern political trajectory that prioritises peaceful coexistence. China is currently protecting its borders while fostering amicable ties with its neighbourhood and other developing nations. This strategy, also known as soft diplomacy, was inaugurated in December 2011 at the 10<sup>th</sup> All-China meeting on diplomacy formation. A spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry emphasised that China believes in conflict resolution that meets the needs of all parties, and considers it a benefit to itself [4, p. 147].

Insights from the Russian researcher A. D. Tsyplyaev can add to our understanding of the soft power strategy's conceptual underpinnings. A. D. Tsyplyaev points out that Wang Huning, a well-known Chinese academic and current leader, coined the phrase "soft power" in a 1993 paper titled "Culture as national power". The political system, national character, foreign policy strategy, international image, and the advancement of science and technology potential are the six elements of soft power that Wang Huning identified. Together, these

elements characterise China's strategy for influencing the world outside of established power structures [9, p. 110].

Chinese scholars have identified the elements that are essential to their country's strategy, including diplomacy, international institutions, education, investment, and image, through an extensive study that was influenced by Wang Huning's insights. Different from the conventional wisdom of J. Nye, the creator of the soft power theory, China's leadership is promoting its culture internationally to further Chinese diplomacy and achieve economic goals. This way, the idea of Chinese revival is being translated into practice, increasing China's clout locally and globally.

Emphasis on traditional spiritual foundations is becoming a common feature of foreign policy in today's global environment. To promote national integrity, cohesion, and unity in the face of clashing ideologies and cultures around the world, it is essential to combat propaganda that only highlights one side of the matter. A culturally resilient state that can withstand external challenges and position itself to and navigate the complexity of the international arena, which constitutes modern China's most important strategic objective.

## Conclusions

The strategy "Great revival of the Chinese nation – Chinese dream" concept was first introduced more than ten years ago. Over 100 million rural Chinese people have lifted themselves out of poverty during this time, and the nation as a whole is making progress in doing so. China's well-being is growing at a rate ten times faster than the rest of the world, with GDP per capita expected to rise by 8.1 % by 2022 and reach 14,096 mln US dollars up from 229 US dollars in 1978. In the same year, the nominal income of Chinese citizens increased by 5 % to 36,883 yuan. Over 12 million new jobs were successfully created, exceeding the 11 million target. China now has a much greater role in the world economy. As of 2022 estimates from the IMF and World Bank place its contribution to the global GDP at 18.48 %<sup>15</sup>. From all indications, China is still moving in the same direction towards becoming a political and economic superpower under Xi Jinping's direction. Projects like "Belt and Road" and "Community of common destiny of mankind" are essential in changing the international system and undermining the long-standing dominance of the Western world order model. China is steadfastly working to adhere to the policy of openness and deep integration in advancing a new paradigm of international cooperation, promising to do everything within its power to contribute meaningfully to the peaceful development of humanity.

We have examined key initiatives reflecting China's present policy direction: Global civilisation initiative, Global development initiative, and Global security initiative. Rooted in the common goal of establishing a fair and equitable global partnership, coupled with a commitment to support developing nations, these initiatives prioritise economic growth and peaceful coexistence. China's efforts contribute to enduring, environmentally sustainable, and healthy global development for human civilisation.

The strategy "Great revival of the Chinese nation – the Chinese dream" embodies China's aspiration for an entirely new worldwide framework founded on transparency, concord, and equitable prosperity for all. As opposed to Deng Xiaoping's earlier Taoist philosophy, China now publicly expresses its goals departing from the notion of staying in the shadows. Now a significant global power, China has made a strong claim to superiority and domination in its current foreign policy.

China exhibits a willingness to adapt to the modern world following a historical journey from humiliation to strength and dignity. The younger generation in China feels that the country is experiencing a national renaissance and feels that it is their duty to inform the world of this change in leadership after three decades of uninterrupted economic growth that has had an impact on the entire world.

<sup>15</sup>Disposable income per capita has increased in China [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://1prime.ru/world/20230117/839491239.html> (date of access: 11.10.2023) (in Russ.).

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Received by editorial board 16.10.2023

UDC 341

## INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION'S EFFORTS IN IDENTIFYING GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LAW: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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The general principles of law, as outlined in Art. 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, are a source of international law. Nevertheless, their precise scope and significance have been widely debated within legal doctrine and their application varies in practice. The recent endeavours of the International Law Commission have, in fact, raised more questions than they have answered. One contentious issue within the International Law Commission reports pertains to whether the commission's work is adequately representative of all regions to enable the formulation of primary approaches to general principles. This article offers an overview of the Court of Eurasian Economic Union practices concerning the application and identification of common legal principles within the Eurasian integration system.

**Keywords:** Court of the Eurasian Economic Union; general principles of law; international law; UN International Law Commission; International Court of Justice; regional integration; sources of international law.

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### Образец цитирования:

Михалёва ТН. О работе Комиссии международного права ООН над темой общих принципов права и региональными тенденциями их выявления. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения*. 2023;2:47–54 (на англ.).  
EDN: BZTCIU

### For citation:

Mikhaliova TN. International Law Commission's efforts in identifying general principles of law: regional perspectives. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations*. 2023;2:47–54.  
EDN: BZTCIU

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## О РАБОТЕ КОМИССИИ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО ПРАВА ООН НАД ТЕМОЙ ОБЩИХ ПРИНЦИПОВ ПРАВА И РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫМИ ТЕНДЕНЦИЯМИ ИХ ВЫЯВЛЕНИЯ

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Общие принципы права являются одним из источников международного права, названных в ст. 38 Статута Международного суда ООН. Однако значение этого источника права широко обсуждается в доктрине, и существует различная практика применения общих принципов права. Недавняя работа Комиссии международного права ООН в этой сфере вызывает много вопросов. Одним из спорных моментов в отчетах Комиссии международного права ООН является то, достаточно ли репрезентативна работа комиссии, в том числе по всем регионам, для того, чтобы сформулировать основные подходы к общим принципам права. Представлен обзор практики Суда Евразийского экономического союза по применению и выявлению принципов права, общих для евразийской интеграционной системы.

**Ключевые слова:** Суд Евразийского экономического союза; общие принципы права; международное право; Комиссия международного права ООН; Международный суд ООН; региональная интеграция; источники международного права.

