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## EUROPE IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBAL TURBULENCE – THEORETICAL AND APPLIED ASPECTS

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### **Abstract**

*In recent decades, changes in world development have brought global security to the forefront, as well as that of individual countries and regions. Security, whether global, national or regional, is linking to the geopolitics and geoeconomics that lead major countries and political blocs. The world that has been forming because of globalization is interdependent on economic and integration processes. The modern free movement of goods and services, as well as the unrestricted distribution of information, pose serious threats to society. There are also negative consequences of globalization such as the destruction of national societies and social ties. That is why the problem of security in all its aspects is a particularly important and topical issue for modern science. The present study analyzes the theoretical and applied aspects of national security – demographic, military, economic, political, information and others. In recent months, medical and infectious aspects of security have become important in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The main alternatives for the development of the world are indicated, incl. and Europe, internal and external problems and threats to the EU.*

**Keywords:** Globalization, Global security, EU, Economic security; pandemic, COVID-19

**JEL Classification:** F5, F6, R5

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, changes in world development have brought global security to the forefront, as well as that of individual countries and regions. Security, whether global, national or regional, is linking to the geopolitics and geoeconomics that lead major countries and political blocs.

The changes in world development after the Cold War put on foreground global security as well as that of individual countries and regions. Security - be it global, national or regional connects directly with geopolitics and geoeconomics. There are links between the world economy (geoeconomics) and global security. The same dependence exists in any national economy and national security, and within individual regions. In modern conditions there are national conflicts that threaten security not only in individual countries but also in regions where [1, pp.200-208] it's found. In modern conflicts, there is a real danger that they will grow into continental ones and even acquire a global character.

Globalization today is a phenomenon that is rapidly entering all aspects of real life and, along with the benefits it brings, creates problems for the individual. Until recently, unimaginable processes such as the practical merging of borders, cultural unification and loss of identity are emerging. Instead of the beautiful world of dreams for the future, there are struggles for military, political and economic supremacy.

### **THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF "SECURITY" – THEORETICAL ASPECTS**

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The world that is being formed as a result of globalization is very interdependent on economic and integration processes. The modern free movement of goods and services, as well as the unrestricted dissemination of information, pose serious threats to society. Among the negative consequences of globalization are the destruction of the cultural foundations of national societies and the disruption of social ties [17, pp.135-137].

The constant weakening of individual countries, the reduction of their stability and sovereignty are the main characteristics of the globalization process. As the famous Polish scientist, professor at the University of Warsaw and Leeds Sigmund Baumann points out, "expropriation begins, but this time of the state." Globalization is nothing more than a totalitarian extension of the logic of global financial markets to all aspects of life [1].

Another prominent contemporary sociologist, W. Beck, points out in his monograph "The World Risk Society" that even greater control of the dangers is needed, which hides the situation of serial produced uncertainty. He also points out that "global risk itself is a kind of organized irresponsibility" [2, pp. 14-26].

The above shows that security in its various forms in modern conditions is extremely high priority. It is related to such issues as economics, politics, law, morality, religion, traditions. The system of knowledge about security has its interconnected national and international aspects, as the focus of individual analysts are the individual sovereign states, the international community and even individual human individuals.

According to some authors, there are essential prerequisites for the gradual formation of a new scientific field, whose research field is the field of security [8, pp.5-17].

The concept of "security" is multifaceted and thus difficult to define precisely, completely and unambiguously. The notion that this is "reliability", "maximum reliability", "protection", "protection", "sustainability" and others has gained wide citizenship. In a number of Bulgarian and foreign dictionaries these concepts are defined as follows. For example:

- "secure" – trustworthy, faithful, positive, reliable, often called a safe person or secure protection;
- "security" – quality of confidence, confidence, positivity, no danger, elimination of danger, safety;
- "dangerous" – containing danger, carrying danger; used in various phrases as a dangerous enemy, etc.;
- "danger" – an opportunity for trouble, an opportunity for misfortune;
- "safety" – no danger, security;
- "protection" – preservation, protection from danger, protection from trouble, defense;
- "protection" – protection, patronage, care for someone or something, etc.;
- "self-defense" – protection with one's own forces from danger, which protects life, property, interests, status quo [4, pp.11-12].

Therefore, the term "security" can also be defined as the absence of "danger", "safety", and the term "uncertainty" - with "danger". Obviously, the pairs of expressions "security" / "uncertainty" or "danger" / "safety" complement each other.

