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**CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

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This article examines the place of Central and Eastern Europe among Canadian foreign policy priorities. Canada's active involvement in international events started in the 20th century and evolved from the monocentric orientation on Great Britain/the United States towards multilateralism and active participation in international organisations and institutions. During the Cold War, the main vector of Canadian policy towards the region was to prevent the spread of communism and to weaken the ties of these countries with the Soviet bloc. At that time, policy towards Central and Eastern Europe was a part of Canadian policy towards the Soviet Union. After the revolutionary events of 1989-1991, Canadian policy transformed into technical and financial support of the transformation towards democratic changes in the region and evolved into the framework of Canadian policy towards Europe. Since 2014, the mainstream of Canadian policy in the region was completed by security issues caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The events of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, which began on 24 February 2022, are not covered in this article, as they require a separate study. Despite the fact that Central and Eastern Europe has never been a priority for Canada, active involvement in the region since 1989 has helped Canada to assert itself as a notable international actor. Canada's current policy and bilateral relations with the nations of Central and Eastern

Europe are based on common values and approaches to such issues as support for human rights and democracy, territorial integrity, and the rule of international law. Canada is a donor country for a great variety of projects and programmes that have been and are being implemented in this part of Europe. The policy towards the region allows Canada to deal with new partners abroad, and to take an active part in international organisations and processes. At the beginning of the 21st century, Canada as a middle power tried to use different methods and mechanisms to protect its own national interests in the international arena, and Canada's involvement in the democratic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe made it possible to consider Canada as an important and influential international player.

**Key words:** Canada; Central and Eastern Europe; Canadian foreign policy.

### **Introduction**

In 1989-91 the world changed dramatically after the dissolution of the socialist bloc in the Eastern part of Europe. Such events as the Velvet Revolution in Prague, the victory of the Polish Solidarity in the first democratic elections, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were the brightest signs of the end of the Cold War. The East-West bipolarity of the post-World War II world de facto vanished and the reconfiguration of the world order became the most important issue of that time. These changes influenced greatly international relations and foreign policy of both East and West. For the East (former Communist countries in Europe) the issues of the transition towards democracy, market economy, and sovereign foreign policy were the most topical. For the West, it was a necessity to transform national foreign policies under new international circumstances and to change approaches towards the former 'opponents' from the East, which since 1989 were seen as new opportunities. During the Cold War, the main division was within Europe, so the dramatic changes in its Eastern part in the post-Communist period still was of great interest to Western countries.

### **Recent research and publications analysis**

The main issue since 1989 was the transformation processes in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (abbreviated CEE). It has been already described and discussed in numerous publications, reports, scientific conferences, and round-tables, which took place both in the countries of the region and abroad. There is not a purpose within this paper to analyse the results of the mentioned researches and to name the authors dealing with this topic. Here we can only mention few main vectors of the study in the field: domestic developments in the region itself (mainly political and economic path to democracy and market economy); changes

in the foreign policy of Central and Eastern Europe (mostly joining the European integration process and participation in Western security structures with entering NATO); transformations of the world order after the end of the Cold War (where the region is studied both as the main object of the research and as well as one of the dimensions of the changed post-bipolar world). A great number of the studies are dealing with the United States' and Western Europe's policy, attitudes, and perceptions of Central and Eastern Europe. A lot of works are dedicated to the general Western perspectives on the developments in the region after the collapse of the communism.

A segment of this great amount of publications and research works is dealing with the issue of Canada's policy towards Central and Eastern Europe. The most of interest was formed in Canada. The attention of Canadian researchers and experts towards the region was active during the Cold War and is still present nowadays. As an example, we can name H. Gordon Skilling's (1966) article about Canada's perception of the developments in the Communist part of Europe till the mid-1960, or we can mention Cory Scurr's (2017) dissertation about Canadian relations with Eastern Europe. The variety of topics increased, and not only political segments were under the attention of the scholars. We can find papers aimed at the examination of Canadian economic and financial support to the countries of the region, as it is in a chapter by Jeanne K. Laux (1994) about financing the transition in Central and Eastern Europe. Another valuable issue is security and stability in the region, which is analysed in the paper of former Canadian defence adviser Andrew P. Rasiulis (2016), who focuses on the analysis of the policy options for Canada in Eastern Europe.