### Introduction

General principles of law are referred to as sources of international law in para 1(c) of Art. 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice<sup>1</sup>. However, unlike treaties and customs, the standards and procedures for identifying these sources are not uniform in doctrine, practice or norm. Currently, the International Law Commission (ILC) is working on draft articles pertaining to general principles of law<sup>2</sup>. The results contain a great deal of elaboration on doctrine and empirical matters but seem to lack the necessary scope and regional representation to accurately reflect the regional context

in which general principles of law are developed and applied. A closer analysis of the differences in the transposition of the principles, such as by borrowing from national legal systems based on similarities, indicates that transposition is most effective when it entails examining all regional approaches at the same time. Furthermore, a thorough analysis of these regional strategies points to the need to supplement national and international principles of law with a new class of general principles of law – those unique to regional legal systems.

### The scope and meaning of general principles in public international law: from H. Lauterpacht to the ILC's current endeavours

Renowned legal scholar H. Lauterpacht highlighted the importance of general principles of law in the international legal system in 1927, referring to them as having “system-forming” properties [1, p. 74]. General principles of law were enshrined in the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice as early as 1929 and were subsequently embedded in Art. 38 of Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as one of the primary sources of law, alongside treaties and customs. Still, there has been ongoing discussion about the nature, purpose, and content of these principles [2–8].

In legal doctrine, the prevailing view – especially at present – is that general principles of law are binding but complementary to treaties and customs. Yu. S. Romanov argues that they are not a source of international

law; rather, they are applicable law [2, p. 170]. Similarly, K. L. Chayka underscores that they form part of applicable law [3, p. 138]. From this perspective, these principles are significant for interpreting and understanding the law. Indeed, in their application, their role is focused on the interpretation and identification of the true content of norms, which, inter alia, maintains the integrativity of the law. Although the ICJ has only occasionally cited general principles as a source of law under Art. 38 of its statute, there is a substantial body of case law citing general principles as a way to achieve a shared understanding of international legal norms. This source is particularly important for law enforcement, and specifically judicial enforcement, because, historically, general principles have been used to fill in legal gaps and for the consolidation of legal cases.

<sup>1</sup>Statute of the International Court of Justice [Electronic resource]. URL : <https://www.icj-cij.org/statute> (date of access: 23.10.2023).

<sup>2</sup>Analytical guide to the work of the International Law Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1\\_15.shtml](https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1_15.shtml) (date of access: 23.10.2023).

It is also of utmost importance to consider how these general principles correlate with the notion of fundamental principles of law. As argued by professor A. Kh. Abashidze, these principles are part of a broader framework of principles [4, p. 29]. We concur with this viewpoint. However, we disagree with K. L. Chayka's position that the general principles of law can be classed within generally recognised principles of law as a part of this larger domain [3, p. 140]. Generally recognised principles are a fully distinct phenomenon in international law, possessing the unique status of *jus cogens*, which denotes their special legal nature and primary legal force within the system of international law sources. In contrast, general principles of law do not hold the same status. As professor L. P. Anufrieva clarifies, general legal principles, basis principles, and generally recognised principles and norms of international law have recently been added to the previously mentioned list, which also included general principles of law, general principles of law recognised by civilised nations, and principles of general international law (Art. 11, para 1 of the UN Charter) in a particular field [9, p. 6]. For this reason, it is critical to define terms precisely to remove any potential for confusion, in addition to elaborating on the range and structure of the principles applied in international law. However, the purpose of this article is to examine the work of the ILC, so we use the terminology that it uses<sup>3</sup>.

In any legal system, the principles of law hold a singular position. They represent the fundamental guiding precepts enshrined in law, characterising its essence and core regularities. Some legal professionals advocate for the consolidation of these principles of law into legal norms [4, p. 21]. Furthermore, in the realm of international law, norms may be referred to as principles owing to their more general and foundational nature. Regardless of the form in which it is enshrined, a principle of law constitutes a legal rule. In light of this conception of the fundamental nature of a principle as a source within a system of law, one may infer the following:

- a principle is the most potent part of everything (*principium est potissima pars cuiusque rei*);
- principle represents the highest level of legal expression *in abstracto* and possess a system-building character.

Principles are generally applied to address gaps in legal regulation in the absence of more specific norms [5, p. 365; 6, p. 560–561], or to interpret any norm, set of norms, legal regime, etc., in the name of integrativity and for the preservation of the legal system's unity [7, p. 97–98].

References to general principles of law can be found in numerous treaties made since the enactment of the statute. Their use is twofold: first, to establish the applicable law for courts and tribunals, and second, for determining substantive provisions. These general principles have found application in interstate arbitration and international judiciary, regional judicial bodies, and national courts [2, p. 153–154].

Still, the ICJ has regularly identified and relied on general principles, citing Art. 38 of its statute, even in the absence of uniform reference, label, or comparative analysis in many cases [9, p. 11]. The ICJ's reference to circumstantial evidence, as admitted in all systems of law and recognised by international decisions, was highlighted in the Corfu Channel case<sup>4</sup> shortly after the inception of the UN Charter. Moreover, the recognised principle that a judgment rendered by a judicial body is *res judicata* and has binding force for the parties to a dispute was underscored in the Administrative Tribunal case<sup>5</sup>.

Therefore, despite being widely recognised and utilised per se, the principles' exact scope and grounds of application remain uncertain, as does their role in the system of legal sources. The UN ILC systematically works with various sources, including on formation, identification, and interpretation of the principles. Its endeavours led to the adoption of the 1969 Vienna convention on the law of treaties and the subsequent creation of several documents that further develop this area of law (Guide to practice on reservations to treaties, draft articles on the effects of armed conflicts on treaties, on the provisional application of treaties, etc.). In 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution on the identification of customary international law that was founded on the UN ILC's conclusions. The ILC is currently drafting additional instruments, including non-binding international agreements, subsidiary means of determining international law, and general principles of law<sup>6</sup>.

In 2017, the ILC included the matter of general principles of law in its work programme. In 2018, the commission appointed a special rapporteur, M. Vazquez-Bermudez, to address this topic. Following multiple working readings in 2023, the ILC approved a draft document comprising 11 conclusions and corresponding commentaries during its initial reading. In conformity with Art. 16–21 of its statute, the commission resolved to transmit the draft, via the Secretary General, to governments for their comments and observations. Governments were requested to submit said comments and observations to the Secretary General

<sup>3</sup>Analytical guide to the work of the International Law Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1\\_15.shtml](https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1_15.shtml) (date of access: 23.10.2023).

