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## 1<sup>ST</sup> MEDITERreg GRADUATE CONFERENCE FOR MASTER'S STUDENTS AND EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS

The scientific conference for master's students and young researchers studying in the specialty 291 International Relations, Public Communications and Regional Studies was held within the framework of the project 101047919 — MEDITERreg «THE RING OF MEDITERRANEAN: REGIONAL STUDIES». The Jean Monnet Module (Grant type ERASMUS-JMO-2021-MODULE) is implemented by the Department of International Relations and headed by the chief of the Department Olga Brusylovska. The conference was held online on May 26, 2022. Among the issues discussed at the conference, the analysis of the theory and practice of regionalism in the Mediterranean occupied a prominent place.

**Key words:** theory of regionalism, regional studies, Mediterranean.

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## **DIVERSITY OF THE EU'S INTERREGIONAL RELATIONS**

Since the 1990s, the European Union has declared its support for regional integration in other parts of the world, and incorporated this objective as a part of European external policy. The European Union is using these relations to project its own model of institutionalised actorness. The success of European regionalism has in some cases prompted other countries to imitation, while elsewhere countries have opted for their own form of regionalism firmly rejecting any explicit attempt to replicate the European experience.

Interregionalism has been defined as «institutionalized relations between world regions». Interregional relations differ from conventional interstate relations in two aspects. First, not just states but also regional organizations and civil society generally participate in the process. Furthermore, as interregional relations are usually asymmetric — since they tend to involve regions with different degrees of complexity such as the EU vis-a-vis most developing regional groupings — explicit support for further integration and the transfer of integration technologies tend to be a key part of the agreements. Second, the scope of interregionalism is usually limited to «low politics»: regional organizations typically engage in negotiations on economic or social issues rather than security or military matters.

Interregionalism is a way to promote the diffusion of the EU's institutional model, its socio-economic development, democracy and good governance through dialogue and mutual cooperation. This concept laid a foundation for

its foreign strategy, based on a range of policy instruments, a mix of conditionalities and incentives, generally tailored to the economic, security and geopolitical interests of the EU. Three broad approaches to the promotion of regional integration can be distinguished. First, the promotion of regional integration through enlargement has provided a very direct and comprehensive way of implementing this policy. That approach was applied towards the Central and Eastern European countries and the Western Balkans. Second, the EU can and has been able to influence regional integration in a broad and general way through normative suasion, where other regional communities adopt certain practices, institutional arrangements, or other forms of governance modelled on the European regional governance system. This approach can be traced in EU-Mercosur and EU-ASEAN interregional relations. Third, the promotion of regional integration has developed through the interregional agreements between the EU and other regional groupings, such as the Cotonou Agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group. Generally, the interregional agreements cover a whole range of issues, such as trade, environment, technical assistance, development, infrastructure, political reform. This approach can also be implemented in EUROMED interregional relations.

In sum, the external promotion of regional integration can be used for various goals: to export the EU model of governance; to exercise international influence through the spread of EU values; and to strengthen the identity of the EU without compromising the national interests of the respective member states.

The EU interregionalism includes a gradual and mutual liberalisation of trade (interregional free trade areas). It also has promoted common policies and institutions as well as the creation of supranational frameworks. For the EU, interregionalism has been considered as a mean to export its regional governance model and to increase its reputation and legitimacy as an international actor.

However, in these last years the relationship between the EU and other regions has stagnated and the enthusiasm for the interregional relations has decreased for the benefit of bilateral relations. Given the ASEAN's emphasis on sovereignty and non-intervention, strong notions of national sovereignty and postcolonial independence in Mercosur member-states, and political instability in Mediterranean region, EU has been shifting its focus on strengthening bilateral relations region-wide.

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### **CONCEPTUALISING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

Globalization creates opportunities but also vulnerabilities. The future of the world economy decisively depends on how global challenges such as cyber risks, climate change, epidemics, and geopolitical conflicts are managed.

No country can master these challenges alone. The globalized world economy needs global governance, and actors must play an active role in shaping it.

Global governance is a continuous process of balancing different interests and initiating cooperative action. The basis for this is the coordination of national policies and identification of shared norms and rules.

Some well-known intergovernmental organizations are UN and NATO. Global governance is the tour given to the systems and institutions that both support and set limits on this interdependence.