### **Purpose of the research**

This paper aims to continue the research done by other authors, proposing generalisations about the place and role of Central and Eastern Europe in Canadian foreign policy. It is important to make an overview of the following issues: how Canada sees the region; the place that this part of Europe occupies among Canada's foreign policy priorities; the main dimensions of the relationship between Canada and Central and Eastern Europe nations; Canada's attitude to changes in the region and how these changes influenced Canadian foreign policy.

This empirical study is designed to discover the main features of Canada's policy towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. First of all, attention is paid to the specifics of the meaning of the definitions 'Eastern Europe' and 'Central and Eastern Europe' and how it is seen in Canada. The next step is aimed to find out the main vector of Canada's perception of the region during the Cold

War and how it fits the general framework of Canadian foreign policy and its priorities at that time. It is also designed to evaluate how Canada reacted to the events in the region, which led to the end of the Cold War, and to explore if any changes occurred after 1989 in Canadian policy towards the region. The last step of this research is focused on Canada's attitudes to the current developments in Central and Eastern Europe.

The research is based on the combination of the elements of both comparative and case-specific analysis: Central and Eastern Europe is examined as a specific case of Canadian foreign policy; 'old Eastern Europe' and 'new Eastern Europe' is considered; Canada's policy towards the countries of the region during and after the Cold War is compared.

A complex approach was also used: Canada's policy and attitudes towards Central and Eastern Europe were analysed from the positions of political realism and within the general framework of Canadian foreign policy, which traditionally is more oriented towards Great Britain and the United States. Special attention was also paid to the study of a combination of external and domestic factors which influenced Canada's foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the assessment of the international and domestic political environment was considered, which led to the changes in Canada's perception of the region and Canadian policy towards it.

### **Results**

#### *'Eastern Europe' or 'Central and Eastern Europe'*

Before examining Canadian policy towards the region, it is necessary to clarify the meaning and usage of such terms as '*Eastern Europe*' and '*Central and Eastern Europe*'. They are mostly used as synonyms and related to the countries of the former Eastern (Soviet/Socialist/Communist) Bloc, but there is some difference.

Both terms have a geographical origin, but during the Cold War under the circumstances of the bipolar contradictions, the term '*Eastern Europe*' received strong political and ideological meaning to explain the East-West dichotomy in Europe. Thus, contrary to the '*West European*' states allied with the USA, the communist states of Europe, which were participants of the Warsaw Pact and under the great control of the Soviet Union, were mostly named '*East European*'. Among them were: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Eastern Europe was some kind of a frontier between the USSR and the rest of Europe. Such countries as Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Ukraine during the Cold War were considered as part of the Soviet Union and they mainly were not distinct from it and were not associated with '*Europe*'. For example, Skilling (1966, pp.4-5) clearly distinguishes '*Eastern Europe*'

and *'the USSR'*; his *'Eastern Europe'* includes Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia.

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the ideological meaning of the East-West division of the continent disappeared and it caused other interpretations of the non-Western part of the continent. Radical transformations in the Eastern part of the European continent changed the configuration which determined previous decades: all former Warsaw Pact countries joined NATO; Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Eastern Germany (in the context of reunification), Hungary, Poland, and Romania became the European Union members; the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) as well as former Yugoslavia countries (Croatia, Slovenia) also joined NATO and the EU. Since the 1990s these countries were addressed as *'Central Europe'* or/and *'Central and Eastern Europe'*, while former Soviet republics like Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, sometimes with Russia and the Caucasus states (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) was referred to as *'former Soviet Union'*, *'former Soviet republics'*, and *'Eastern Europe'* (Romaniuk, 2008).

So, the term *'Eastern Europe'* remained, but after the mid-1990s it got a very different geographical meaning if to compare with the times of the Cold War: *'Eastern Europe'* moved further to the East of the continent, but it still plays a role of a certain frontier between Russia (as a successor of the USSR) and the rest of Europe.

The term *'Central Europe'* is also discussible: Attila Meleg (2018, p.29) mentions that the emergence of this concept was caused by the deep transformations in post-Communist Europe and 'it was a concept of transition and it mainly played the role of destroying the "Eastern" pole of Europe'. A great role in the rebirth of this term was played by the process of Germany reunification.