<sup>4</sup>Judgment of 9 April 1949 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/103099> (date of access: 28.03.2023).

<sup>5</sup>Effect of awards of compensation made by the United Nations Administrative Tribunal advisory opinion of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1954 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/21/021-19540713-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf> (date of access: 28.03.2023).

<sup>6</sup>International Law Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://legal.un.org/ilc/> (date of access: 24.03.2023).

by 1 December 2023<sup>7</sup>. The final version of the general principles draft is poised for adoption in 2024. This initiative has the potential to culminate in a comprehensive analysis and the establishment of an authoritative approach regarding the sources of law: their legal

nature, identification and hierarchy. To what extent has this initiative succeeded thus far? Have the concerns of the juridical community regarding the legal nature of general principles and the clarity of their formation been adequately addressed?

### Navigating the complexities of transposing general principles of law: a critique of the ILC's approach

The draft under discussion by the commission contains both positive and negative aspects, with some aspects being subject to further scrutiny. The replacement of the term “civilised nations” with the term “community of nations” in all authentic translations is a positive development and is widely supported<sup>8</sup>.

However, the commentary to the initial draft of the conclusions on the general principles of law notes an omission: while the draft aims to clarify their relationship with other sources of law<sup>9</sup>, it fails to address the relationship with generally recognised fundamental principles of international law. Although general principles of law may be attributed to a treaty or custom, their peremptory character and importance for the international legal order necessitates a clear statement in the draft document regarding the priority of generally recognised principles in international law, regardless of their method or time of emergence or identification. Furthermore, the document should also make reference to the position of *jus cogens* norms in the system of sources, drawing upon relevant acts and the work of the ILC.

Consistent with the established legal doctrine, the ILC has proposed a qualitative division of general principles of law into two categories: those derived from national legal systems and those derived from international law. To identify general principles of law that have been transposed into the international system from national legal systems, a two-step test is recommended for application. The first step is determining of the legal principle exists, essentially by comparative analysis of national legal systems. This process is more an information-gathering exercise than an in-depth review of the specific content of a principle. Additionally, the test should ascertain whether the principle is representative of various legal families and regions around the world.

The two-step test for determining the first category of principles, the “transposition” principles, acknowledges that the general principle of law identified through this analysis may not be identical to the principle found in various national legal systems<sup>10</sup>.

This raises concern as it undermines the primary purpose of the process, which is to identify the precise content of a general legal principle. Such an approach poses significant risks to the fundamentals of a legal order, including stability, legal certainty, and justice. Effectively, this means that while different legal systems may meet the representation criterion of a principle *de jure*, in reality, the principle is interpreted in a way that does not represent the position of all legal systems. In other words, some legal approaches, interests, and traditions are still not given enough attention.

This discrepancy is particularly pronounced where different legal systems hold distinct views on legal categories and the role of courts or other bodies in legal relations. For example, differences in procedural approaches may arise due to variations in legal systems. Here are a few examples.

**Example 1.** All modern legal systems have measures in place to prevent competition between states in legal proceedings. One mechanism is the principle of *lis pendens*, which aims to avoid parallel proceedings by different courts or arbitrations on the same claims. The conditions for applying the *lis pendens* principle are the same claims, the same parties, the commencement of proceedings in one court before another, and the sequence of filing a claim and initiating a case. However, these conditions are interpreted differently in different legal systems, with the potential to decrease the effectiveness of *lis pendens* and lead to its dysfunctional use [10]. For instance, different legal systems have varying approaches to defining the identity of claims in parallel proceedings, which may be determined by the basis or subject matter of the claim, as well as by its object. The coincidence of the parties to the proceedings is also not an absolute condition, as the parties may change their procedural position in parallel proceedings. Additionally, the timing of commencing proceedings does not align across different legal systems.

**Example 2.** The principle of *Jura novit curia* (the court knows the laws) is interpreted and applied differently in common law and continental legal systems [11].

<sup>7</sup>Seventy-fourth session (2023) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://legal.un.org/ilc/sessions/74/index.shtml#a2> (date of access: 28.03.2023).

<sup>8</sup>Analytical guide to the work of the International Law Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1\\_15.shtml](https://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/1_15.shtml) (date of access: 23.10.2023).

<sup>9</sup>Chapter IV. General principles of law [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://legal.un.org/ilc/reports/2023/english/chp4.pdf> (date of access: 08.10.2023).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

There are many other examples of discrepancies, not related exclusively to procedural issues. These examples are presented to illustrate that even at the practical level of law enforcement, differences exist. As a solution, it is proposed to categorise such principles as either international legal principles, with appropriate rules to identify their content, or to recognise that such principles, despite their formal presence in most legal systems, are not general principles of law as defined in Art. 38 of the ICJ Statute.

Principles at the highest degree of abstraction, involving ethical, moral, and political layers, will be more

difficult to “generalise” in this way. It is acknowledged that both the principle of humanity and the principle of equity exist as general principles in all legal systems. However, transposing these principles is inappropriate for several reasons. Firstly, approaches to the content of internal elements may vary, and, secondly, these principles fall within the domain of principles generated by the international legal system. When determining the existence of general principles derived from national legal systems or the international legal system, it is advisable to elucidate their content based on the authentic content generated in international law.

### **Towards *jus inter regiones*: a call for comprehensive representation of legal models in international law**

Paragraph 2 of draft conclusion 5 emphasises the importance of conducting a broad and representative comparative analysis encompassing different “regions of the world”<sup>11</sup>. The commentary to this paragraph clarifies that the term “regions of the world” pertains not only to different legal families but specifically to diverse geographical areas. We fully endorse this stance and the corresponding clarification. Importantly, however, the draft itself does not adequately address the various legal models within different regions. While it primarily focuses on the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights, and the practice of implementing the Inter-American convention on human rights, it fails to sufficiently consider the legal practices within other regional associations (including the CIS or EAEU, in which holds membership), despite the richness of their experience regarding the application and identification of general principles of law. Examples include *non bis in idem*, procedural equality of parties in horizontal legal relations, protection of the weaker party in vertical legal relations, estoppel, *res judicata*, and legal certainty, among others [12; 13].