The liberal theory of international relations emphasizes the interconnected nature of global politics and a stronger world when states cooperate.

Regional Governance is first and foremost a definition for a modern form of regional policy which stands out due to the following factors:

- a) Increase of the importance of the region as political coordination level
- b) Replacement of the territorial principle by the functional principle
- c) Intersectoral cooperation through weakly institutionalised regional networks and partnerships
- d) Hierarchical steering of incentives through various instruments and forms.

Regionalism has increasingly become a global phenomenon. Growth of regionalism is a sign of political globalization and the attempts to regulate its effects. Some well-known regional organizations are NAFTA and the EU.

Regional Governance plays an important role in relationship to programmes supporting strategies for sustainable regional development.

The concept of Regional and Global Governance in general is to establish consensus on 'purposes and principles', clearly define the division of labor, and limit competition and also to establish formal and informal organizational links between regional and global institutions.

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### **DEBATES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL REGIONALISM**

After World War II, a major development in the world was the establishment of multilateral organizations and mechanisms to deal with and manage global problems, which is a major progress of human society. However, the operation of multilateralism is complicated, and there are many constraints in many aspects, and there are also great limitations in management and governance. This makes the role of regionalism recognized, valued and carried forward.

Geopolitics is the basis for the positioning of regions, and there are different levels: large regions, with continents as boundaries; sub-regions, within continents based on proximate geopolitics; and small regions, within sub-regions, and various types of regions based on geopolitical links. Although the different regions are very different in terms of the way they are linked,

the structure of their relations and the form of their governance, they have strong generic characteristics as a nation-state dependent vehicle in terms of their basic positioning, structural composition, and links of interest and the structure of their relations. Large regions based on intercontinental divisions are not just a geographical concept, but also have special intrinsic links and interest bases that structure different forms of regional organizations or mechanisms for the management and governance of regional affairs. In Europe, the European Union has been established, showing a high degree of regional integration and exercising management functions over regional affairs; in Africa, the African Union has been established and a free trade area has been constructed, providing a certain degree of intervention and governance over regional affairs; in the Americas, Asia and Oceania, regional governance mechanisms have also been established to varying degrees.

From the analysis of regionalism in different continents, it can be found that regionalism does not weaken the country, but complements and strengthens it. Although regionalisms exist in different continents, they interact with each other to achieve national and group interests at the regional and global levels, remove constraints on globalization growth, minimize the destructive effects of globalization, and at the same time Guarantee geopolitical and geo-economic gains, institutionalize cooperation, change global and regional governance systems, build regional cooperation and identity, and strengthen interdependence.

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### **WHY SECURITY REGIONALISM?**

The end of the Cold War and the period of bipolarity were the trigger for a rethinking of the classical theories of international relations within the framework of regionalism. With the collapse of the «world socialist system», the importance of regional problems increased dramatically, because the rigidly structured from above centralized political systems of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the USSR deliberately excluded the problem of internal regional differences and identities. In the course of breaking down the exclusive ideological barriers in the first place, the importance of regional issues in the new context has grown so much that it has made possible the successful convergence of formerly ideologized identities within a single regional space.

Regional organizations and institutions, according to them, are capable of playing a significant role in ensuring regional security because of their special interest in preserving peace in «their» regions and their greater awareness of the causes, circumstances, opportunities and ways of resolving local conflicts. The regionalization of security does not exclude the possibility that many or at least certain security problems are also global and thus best dealt with by

multilateral institutions like the UN. However, it also recognises that the regional sources of insecurity can be met with regional security provision that the UN cannot act as a global security provider.

The security dimension of regional institutions may be understood in two different, related ways. First, it can be broadly interpreted as the attempt to promote peaceful and predictable relations among its members, to build security and community through cooperation. Second, and more narrowly, a regional security institution can be understood as an organization whose charter contains an explicit reference to security provision to meet a security threat, whether through the coordination of defence, security or foreign policy at some level.

There is no regular or easily identifiable pattern or process to the development of security regionalism. Just to give one example, Latin American, South Pacific, Southeast Asian and most recently African countries have successfully established and maintained a nuclear free zone throughout their regions. In South Asia, in contrast, the two major regional powers, India and Pakistan, have gone nuclear, while the commitment of the League of Arab States to remove all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) from the Middle East has failed, with Israel's nuclear capacity already well-established and Iran moving ever closer to becoming a nuclear power. Humans' basic instinct is survival, just as the most fundamental task of the state is its survival and the maximization of its interests. States try to protect themselves from any threat, to ensure their security. Each state has different ideas about threats, as well as different perceptions of the concept of security, so different states form their own security policies.

