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ACTIVATION OF UKRAINE-LITHUANIA RELATIONS IN THE CONDITIONS OF RUSSIAN MILITARY AGGRESSION (2013-2016)

Introduction. The study of interstate cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania is relevant in view of the fact that both states share a historical past, established and restored their independence only in the early 90's of the XX century. The research about interstate cooperation in the background of security challenges and European integration of Ukraine is an important scientific issue and a crucial factor in terms of implementation of European foreign policy vector. It is worth noting that the security issues in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are still important due to the intensification of the Russian Federation's aggressive policy. Under such threats, Lithuania is carrying out preventive diplomacy, strengthening its defense capabilities and providing powerful military support for Ukraine.

Objectives of the paper: comprehensive analysis of the processes of formation and development of the main directions of Ukrainian-Lithuanian intergovernmental cooperation in the political, security, defense, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

Review of recent publications. The history of Ukraine and Lithuania is based on a sufficiently strong foundation, which creates promising conditions for future bilateral relations nowadays. Cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania can now be seen as an example of using the past in order to strengthen relations in the future. This is probably due to a number of factors: inter-state relations are largely centered around common challenges, threats and prospects in the security system in the context of Russia's occupation of the territory of Ukraine; guaranteeing the security of Lithuania and Ukraine in the conditions of information warfare; increase of defense efficiency of both states; overcoming of the economic and political burdens of the socialist past, and thus – successful European integration to the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, which creates the basis for the stable economic development of the entire region; clear historical memory and awareness of the seriousness, magnitude and depth of the threat posed both directly to the CEE region and to the whole world [2: 17; 5].

To illustrate this idea it is worth mentioning that the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė, is considered to be one of the most powerful lobbyists

of Ukrainian interests in Europe and at the same time the one who is fairly equitable in the estimations of the Ukrainian elites.

Results of the research. Lithuania is one of those countries which supports the reformation process of the security and defense sectors of Ukraine the most actively. Moreover, Lithuania has become the first state to hand over the lethal weapons to Ukraine and has become an example for other Allies in this regard. An important component of the Lithuanian policy towards Ukraine in the context of strengthening regional security is the consistent promotion of in-depth cooperation between Ukraine and NATO. Strategic partnership between countries exists in the field of defense as well, for instance: regular training of representatives of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and consultations in Lithuania including English language courses for militaries, treatment of military personnel in Lithuania, exchange of experience, transfer of unused munitions to Ukraine, etc. Thanks to cooperation with Lithuania, Ukraine's participation in NATO's initiatives in the Alliance has increased even without its actual membership.

Taking into account that Lithuanian business has significant experience in foreign economic activity, Lithuania is a convenient platform for promoting Ukrainian exports to the EU and other countries. Lithuania is the largest trade partner of Ukraine among the Baltic States. Within the framework of the investment projects realization on the territory of Ukraine there are (according to the Lithuanian data) 55 enterprises with Lithuanian capital. In the relations between Ukraine and Lithuania, the issue of joint participation in the development and implementation of the new EU energy security strategy, diversification of sources and routes of energy supplies, development of alternative, renewable energy sources and energy efficiency improvements deserve special attention [2: 3].

One of the developing areas of strategic partnership between Ukraine and Lithuania is interaction in the field of cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Ukraine's presence in the cultural and informational space of Lithuania, as well as the last in Ukraine, is quite noticeable since in Lithuania, as in the rest of Europe, the role of public policy tied with collective memory is growing [4: 66]. To put it another way, in the XII-XV centuries Kyiv was a kind of civilization beacon for Lithuanians and the interweaving of cultures as a result of long existence within the framework of the Polish-Lithuanian state left a strong mark in the cultures of both nations. Lithuania and Ukraine are linked by the figure of the Great Kobzar, who lived in Vilnius from 1829 to 1831.

Another key point is that the Ministry of Education of Lithuania annually gives 40 grants for students from Donetsk and Luhansk regions for studies at Lithuanian universities. In total, around 400 students from all over Ukraine study in Lithuania. Moreover, a number of exchange programs are established between the leading universities in Ukraine and Lithuania. Cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania plays a leading role in solving out the economic, environmental, social and cultural issues of both countries. To neglect it means to generate the threats not only for the security of Ukraine and Lithuania, but also for the whole region in general.

Conclusion. Having analyzed the main factors, directions and forms of Ukrainian-Lithuanian intergovernmental cooperation in the security, defense,

political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, we can conclude that the need to support such coordination between countries at all levels is obvious and requires fruitful efforts henceforward.

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