In our view, enhancing the diversity of approaches and promoting equality and solidarity within a multi-regional context is essential for advancing international law. The interregional character of international

law, or *jus inter regiones*, does not alter the fundamental notion of the sovereign equality of states as primary subjects of international law. However, it can facilitate security and sustainable development by formulating common value-legal concepts at the regional level and integrating them into a universal framework.

A more in-depth examination of regional and, specifically, Eurasian approaches reveals the emergence of a distinct category alongside national and international legal principles – the general principles of law of regional legal systems as independent systems of law.

Our analysis identifies three methods for establishing such principles, which are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing:

- 1) transposition from the national legal systems of principles applicable within all member states;
- 2) transposition from the international legal system;
- 3) identification of authentic regional principles specifically enshrined as principles of regional law.

In this context, the role of the Court of Eurasian Economic Union (hereinafter EAEU Court) cannot be overstated. At present, this judicial body provides a regional perspective on such principles, shedding light on the fundamental principles of justice administered within this region.

### **General principles in the case law of the EAEU Court**

The principles of regional integration law may be derived or transposed from the international legal system. In this regard, the universally recognised principles and norms as referred to in para 50 of the Statute of the EAEU Court (Annex 2 to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union)<sup>12</sup> include fundamental principles such as sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs, and *pacta sunt servanda*, and also universally recognised norms applicable to interpretation in international law.

These principles and norms are regularly cited by the EAEU Court in its advisory opinions [14].

Interpreting this category broadly can enhance the effectiveness of integration law and is consistent with general legal canons and legal logic. The legal basis for the application of such principles in the administration of justice is directly provided by the norms of the statute, and the task is to consistently elucidate the content of each principle or generally recognised norm.

<sup>11</sup>Chapter IV. General principles of law [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://legal.un.org/ilc/reports/2023/english/chp4.pdf> (date of access: 08.10.2023).

<sup>12</sup>Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/acc\\_e/kaz\\_e/wtacckaz85\\_leg\\_1.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/kaz_e/wtacckaz85_leg_1.pdf) (date of access: 24.10.2023).

One example of this is the principle of sovereign equality, embedded in various provisions ranging from the preamble to specific sectoral clauses. Nonetheless, the EAEU Court's practice has given it a more specific expression, shifting from an abstract principle to a norm of sector-specific regulation. An instance of this can be found in the advisory opinion of the Adilov case on 11 December 2017, where the EAEU Court cited the principle of sovereign equality of states as a universally recognised principle of international law<sup>13</sup>. By applying this principle, the EAEU Court emphasised the principle of equal representation of member states in the selection of candidates for positions within the EAEU Commission's bodies.

Additionally, the EAEU Court's jurisprudence frequently makes reference to universally recognised norms as procedural-legal maxims. For instance, in the judgment of the Tarasik case on 28 December 2015, the principle *ne eat iudex ultra petit a partium* was invoked<sup>14</sup>, allowing the court to establish the boundaries of the proceedings and disregard arguments supporting claims that were not admitted to the proceedings.

The legal principle of *non bis in idem*, also deriving the norms, maxims and practice of international law, was central to the *non bis in idem* case, where it underwent thorough development through the court's interpretation. In its advisory opinion dated September 2017, the court employed dual rationale to establish the applicability of this principle to legal relations within the union, both as an international legal principle and as a constitutionally guaranteed right and freedom in the member states<sup>15</sup>.

The EAEU Court has yet to compile a comprehensive list of human rights principles transposed from national legal systems. In doing so, it faces one critical task. Considering the general message articulated in the preamble of the treaty of the union, which emphasises the imperative of unwavering adherence to the supremacy of constitutional human rights and freedoms, and that this provision serves as a mandatory condition for the application of the principle of the precedence of union law, the Court will be required to ascertain the shared principles among the legal systems of the member states and ensure a consistent and precise comprehension of rights and freedoms by all states. Hence, the EAEU Court is expected to have a substantial amount

of dedicated work in this area in the future, along with the constitutional courts and comparable bodies in the member states.

Remarkably, the principle of non-discrimination has emerged as a key element of the EAEU legal framework, particularly in human rights issues such as the professional athletes case and various labour-law disputes<sup>16</sup>. This principle not only emanates from the provisions of the treaty and other union acts but also serves as a general principle of law with direct integration. It is utilised to regulate non-tariff measures (Art. 46) and the financial markets (Art. 70), ensuring equal treatment for economic entities across the member states in energy resource markets (Art. 79) and industrial policy (Art. 92) among other provisions. Ultimately, it serves as a consistent theme embedded throughout the treaty<sup>17</sup>.

The general principles of law shared by all the member states in a group of countries can also come from international law, and likewise, the principles of law in an integration association can come from union law, and reflect the values that are important to all the countries in the union. Accordingly, the court does not exceed its powers as prescribed in para 102 of its statute, nor does it annul or modify existing norms of union law or enact new norms. Instead, it identifies instances where legal principles manifest within union law, crystallising norms that are not merely rules for specific legal relationships but also embody the character of a principle.

In this context, the court may rely on general principles of law both for interpretation and as a source of law.

However, for the establishment and applicability of these principles, it is essential to demonstrate two elements (the two-tier test): the manifestation of such a principle in existing norms of union law agreed upon by the states, and the applicability of the principle to any legal relationship regardless of the subject matter. Additionally, a supportive criterion for identifying the meaning of the norm is the use or recognition of such a principle in the legal systems of the member states.

Therefore, while the court can and should refer to general principles of union law as a source, it is important to note that the court does not create but rather identifies such principles. Moreover, there are established principles that serve as a widely accepted benchmark for evaluating the legality of actions or omissions [12; 13].

<sup>13</sup>P-5/17: Adilov case [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/P-5.17/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/P-5.17/) (date of access 23.10.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>14</sup>C-4/15: Tarasik case [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/C-4.15/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/C-4.15/) (date of access 24.10.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>15</sup>P-1/19: NPP "Atameken" case (non bis in idem) [Electronic resource]. URL : [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/P-1.19/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/P-1.19/) (date of access 24.10.2023) (in Russ.) ; P-3/18: on professional athletes [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/P-3.18/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/P-3.18/) (date of access: 24.10.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>16</sup>P-3/18: on professional athletes [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/P-3.18/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/P-3.18/) (date of access: 24.10.2023) (in Russ.) ; P-5/17: Adilov case [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://courteurasian.org/court\\_cases/eaau/P-5.17/](https://courteurasian.org/court_cases/eaau/P-5.17/) (date of access 23.10.2023) (in Russ.).