Security (respectively - uncertainty) have many dimensions - economic, financial, psychological and others. Economic failure is often associated with political problems and severe conflicts.

One of the most developed topics is undoubtedly the idea of individual security. The report "The New Dimension of Human Security" of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) addresses key aspects of security. The following groups are listed there:

- economic - food security with which they are connected with environmental safety and food shortages; high mortality and disease; degradation of regional and global ecosystems; deficit of clean water; Global Warming; deforestation; natural disasters that take the lives of thousands of people;

- political security - protection of the individual from political repression and other forms of violence; state guarantees for the protection of its own citizens.

In our opinion: the most meaningful is the definition, according to which: "security is conjunctive, situational clarity, objectively and subjectively guaranteeing trouble-free short- and medium-term predictability and confidence" [15, pp.7-16].

## **GEOPOLITICAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS IN EUROPE**

Ensuring national security is paramount for any country. According to Art. 20 of the Concept for National Security of Bulgaria, it represents: "a state in which the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, state borders, territorial integrity and independence of the country are protected, when there is no danger of armed attack, forcible change of the constitutional order, political dictates or economic coercion and when democratic functioning is guaranteed. The state, as a result of which the society and the nation preserve and increase their prosperity and prosperity" [10].

The problem of national security is becoming increasingly relevant in today's world of refugee waves, demographic imbalances, economic, environmental and energy crises [13, pp.104-105].

National security is a multi-component system that includes various elements - demographic security, military security, political security, economic security, social security, information security, environmental security. In recent months, the medical and infectious aspects of security have been particularly important.

There is an interdependence between the various forms of national security and each of them cannot exist independently.

The rapidly evolving process of globalization has created hopes for resolving emerging conflicts within individual countries and alliances around the world, which have quickly given way to growing concern that the world is facing new risks and confrontations that require a new world order.

According to the American analyst Joseph Nye, there are at least five main alternatives for the development of the world, namely:

- return to the bipolar system
- unipolar domination
- multilayered interdependence
- multipolar system

The same author notes that it is high time to get rid of the old notions formed in the Cold War era, when order was based primarily on the sovereignty of the individual state. According to Joseph Nye, "we will live in an anarchic world". Order will be ensured both

by the balance of power between the states, as the realists claim, and by the developing international investments according to the liberal idea. This order will not always be fair. Justice and order often come into conflict with each other, even on issues of self-determination. Is it more important to keep the borders intact, or to pursue humanitarian goals while violating territorial integrity? How do these alternatives affect the principles of order? [14, pp.238-243] These disputes are not easy to resolve, especially given the new realities in the world.

Any national conflict created by the state of the national economy creates changes in national security, which poses threats to the regional economy and security. Global conflicts threaten global security.

According to Manuel Castel, global conflicts are created on various occasions. In recent years, they are mainly of two types - geoeconomic and geopolitical. They are based on the so-called "vital interests", which are the main strategies of the United States [9]. Conflicts are a cover for the concept of "economic interests" and are created and managed in areas with energy resources - coal, oil and natural gas. It is no coincidence that they are very fierce in the Middle East, involving Arab countries and countries defending their "vital interests" - the United States, Russia, Turkey and others.

The future of the geoeconomy will also be determined by the West-East communication bridge. The leading role will be played by the Eurasian Natural Communication Corridor, which will be crucial for Europe's security.

The two world geoeconomic poles - the European and the Asia-Pacific - will play a key role in the emergence and development of global conflicts. The third world geoeconomic pole, the North American pole, also has its place.

According to the famous political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski, in the coming years four geoeconomic directions are possible for the development of transnational communications (including tourism):

1. From North America through Russia to Europe – This is a transnational corridor through Alaska and Siberia;
2. From China to Europe – passes through Russia or the "Silk Road". In 2014, it was for this reason that the Eurasian Economic Union was established, which is expanding today. Russia has a leading role;
3. Meridian corridor North - South. It is a corridor from Northern Europe through the Middle East, the Caucasus to Iran and India;
4. Far Eastern Axis - from Singapore and China through Russia to North America [3].

All these transatlantic communication corridors are crucial for the future economic redistribution of the world. Russia, China and the United States play a leading role in them. It is important for Europe's security to find its place in this geostrategic system. According to US "National Interests" doctrine, there are five outbreaks of global conflicts that could lead to world war.