It is important to say that modern international relations are characterized by growing processes of integration and regionalization, which are based on the security factor. The formation of regions, as the basic unit of the new world order, contributes to the increasing interpenetration of the interests of states and their interdependence. In its essence, security is a multidimensional phenomenon, which includes not only direct action measures (protection of territorial integrity, prevention and neutralization of real and potential threats to the interests of the region), but also the creation of conditions for sustainable development in certain social and economic conditions. The security factor affects the processes of identification of the territorial society, activates the action of cultural and social economic preconditions of association of the population with the place of their residence, and provides protection of information and geographical space. The establishment of mutual understanding and interaction between all representatives of the territorial community is the security factor that spreads a positive image of the region both inside and outside the state.

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**THEORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGIONALISM**

One of the most common approaches to international relations research today is definitely regional studies. This is a modern method of investigating interstate relations, based on the division of counties on regional peculiarities. Such a classification became possible due to the ongoing phenomenon of globalization, which quickly transformed into regionalization and localization. The key elements of this method are the interdependence of neighboring states within a certain geography, their common goals and interests, and joint economic, political, and socio-cultural tendencies. In the 1980s, two Swedish Scientists B. Hettne and F. Söderbaum investigated the trend for the conclusion of multilateral agreements between countries on a regional basis and pioneered the theory of regionalism (often called 'new regionalism').

The study of regional environmental mechanisms has been developed after scholars noticed that about 60 % of all climate-related agreements constituted regional treaties, and was closely connected with the political ideology of the postmodern era. The core principle of states' difference according to their green performance was based on the idea of sustainable development — 17 environmentally aimed goals presented by the United Nations that can help humanity deal with climate change consequences. And despite there have been dozens of international initiatives aimed at fighting global warming, melting glaciers and massive environmental pollution since the 1990s (e. g. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement), the countries of Southeast Asia still cooperated primarily with those of their region, while the Euro-Atlantic or Latin American states tended to cooperate within their own geographical formation. From these observations, the concept of environmental regionalism arose, which is exactly the division of the entire world into several regions and a more compact study of international 'green' relations in this context.

Since not a single global effort has been able to achieve significant success in climate actions, it has led to the creation of smaller groups of countries (regions, sub-regions, interstate unions) that demonstrate the most successful performance in terms of ecology. Quite often, such groups elaborate on joint environmental initiatives and eventually begin to be perceived as a single actor, and their foreign policy is usually considered a common (sub)regional phenomenon. In short, within the most advanced regions, each individual state makes a significant contribution to the elimination of the problem that allows researchers to talk about the best climate-related regional policies in Western Europe, Scandinavia, the Baltics, Oceania and the Pacific. At the same time, several regions with the poorest environmental performance have emerged (the Sahel, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Latin America); they require a fundamental rethinking of their green strategy or further international support in order to finance their efforts of combating the effects of rapid climate change.

Because environmental regionalism is not a unified and well-structured doctrine, there are dozens of social scientists who use this method in assessing climate policy but most of them are limited to the analysis of one particular region and can be representatives of other theoretical schools at the same time. For instance, J. Balsiger is known for his work on European green regionalism, particularly in the Alpine sub-region; Ch. Foster is a major ecology researcher at Harvard; J. Blatter specializes in studying this theory in North America; J. Carew-Reid coined fame as a classic of the Australian school of new regionalism; K. Kato is the famous Japanese researcher on Southeast Asian environment; M. Saguier and famous German environmentalist K. Siegel are mainly engaged in regional studies of South America; A. Obydenkova is a prominent specialist of the post-communist space, and in the works of D. Morales & L. Sariego-Kluge one can find the application of eco-theory for many peripheral regions. Also, this approach has not still gained popularity in some other regions and is traditionally seen as 'left-liberal political populism', so there are scholars in third-world countries and Russia who tend to criticize regional studies with environmental overtones. However, green regionalism remains extremely attractive for modern IR and thus, requires further theoretical development and practical usage.