<sup>17</sup>Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/acc\\_e/kaz\\_e/wtac-ckaz85\\_leg\\_1.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/kaz_e/wtac-ckaz85_leg_1.pdf) (date of access: 24.10.2023).

Violation of these principles can serve as a stand-alone ground for recognising a decision as inconsistent with the higher norms of the union. Notably, the principle of legal certainty has been pivotal in EAEU Court practice [12]. The panel's decision in the Sevlad case, advisory opinion in the Declaration of cash case<sup>18</sup>, advisory opinion in the case of vertical agreements<sup>19</sup>, and judgments in the "Dominantapharm" case, ratiopharm Kazakhstan case<sup>20</sup>, and JSC "Alfa-Medica" case<sup>21</sup> all refer to it. The multitude of judicial acts and the application of this principle to various situations have enabled the identification and formulation of clear criteria for compliance with union law based on legal certainty, encompassing accuracy, unambiguity, and impossibility of alternative interpretations.

The term "general principle of union law" was initially employed by the EAEU Court in the 2021 advisory opinion in the public procurement case<sup>22</sup> concerning

the principle of proportionality [15]. However, it had been previously invoked in earlier cases. The court emphasised, in various instances, that limitations on mutual trade in goods must not constitute arbitrary discrimination or covert restrictions on trade, and should align with the principle of proportionality (para 7 of the advisory opinion of 30 October 2017<sup>23</sup>). In the case of professional athletes, the EAEU Court, in its practice, illustrates instances of applying the principle of proportionality to safeguard not only economic integration but also fundamental human rights and freedoms<sup>24</sup>. For instance, in the advisory opinion of 15 October 2018 (declaration of cash case), the EAEU Court underscored the need to adhere to the principle of proportionality<sup>25</sup> when deciding whether to subject an individual to administrative or criminal liability in case of identified violations of the procedure for the movement of cash and (or) traveller's checks.

## Conclusions

Henceforth, it is evident that both the identification and application facets hold significance within the court's purview. The court will persist and, to some extent, amplify both the identification and justification of its regional general principles of law. This endeavour is crucial for the consolidation and construction of the legal framework of the union, as well as for projecting the regional agenda onto the international stage, thereby fortifying the positions of the member states and the EAEU as subject of international law. A two-step test is suggested for this purpose, involving an evaluation of whether these principles are imple-

mented within the union's law (special norms) and if they apply to legal relations irrespective of the subject matter.

The Draft on the general principles within the UN ILC will attain greater reliability and precision, aligning with the principles of legal certainty and equity, if it undergoes comprehensive amendments informed by the practices and legal values of various regions, including the EAEU. Moreover, a more cohesive system of sources with a clearly defined legal nature should be proposed, accompanied by specific examples illustrating the methodology for transposing these principles.

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Received by editorial board 25.10.2023

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# ИНТЕРВЬЮ

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## INTERVIEW

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### МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ЖИЗНЬ В ЛИЦАХ: АСЛАН ХУСЕЙНОВИЧ АБАШИДЗЕ – УЧЕНЫЙ, ПРАВОВЕД, МЕЖДУНАРОДНИК

### FIGURES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: ASLAN KHUSEINOVICH ABASHIDZE, RENOWNED SCHOLAR, JURIST AND EXPERT IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

*Aslan Khuseinovich Abashidze is the head of the department of international law of the Institute of Law of the RUDN University named after Patrice Lumumba. He is a professor and honoured lawyer of the Russian Federation and he also holds a doctorate in law. A. K. Abashidze has served as a member of the working group on Arbitrary detention of the UN Human Rights Council (2007–2009) and as a member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2010–2026), including twice as its vice chair and rapporteur. He is a member of the executive committee of the Russian Association of International Law, a member of the European Association of International Law, and the World Association of International Law. He also serves on the Academic Consultative Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Expert Advisory Board on International Law under the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Expert Advisory Board under the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, and the Consultative Council with the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, and chair of the International Law Commission of the UN Association of Russia.*



**– You work in a variety of fields – academic research, education, setting and implementing standards in international law. You have been holding the chair of the department of international law at RUDN University named after Patrice Lumumba and serving for many years as an independent expert inside the UN system, all while teaching at prestigious Russian institutions. Could you please describe how you entered this complex and fascinating field and why you chose to specialise in public international law?**

– When people ask me how to choose a career in general, I always advise them to follow their heart. I tell them to make a conscious choice and follow through on it and always consider all that happens in this field.

I decided to become a lawyer in my early years, even though it was not in my family's history. In 1979, after completing my army duty in Monchegorsk, I was recommended to apply to Peoples' Friendship University named after Patrice Lumumba. That is when my desire to become fully immersed in the study of law was fulfilled. I am presently working there, passing on my expertise and real-world experience to successive generations of international law students from more than 160 countries. When it came time to choose our tracks in our 3<sup>rd</sup> year, I was the only student from the Soviet Union at the faculty of economics and law who selected international law. Already at that time, this field of law appeared to be the most exciting, but also very difficult and complex.

An international lawyer should be an expert in history, geography, philosophy, political science, culture, and foreign languages, know the fundamentals of domestic law and the vast body of international legal instruments for global affairs. By covering the whole spectrum of relevant legal problems from a broad historical and geopolitical perspective, this profession enables you to get to the heart of the matter.

***– What drew you to academic research and when did it happen?***

– My academic mentor, professor I. P. Blishchenko, introduced me to research. I graduated from the university with honours, obtained a diploma as an English-to-Russian translator, and was recommended for post-graduate study. I defended my PhD thesis for the degree of candidate of sciences in 1988, and it was in international law. During the Soviet time, the department sent its new members to study abroad, and as one of these young professionals, I completed a master's degree in human rights at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute at Lund University in Sweden in 1992. The year of 1988 marked my teaching debut. I defended my doctoral thesis in international law in 1997. I received the rank of professor in international law from the Higher Attestation Commission in 2000. I. P. Blishchenko, my mentor, showed me with his example how to combine teaching with the work of a UN expert – he travelled regularly on missions to the UN to assist with his expertise on human rights and international humanitarian law. His work made it evident that international law was a distinct area where academic research and practice go hand in hand, and where leading professionals were also renowned scholars. This also works in the opposite direction: an effective scholar who keeps abreast of the current trends in international law will know how theory is applied in real world contexts. Because of this, we use the doctrines of the experts as auxiliary methods to ascertain the norms of international law, as art. 38 of the Statute of the UN International Court of Justice provides, and use moot courts and model courts extensively in the training of international lawyers, where the case method has acquired great prominence.