These are:

- Sunni conflict. This includes the United States, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia. In addition to these countries, others are occasionally included.
- Indo-Pakistani conflict. This conflict is set in their fall as colonies of England. Unofficially, Great Britain (as a former ruler with great influence), China and the United States are also involved in this conflict. It is through Pakistan that their fastest route to the Arabian Sea is, which is also the most direct connection with large parts of the world.
- East China conflict. To this day, there is a serious dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku archipelago, which is currently controlled by Japan. The

island of Taiwan. It can often be found in directories as well Chinese Taipei. Conflict between China and the breakaway is always possible, but also with the possible involvement of the United States.

- Ukrainian conflict. It is set in the past when it created independent state.

Later it was part of the USSR. To this day, major regional differences are clear. For example, the East (around Donetsk, Kharkiv), but also Odessa and Crimea are Russian-dominated; Western Ukraine professes Catholicism and has great Polish influence, and the region of Transcarpathia has Hungarian and Slovak influence [12, pp.149-171].

This is the conflict with the largest involvement of geopolitical players such as Ukraine, Russia, Poland, but also the United States, the European Union and NATO. As all these conflicts deepen, they could lead to regional war and even global war.

Although only in the economic field, there are those between Russia, the United States and the European Union; between Russia and Turkey (where they sometimes transfer "sparks"). These conflicts are of great importance to the whole world, as they often involve the strongest economies [7, pp.25-35].

The world is facing a number of problems. Europe is no exception to this turbulent state of modernity. As a union of sovereign states, the continent faces many threats. In general, these threats can be defined as internal and external to the European Union.

Internal threats related to problems caused by the so-called "intimate enemies of democracy". According to the famous Bulgarian philosopher and culturologist Tsvetan Todorov, who lives and works in Paris, freedom is a basic value of democracy, but there is another specific type of freedom that under certain conditions can become a threat to democracy.

The same author draws the sad conclusion that we live today in a democratization that suffers from its excessiveness and in which freedom becomes tyranny, the people become a manipulative mass, the desire to promote progress degenerates into crusading ambition [16, p.217].

Still, it is better to live in a democracy before living in totalitarian societies.

This "corrosion of society" also leads to many problems in the European Union, such as:

- Clash between different ethnic groups, peoples and races within different countries
- Clash between the different social strata;
- Lack of unanimous opinion of individual members in modern conditions;
- In recent years significant internal turbulence – constant economic crises, starting with the World Economic Crisis (2008) and continuing to this day in some countries (most notably Greece, Spain and others);

1. External threats to the European Union can be identified ethnic, political conflicts, organized crime, the imperial ambitions of countries such as the United States, the radicalization of Islam, the global migration crisis, terrorism and others.

2. The proliferation of cross-border organized crime is also one of the main threats to the security of citizens and the democratic foundations of society - economic crime; drug, arms and human trafficking; smuggling; production and distribution of counterfeit currency and documents, cybercrime, money laundering, etc.

A huge problem for international security within the European Union with non-EU countries with weak statehood, which are not able to guarantee the security, rights and freedoms of their citizens, to manage public relations and to fulfill their international obligations. Growing religious and cultural differences, especially in the Arab world, are creating conditions for radical conflict and political instability. In these areas, in addition to

the destruction of nation-states, something even more terrible is happening - the disintegration of nations.

This process began with the events in Lebanon, and today it is throughout the region. Much earlier, the famous thinker Jean-Marie Gounod in his book *The End of Democracy* (1997) called this process "Levanizing the World." According to him, "Lebanon is not that part of a partially extinct country on the map of the Middle East. From now on, it is in each of us." [5]. Then the process of disintegration of nations is in full swing in modern times - in Libya, Syria, Algeria and others. The unstable economic and political situation and the low standard of living in these Third World countries generate strong migratory pressure on European countries.

Cybercrime is a new modern direction of pressure on various countries and poses a serious threat to the security and stability of nation states. Cyberattacks block the normal functioning of information systems important for the economy, the financial system and the government.

In addition to the above-mentioned threats to Europe, there are also those related to the Environment and Energy.

In addition to these threats to the world and the EU, there are in particular those related to biological threats and in particular the pandemic of COVID-19.