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**MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES IN ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST**

The post-communist development of the Mediterranean countries has been noted in the studies of many Asian and Middle Eastern scholars. Given the development of Albania, Croatia and Slovenia, it is worth noting the surplus of institutions and think tanks that have followed the gradual transformation of political transformation in these countries. The attitudes of Chinese, Japanese and Arab scholars towards the post-communist Mediterranean countries differ significantly from those of the Ukrainian or European research schools. However, it is not the comparative nature of this work that should be noted, but the more independent position of the countries of the Arab and Asian regions on the environment of the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

The Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ) in Arab (and Middle Eastern) Studies has published an article on «Post-Communist Eastern Europe and the Middle East: The burden of History and New Political Realities». This article describes the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe and the emergence of a whole new geopolitical and social reality that is strikingly different from its predecessor.

Turkish sources have their own vision of the Mediterranean region. For ex., Abdurrahim F. Aydın and Erjada Progonati (Inonu University in Malatya, Gazi University, Ankara) wrote «Albania's foreign policy in the post-communist era». Also, the journal of Southeast European Studies helps provide more information about the region. Namely, it is an article about interreligious

tolerance and intercultural life in Albania. The Turkish Institute is studying the security of the Balkan region, where there is a lot of dynamism.

The Chinese School of International Relations, Peking University has proved to be more general in its approach to the study of North-eastern Europe, through the prism of civilization inherent in Asian culture. Researcher Kong Fanjung, for example, presented his thoughts on the countries of South-east Europe. This person visited all the countries (Baltic States, Moldova, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Romania), which he writes about in his work «Research and Reflection on the Eastern Countries, Central and South-Eastern Europe». It is a balanced analytical article that clearly traces the line of post-communist transformation, especially from the point of view of Asian colleagues.

The process in Croatia was described separately by the Japanese researcher Yamakawa Takashi of the Higher School of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University, again through the prism of the Asian vision of the problem. His work deals with the Logic of «Nationalization» in Croatia: Political Movements in the «Croatian Spring» and the Process of Disintegration of Yugoslavia.

During the selection of material for this essay, the most difficult thing was to find Arab authors who could reveal the topic of the post-communist world situation. Studying the Arabic circulation of literature was the most accessible Qatari news site Aljazeera, which collected a report by journalist Hani Salah, who was able to gather and analyze the situation in the Balkans. Hani Salah singles out a more economic factor in the development and as a country as a whole gradually chose their regime after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

That is, looking at the great distance between the Mediterranean and the Asian and Middle Eastern regions, it becomes clear that researchers such as China, Japan, Arabic, and Turkey are interested in the post-communist life of Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia. What makes their work in some ways unique and gives a complete picture of how «distant» colleagues analyze the situation after the collapse of the Soviet system. As we see, the studies are very different from each other, but the transformation of social order is common in all three countries.

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#### **POTENTIAL OF POSTCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**

In the demographic, social, and political development, the post-communist countries of the Mediterranean, such as Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia, have come on a long and worthy path of transformation from one system of functioning to another. This path was unique for each state, but it also created

a certain similarity — the emergence of freedom and liberalization, the opportunity to make their own choice and develop in their own special direction.

In the path of the demographic potential of the countries, we can note the features of Albania and the factors that influenced the development of this sector — freedom of movement within the prefectures of Albania after the end of the rule of the communist regime, which caused internal migration of the population, the conflict in Kosovo in 1999, which led to the resettlement of Kosovo Albanians directly to Albania and Macedonia, and the current situation, which characterizes the population of Albania as a young type, with a large working-age population that far exceeds the number of people over 64 years old. Croatia faced the problems of population decline, the emigration of young people and the working population, as well as the active aging of the nation, which leads to the impossibility of developing the social sphere and paying decent pensions. Slovenia is also on the brink of a demographic crisis because this country also has a decrease in the birth rate and an increase in the number of elderly people. But migration processes have a positive effect on the demography of Slovenia because the absence of this trend would lead to a reduction in the working population.