I was most fortunate to know V. A. Kartashkin. He was my instructor in the course on the international protection of human rights. His textbooks have been used by successive generations of law students across Russia. He also headed the Human Rights Council under the President of Russian Federation and served in the UN sub-Commission on the promotion and protection of human rights. I was honoured to work as his assistant during his service at the UN, which not only allowed me to build my expertise but also enabled me to write scholarly research on contemporary issues in the protection of human rights and freedoms within the UN system.

***– Could you elaborate on the relationship between your practical work at the UN and your research activity, and more broadly, your academic interests?***

– I have served in the UN system for over 15 years, as you may know, and I always consider the information I receive during sessions or on UN missions (including within the UN working group on arbitrary detention) in terms of the goals, objectives and the progress made, while viewing the system of international relations in its entirety. This approach is consistent with the systems analysis method, as academics call it. Over this extensive period, my academic interests have spanned many areas of international law – maritime, space, air, environmental, and humanitarian law, international law of human rights, and the law of international organisations, this extensive outlook helped me consider a wide range of practical problems with adequate breadth. Some degree of specialisation is always present. Both my doctorate and PhD research were focused on human rights concerns, for instance, my doctorate thesis addressed the international protection of ethnic minorities. The subjects of my public remarks are related, for the most part, to specific human rights concerns, such as the protection of the family unit, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, etc. My professional practice is advancing in a similar direction. Since 2010, I have served as a member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, including twice as vice-chair and as a rapporteur. The committee meets twice a year for three-week sessions to consider periodic reports from the states parties to the International covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights (171 as of today). Every 1.5 years I stayed in Geneva for an extra week to prepare follow-up questions to the reports already presented for the committee's consideration. Since 2013, the committee has accepted individual complaints. Another key area of the committee's work is the approval of General comments, which consolidate the extant experience and highlight the key elements of specific covenant provisions. Naturally, the academic views of the committee members are reflected in this work, and the stances taken by these scholars reflect their core methodologies in different areas of international human rights law. I have also made an effort to contribute my well-earned expertise to the drafting of the latest General comments.

***– In addition to supervising the defence of more than 50 PhD dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences in international law, you have published more than a 1000 academic works. You have advised three doctorate dissertations and you are the academic mentor for 6 colleagues from your department working on their doctorate dissertations. In your opinion, which areas of academic research are the most relevant at present? And which trends in academic research***

***should guide the work of new and aspiring scholars of international law?***

– International lawyers of all generations should continue to place a high priority on developing their national, sub-regional, regional, and global discourse of public international law, which is based on the shared traditions of the Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet schools of international law. They should also analyse and carefully study foreign doctrines and trends in the activity of international intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN. The contemporary themes of non-interference, safeguarding state sovereignty, including digital sovereignty, and the challenges of achieving economic, social, and cultural rights within the framework of geopolitical shifts are all highly relevant. The search for new forms of universal mechanisms that will enable us to resume mutually beneficial collaboration, cyber-security, and access to resources and technology are some of the most recent issues that impact the interests of every state. Integration issues between Belarus and Russia are significant fields that require multidisciplinary and comparative study to develop shared scientific capability. Prioritising efforts towards resolving global division is crucial for both scientists and practitioners. With governments more divided than ever, constructive multilateral promotion of nearly any issue is hampered. While defending their rationally supported ideas, researchers must look for areas of agreement. Additionally, scientific publications and programmes ought to support global collaboration in science and education.

***– When it comes to international cooperation, it is important to keep in mind that the Universal declaration of human rights, one of the cornerstones of the International bill of human rights, will mark its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. What is the current mindset of international organisation officials and the scientific community regarding this instrument? What does it mean for the future of relations between countries, which are going through a severe crisis of transformation?***

– Indeed, you have accurately observed that the Universal declaration of human rights is vital. National constitutions and international legal acts refer to the declaration's provisions, even though it is de jure non-binding. The vast majority of states, international intergovernmental organisations, and their bodies recognise the authority of this act and cite it as support for their positions. It is important to keep in mind that while reaching a consensus on the act's provisions was not simple, the states were able to create the paradigm of value-legal categories and principles that are now accepted globally. The primary categories of human rights – civil, political, economic, social, and cultural –

are enshrined in this act, which was created by the anti-Hitler coalition's member states. They are fully reflected in our Constitution, which serves as the cornerstone for each person's legal position inside the Russian Federation. We must abide by these rules both now and in the future. My personal experience leads me to believe that this act serves as a common agreed-upon basis for other UN bodies' work. For instance, as members of the working group on arbitrary detention, we came across violations covered by the International covenant on civil and political rights. However, in cases where the state in question was not a party to the covenant, the working group referred to an analogous article of the Universal declaration of human rights, which was typically accepted by the state in question. Never forget the words "a universal understanding of the nature of these rights and freedoms is essential to the full fulfilment of this obligation" found in the preamble to the Universal declaration of human rights. States can only successfully cooperate in the area of human rights if they do it equitably and productively.

***– What should be done in these kinds of circumstances? Do the current systems need to be changed?***

– First and foremost, there is a need for systematic practices to prevent the detrimental impact of individual states' actions on mechanisms which have been operating for years. Second, an advantage should be taken of the already-established protocols to focus on real world problems and on finding solutions. Allow me to provide a specific example. The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights expresses its concerns on specific situations of the states parties involved and offers recommendations on the periodic reports of the member states. For example, in its concluding observations on Lithuania's third periodic report on 30 March 2023, the committee, inter alia, expressed concerns decline in the number of national minorities, including Poles, Russians, and Belarusians, as well as the situation of their rights as a result of the repeal of the relevant legislative act on minority rights. It called for immediate action to effectively protect the rights of national minorities, including in the areas of language, religion, culture, and national identity. The committee also drew attention to the Lithuanian government's ban on fertiliser exports from Belarus to third world nations in Latin America and Africa, which endangered those regions' food security, and suggested that the ban be removed.