In the present study, a brief analysis of the medico-geographical aspects of the pandemic is made - the origin, stages of growth in different countries and continents. The regions in the EU where it is the largest are listed. The main consequences of the pandemic are also considered - medical, economic, social, psychological and others. According to various scientists, the pandemic of COVID-19 occurs in the fall of 2019. In the 11 million city of Wuhan (Hubei Province) and is growing rapidly worldwide. Thanks to the measures taken quickly, it was limited to China, and then to the whole of East Asia (Korea, Singapore, etc.). In contrast to this region in Europe and North and South America, the measures are delayed due to various reasons, e.g. In many countries, the rulers completely deny the existence of this pandemic, and it is reduced even to the common flu. A typical example are the largest and most powerful countries in the world - the United States, Russia, Britain, India, Brazil, Argentina and others. These are the countries with many infected and dead people in the world. For political reasons, no action was taken in Italy and France, holding local or parliamentary elections; sporting and cultural events (Austria, Germany, Italy, etc.) where measures are delayed. Only in some smaller countries have more adequate decisions been made (Bulgaria, Montenegro, Kosovo, etc.) to limit it. From the end of February, the pandemic goes through the following stages:

1. Origin - in China and East Asia and its spread. Lack of measures in other countries;

2. Growth of the pandemic - the largest in Italy (mainly in the Northern regions, France, Spain, Germany and Great Britain);

3. Countries whose leadership does not recognize their existence and fall into an acute pandemic crisis (USA, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, India), which are also the largest infections and deaths. Unlike them in China, Korea and other countries, the pandemic is limited;

4. The EU will not take any coordinated action until early autumn. Restrictions on border crossings between member states are beginning have been introduced. There are only isolated cases where patients are been transported by air in border areas from France to medical centers in Germany;

5. Only at the end of the summer of 2020. The EU and its member states are launching a policy of closing and restricting travel and tourism between regions and countries in order to reduce the infection.

6. In recent months, the EU are not been united in its response to the pandemic. Eg. Austria, Spain and Bulgaria want to open winter ski resorts and Germany, France and others. on the contrary, throughout the EU.

7. In recent months, the EU has agreed on a common pandemic policy - funding, medical supplies, approvals and the purchase of the same vaccines for all member states.

In the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU faced a number of threats, the main ones being:

1. Insufficient level of development of the health systems - insufficient medical staff, beds in intensive care units, equipment, etc. There is also a problem with the different levels of medical services in the separate territorial units (Bulgaria, East Germany, Southern Italy, etc.).

2. Sharp decline in financial revenues and deterioration of the economic situation. The crisis is especially severe in entire industries such as air transport, tourism, culture and others.

3. The crisis has led to a deterioration of the social environment in the country. The number of closed companies, increasing unemployment, etc. is constantly growing.

4. In the education system there was a transition to distance learning, which lost personal contact with teachers and worsened the quality of the educational process.

5. Last but not least, the crisis affects the mental state of individuals.

The first-ever European Union Regional and Local Barometer report identifies the state of the Union at local level - in individual regions, as well as cities, municipalities and rural areas. The consequences of the crisis are asymmetrically distributed. The worst situation is in the coastal areas of Croatia, Eastern Bulgaria, in Andalusia, Castile and Leon, Valencia and the capital Madrid in Spain; Ile de France in France; most of the Italian regions, Central Macedonia and Crete in Greece. There are significant differences in the development of individual cities and municipalities. Positive examples of business support are given in Luxembourg (exemption from rents for retail outlets), Vienna, Sofia and others. lending to small and medium-sized businesses. There is also a growing interest in life in suburban and rural areas, as the settlers work through information technology. An interesting example is the organization of charters for understaffed institutions in the provinces of Burgenland and Lower Austria for 355 social workers and assistants from Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. [17]

All these aspects lead to new changes in the regional policy and regional development of the individual countries in the EU. Assistance, which has so far been to the least developed regions in the context of the crisis, should be shifted towards the most affected. For example, in the EU, the oldest population (over 25% of the population is at or over the retirement age) is in the Lombardy region of northern Italy, where it has the highest number of retirement homes, but also the highest mortality. In Bulgaria, the number of infected is around the European average, but the country is one of the first places in terms of mortality.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study is an attempt to systematize the theoretical developments in the field of security in its various aspects. The main geopolitical problems and conflicts that affect the current development of the EU are considered. The main external and internal

threats to modern Europe are identified. In modern conditions, the most serious global problem is undoubtedly the growth of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the overall economic, social and health development of society. Although humanity is already in the second stage of its expansion, so far it cannot cope with its growth. Europe, as well as the whole world, is likely to face an economic, social and pandemic crisis.

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