In the social sphere in Albania, there are problems with health care, the weaknesses of which were identified during the coronavirus pandemic in the inability of the government to purchase the required amount of vaccines; education funding, and the lack of government support for distance learning, which left a huge gap in the education of an entire generation; a gap between rich and poor people. Croatia worthily continues its fight against the outflow of the young population, placing stakes in social policy on this segment of the population- support for youth in employment, creation of decent living conditions in all parts of the country (including in rural areas), assistance in finding employment for people with disabilities, encouraging the hiring of young employees, the active development of social life. Slovenia has succeeded in finding employment for women and women with children, which is very important in the social sphere since it is difficult for these segments of the population to find a job. But the country is facing problems in higher education because a large number of young people refuse to continue their studies and in the health sector, linked to bald spots in health insurance and corruption.

In the economic path, Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia faced virtually the same problems that affected their development — the coronavirus pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. Albanian economy has started to recover very actively after the consequences of the pandemic — the tourism sector of the economy and foreign investment began to develop. But the energy crisis and the looming food crisis have led to a rapid rise in prices and deterioration in economic development. Slovenia has its own trump cards in the economic potential — membership in the Eurozone, diversification (i.e. expanding the range of products) in all areas of production, and integration into the European production chain. Croatian economy has significant economic potential — the country has a long coastline (ports and tourism), the potential for active oil and gas production (less depending on the energy situation in the world),

country's accession to ERM II, highly developed infrastructure (it helps to develop trade and transport large volumes of goods).

The post-communist countries have great demographic and socio-economic potential, but the governments pay attention to the existing problems and carry out appropriate reforms to solve them.

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**INTEGRATION OF MEDITERRANEAN: CASE OF POSTCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES**

The Mediterranean Sea has a vital transport and strategic importance. It is not only an important waterway between Europe, Asia and Africa, but also an important channel between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. The Member States of the European Union dominate more than half of the foreign trade of the southeast Mediterranean countries. There are glaring economic inequalities between the north and the south, and it would be very difficult to talk of a homogenous entity of Mediterranean countries. Trade and the elimination of customs barriers may be beneficial for the members with regard to rapprochement, but they can also have a negative impact when the partners involved have different levels of growth and development. In a context in which globalization has become the economic, political and media watchword, observers are drawn to the strategic and economic stakes in the Mediterranean basin. The Mediterranean region includes post-communist countries — Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

Launched by the European Union in November 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) relies on a region-building approach in its attempts to stabilize the southern Mediterranean. It entails the promotion of common values, interests and a shared identification among the participating parties.

The Barcelona Process, which followed the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, has given impetus to the integration of a number of countries. As Balkan and Adriatic countries, these countries have the same integration process, and most of them are members of the Balkan Fund and the Adriatic Initiative. Euro-Mediterranean integration of post-communist countries has helped the EU to substantially transform the nature of the BP. This is no longer fundamentally just a forum for EU relations with Southern Mediterranean members that are unable to join, or with the Arab States and Israel, but signifies the appearance, together with Turkey of a third group that can act as a connector between both, a facilitator of consensus between third-party members and global Euro-Mediterranean consensus.

The Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII) was established in Ancona, Italy in 2000. Attending the founding activity were seven countries, among which Albania. The aim of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative is to promote and deepen

regional cooperation, which will serve as a contribution to the European integration of member countries.

The development of small post-communist countries in the Mediterranean region is insignificant compared with other big countries. They can only develop along with the general direction of regional development but their influence on the regional development is very small.

### **I КОНФЕРЕНЦІЯ ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТІВ МАГІСТРАТУРИ ТА МОЛОДИХ ДОСЛІДНИКІВ «MEDITERreg GRADUATE CONFERENCE»**

Наукова конференція для студентів магістратури та молодих дослідників, які навчаються за спеціальністю 291 Міжнародні відносини, суспільні комунікації та регіональні студії, була проведена в рамках проекту 101047919 — MEDITERreg «КІЛЬЦЕ СЕРЕДЗЕМНОМОР'Я: РЕГІОНАЛЬНІ СТУДІЇ». Модуль Жан Монне (Тип гранту ERASMUS-ЖМО-2021-MODULE) реалізується кафедрою міжнародних відносин та очолюється завідувачкою кафедри Ольгою Брусиловською. Конференція відбулася 26 травня 2022 р. он-лайн. Серед питань, що розглядалися на конференції, чільне місце зайняв аналіз теорії та практики регіоналізму в Середземномор'ї.

**Ключові слова:** теорія регіоналізму, регіональні студії, Середземномор'я.