Therefore, we highlight acute instances of commitments being violated and risks of such major breaches within the context of the current human rights procedures, and we suggest particular actions to address or prevent adverse outcomes. Lastly, where it is truly needed, it is both possible and necessary to suggest modifications to the current multilateral system to maintain the diversity of civilisations and the fair distribution of

wealth, thereby preserving, rather than undoing, the truly spectacular advancements of international law during the post-war era. Russian and Belarusian governments have relatively similar stances in this regard as well as other global problems. For instance, we support the UN Security Council's growth but oppose overhaul of the UN system as such. "Not throwing the baby out with the water" and adhering to "healthy conservatism" is vital, as stated by the President of the Russian Federation. In the spring of 2023, I presented the same impartial evaluation of objective changes and the report with the same name, "Forming a new international architecture for the protection of human rights", at the St. Petersburg forum.

***– Reforms to the UN have been attempted almost from the start of its operation. The organisation has reacted to the growth of its membership by expanding the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The UN Charter does not impose many constraints, and hence the UN system itself is always evolving. Its Secretaries General, beginning with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, have initiated significant reforms within the UN. Boutros Boutros-Ghali was arguably the pioneer in the debate on UN reform. That was back in the early 1990s, which saw significant changes in the global environment. Next, reform was pursued by Kofi Annan, Ban Ki-Moon, and Antonio Guterres. What is your take on these changes?***

– The UN Secretary General's mandate does not include UN reform. He is at the head of one of the UN's six main bodies, the Secretariat, and he must oversee it effectively. The Secretary General may discuss UN reform only when specifically requested to do so by UN member states – say, by a decision of a UN summit or a resolution of a UNGA session. A crucial factor to keep in mind in this regard is that any substantive reform of the UN will be contingent on amending the UN Charter, the organisation's founding document. Additionally, the Charter itself specifies the procedures for amending it, and they must be closely observed.

***– The Security Council's permanent members' veto power is the cornerstone of UN reform. The suggested modifications, however, are hotly contested and typically only achievable if the UN Charter is changed. What do you think could be a realistic option for reforming the Security Council?***

– Chapter XVIII ("Amendments") of the UN Charter provides one. Specifically, under art. 109, para 1, the General conference of the members of the United Nations, comprising 193 members, may be convened to discuss amendments to the UN Charter, at a time and location approved by two thirds of the votes of the General Assembly and the votes of any nine members

of the Security Council. Articles 108, 109, para 2 stipulate that any changes or revisions to the Charter "shall come into force upon ratification... by two thirds of the members of the organisation, including all permanent members of the Security Council".

As you can see, any changes will require the unanimous support of all five permanent members of the Security Council who have veto power. As a result, Russia and the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council must agree to any changes to the Charter. That means that all proposals submitted to the UN Special structure on reform – in place since the mid-1970s – as well as individual state positions regarding the UN reform should be agreed upon based on the UN Charter art. 108, 109 and adopted with the approval of all UN Security Council permanent members.

As for the options for the UN Security Council reform, there are many of them, and Russia has a position on this issue. However, Russia's position on some points may change depending on new circumstances. For instance, the Russian leadership has previously backed several nations' admission to the UN Security Council, including Germany, Japan, and others. Nevertheless, following their admission as UN members on the condition that they uphold the "anti-Hitler spirit" of the UN Charter, these and other states – that were once Nazi Germany's satellites – have voted against the Resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which is annually adopted by the UN General Assembly on Russia's initiative. Given this, it is appropriate to ask whether they ought to be allowed to join the UN Security Council.

***– The activities of the Security Council and General Assembly are more recognised and more widely covered, although ECOSOC is one of the main bodies and appears at first sight to be a complex multi-level structure with a wide range of responsibilities. You have taken part in the Economic and Social Council's different accountability mechanisms on several occasions. What is ECOSOC, and what is its role?***

– This is a pertinent question for those who see harm in the "reforms" that have already occurred and affected the mandate of the ECOSOC as one of the six main UN bodies. The UN Charter essentially incorporates numerous innovations as compared to the League of Nations, including a stronger focus on state-to-state cooperation in the social and economic domains. The UN Charter's Preamble, art. 1, chapter IX "International economic cooperation", chapter X "Economic and Social Council" all underline such cooperation in social and economic domains, both of which fall within the mandate of the ECOSOC. The human rights domain was once been within the purview of ECOSOC as well.

However, under the decision of the Vienna conference on human rights in 1993, the Centre for human rights was removed from the ECOSOC structure, and the functions in the Human Rights sphere were transferred to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) established in 1994. After another “reform”, in 2006, the Commission for Human Rights was removed from ECOSOC and placed within the purview of the Human Rights Council, appointed by, and reporting to, the UN General Assembly.

However, economic and social issues, as well as the regional economic commissions have been left within the remit of ECOSOC. One change that is underway (that follows from the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/366) will result in the Committee on Economic and Social Rights being formed not by ECOSOC but by the Assembly of States Parties to the International covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights.

All such “reforms” and reform proposals contradict the UN system’s official position, which proclaims all human rights to be interconnected and indivisible. In reality, the institutional mechanisms for human rights protection are becoming increasingly fragmented. The Sustainable development agenda – 2030 sets 17 human development goals and 169 targets while specifying that sustainable development is grounded in three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. However, the reforms that remove the human rights sphere from the purview of ECOSOC are counterproductive and will have lasting negative implications for the universal human rights system.

**– Another main body, the Trusteeship Council, has been inactive since 1994. What might its future look like?**

– At the time the UN Charter was drafted, the future of colonial territories and their peoples was a relevant issue. Eventually, the UN trusteeship system came to replace the mandate system of the League of Nations. The Trusteeship Council was created as one of the six main UN bodies to deal with this problem (chapter XIII of the UN Charter). Its mandate was officially suspended in 1994 when the last Trusteeship territory, Palau, acquired independence. Of the variety of official and unofficial proposals for its future, the one that most appeals to me is its transformation into a body that generates innovative ideas for the UN member states and the UN itself. Let me also underline that chapter XI (“Declaration on non-self-governing territories”) continues to be relevant because, sadly, a significant number of territories are still under the illegal governance of the former colonial powers. Two such examples are the island of Diego Garcia (as a part of the Chagos Archipelago), where the United States is keeping its military

base and the Chagos Archipelago, which is legally a part of Mauritius but is being held by the United Kingdom.

**– Do you believe that the United Nations is still effective in today’s world in general? And in what specific areas?**

– Several authoritative answers have been proposed regarding the relevance of the UN and its utility for humanity. In his statement at the Valdai discussion club meeting on 21 October 2021, V. V. Putin described the UN as an effective body as he discussed ideas for the reform and abolition of specific international institutions. According to him, the UN has been much criticised for failing to adapt to rapid changes. In his view, the criticisms are partly fair, but it’s most likely the fault of all of the players involved, not just the organisation. Furthermore, this international platform not only upholds rules but also keeps the spirit of standard-setting, grounded in the principles of equality and giving everyone’s viewpoint equal weight. To add to this testimony, let me underline the breadth of the UN’s standard-setting activity, spanning areas such as human rights, environmental protection, the fight against terrorism, and many others, as evidence of the organisation’s effectiveness.

I may also refer to another authoritative opinion and the official positions of the leading powers in world politics regarding the preservation of the UN. At the Valdai discussion group session, V. V. Putin described the United Nations Organisation as the principal international organisation, that is still a fundamental value and continues to provide an example of healthy conservatism in international relations that is so much needed to restore normalcy in today’s turbulent world.

The Russian foreign policy concept approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 31 March 2023 declares adaptation to the realities of a multipolar world as a priority for the Russian state contingent on the restoration of the UN’s role as a central coordinating mechanism for aligning the interests of the UN member states and facilitating their efforts.

The joint statement of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on foreign relations on the eve of a new era and global sustainable development, dated 4 February 2022, calls on every state to protect the international system that builds on the UN’s central role and the world order based international law and to strive for genuine multilateralism under the central and coordinating role of the UN and its Security Council.

These statements, I believe, have full answers to your question.

**– Please discuss your professional goals for the upcoming year as well as your overall vision for collaboration between science and education at the university and programmatic levels.**

– When it comes to my work at the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, my main focus will be on three of its general comments that are currently being drafted – on sustainable development, the application of international humanitarian law to the protection of economic, social, and cultural rights, and on issues of national policies and laws regarding drugs.

The teaching and learning plan of the department I am chairing, emphasises the search for extra potential for improving the quality of the English language programmes for masters and candidates degree in law.

As regards the department's publication plans, we are working on the first draft of a manual on the history of international law, and on updates to the textbook "Regional human rights protection systems".

We will, of course, continue our work on strengthening our academic ties with the world's leading universities, with a focus on Africa and Latin America.

**– Thank you, Aslan Khuseinovich! Please accept our wishes for good progress and lasting success in all your endeavours.**

*T. N. Mikhaliova<sup>1</sup>, A. V. Selivanov<sup>2</sup>*

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## АННОТАЦИИ ДЕПОНИРОВАННЫХ В БГУ РАБОТ

### INDICATIVE ABSTRACTS OF THE PAPERS DEPOSITED IN BSU

УДК 338.48-2-056.26+338.483.12:069

**Особенности обеспечения доступности музеев для людей с особыми потребностями** [Электронный ресурс] : результаты исслед. / БГУ ; [редкол.: Л. М. Гайдукевич, Н. М. Борисенко, А. Н. Решетникова]. Электрон. текстовые дан. Минск : БГУ, 2023. 61 с. : ил. Библиогр.: с. 59–61. Режим доступа: <https://elib.bsu.by/handle/123456789/304789>. Загл. с экрана. Деп. в БГУ 20.11.2023, №010620112023.

В отчете представлены результаты исследования студенческой научно-исследовательской лаборатории «Инновации в туризме» при кафедре международного туризма ФМО БГУ. В отчете рассмотрены аспекты обеспечения доступности музеев для людей с особыми потребностями, изучен зарубежный и отечественный опыт, проведен анализ доступности музеев БГУ. Адресуется преподавателям, научным работникам, студентам и аспирантам учреждений высшего образования.

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*Журнал включен Высшей аттестационной комиссией Республики Беларусь в Перечень научных изданий для опубликования результатов диссертационных исследований по историческим, политическим и юридическим наукам.*

*Журнал включен в библиографическую базу данных научных публикаций «Российский индекс научного цитирования» (РИНЦ).*

**Журнал Белорусского  
государственного университета.  
Международные отношения.  
№ 2. 2023**

Учредитель:  
Белорусский государственный университет

Юридический адрес: пр. Независимости, 4,  
220030, г. Минск, Республика Беларусь.  
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Тел. (017) 259-70-74, 259-70-75.  
E-mail: [jpedagogics@bsu.by](mailto:jpedagogics@bsu.by)  
URL: [https://journals.bsu.by/index.php/  
internationalRelations](https://journals.bsu.by/index.php/internationalRelations)

«Журнал Белорусского государственного  
университета. Международные отношения»  
издается с января 1969 г.

Редактор английского текста *А. Ф. Пискунов*  
Редактор *А. С. Люкевич*  
Технический редактор *М. М. Баулина*  
Корректор *А. С. Люкевич*

Подписано в печать 22.12.2023.  
Тираж 40 экз. Заказ 1218.

Республиканское унитарное предприятие  
«СтройМедиаПроект».  
ЛП № 02330/71 от 23.01.2014.  
Ул. В. Хоружей, 13/61, 220123,  
г. Минск, Республика Беларусь.

© БГУ, 2023

**Journal  
of the Belarusian State University.  
International Relations.  
No. 2. 2023**

Founder:  
Belarusian State University

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URL: [https://journals.bsu.by/index.php/  
internationalRelations](https://journals.bsu.by/index.php/internationalRelations)

«Journal of the Belarusian  
State University. International Relations»  
published since January, 1969.

English text editor *A. F. Piskunov*  
Editor *A. S. Lyukevich*  
Technical editor *M. M. Baulina*  
Proofreader *A. S. Lyukevich*

Signed print 22.12.2023.  
Edition 40 copies. Order number 1218.

Republic Unitary Enterprise  
«StroiMediaProekt».  
License for publishing No. 02330/71, 23 January, 2014.  
13/61 V. Haruzhaj Str.,  
Minsk 220123, Republic of Belarus.

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