The combination of states which are considered as *'Central and Eastern Europe'* is still debatable. The most popular meaning of this region is proposed by Wikipedia as follows: 'Central and Eastern Europe, abbreviated CEE, is a term encompassing the countries in Central Europe (the Visegrád Group), the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and Southeastern Europe (Balkans), usually meaning former communist states from the Eastern Bloc (Warsaw Pact) in Europe' (Central and Eastern Europe, 2022).

In Canadian official rhetoric, as well as acts and statistics, we can find the different meanings of today's CEE region. During the Cold War, the term *'Eastern Europe'* was used (in its political and ideological meaning as the opponent to Western Europe); at the end of the Cold War, the term *'Central Europe'* emerged

(as the implementation of radical changes in the region and as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union when new '*Eastern Europe*' was formed). For example, then-Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark (1994) in his speech to the Department of Political Science and Economics at McGill University (Montreal, 5 February 1990) was talking about Canada's place in the changing world, which was still seen as East-West; and Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania were still named as '*Eastern Europe*'. Later in his and his successor's vocabulary, there were present both '*Eastern Europe*' and '*Central and Eastern Europe*' as synonyms.

Since the mid-1990s, when the processes of political and economic transformation deepened in European post-Communist countries, diverse approaches to CEE still coexisted in Canadian perceptions of the region and the definition of the region has not been unified. In different documents, reports, statistics we can find a lot of variants regarding the selection of the states which considered as '*Eastern Europe/Central and Eastern Europe*'. Among the most often used list of states named as '*East European*' in Canadian official interpretations we can find Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, since 2019 – Republic of North Macedonia), Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and even Turkey. So, we can see that in Canada the meaning of 'CEE' region can also include almost the whole post-Soviet space excluding post-Soviet Central Asia states. We also can find a grouping of countries within CEE as the following: *Eastern Europe* (and within it – the Baltics), *Balkans* (sometimes – ex-Yugoslavia/former Yugoslavia), *South Caucasus* (Canadian International Development Agency, 2009c). Such a grouping was used by the Canadian International Development Agency (abbreviated as CIDA) in its statistical documents about amounts of financial assistance to the countries of the region.

One of the current approaches towards the meaning of Eastern Europe concerns defence and security issues, which are connected with the events since 2014 in the East of Ukraine. As the main question is the safety of the region under the threat of Russian aggression, Eastern Europe is composed of such states as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine (Rasiulis, 2016).

#### *Central and Eastern Europe among Canada's national interests before 1989*

For a better understanding of the place of the CEE region among current Canada's priorities, we can make a brief overview of Canadian policy towards the eastern part of Europe before 1989.

As it seems from the outside since 1867 Canadian overseas activities were mostly oriented within the same vector as British and American policy. In 1945

it was even proposed a concept of 'the North Atlantic Triangle', which explained the importance of the United Kingdom, the USA, and Canada relations to Canadian security (McCulloch, 2011, pp.199-201). Since getting full sovereignty after 1931 (the Statute of Westminster) Canada was trying to distance itself from Great Britain and to develop its own independent foreign policy. But up to the end of World War II Canadian external policy was mainly determined by Great Britain, after World War II the leading role transferred to the United States. We can name three main reasons which influenced this change: the weakness of the UK after World War II, Canada's desire to be really independent, and increasing economic, trade, and security interactions between Canada and the USA.

One of the turning points which influenced future American dominance in Canada's external policy was 'the Gouzenko affair'. It started on 5 September 1945 when a cipher clerk of the Soviet embassy to Canada Igor Gouzenko defected to the Canadian side with more than a hundred secret documents which proved that a number of Canadian, American, and British public officials and eminent scientists were recruited by the Soviet Union as agents for the atomic espionage. Information about the network of Soviet agents caused a real panic in the West because it was considered as the starting point of the Cold War and anti-Communist hysteria for Canada (Knight, 2006). Since the Gouzenko affair the main geopolitical and geostrategic considerations were targeted to challenge Soviet hegemony and to combat Eastern European communism. Canada followed such an approach. For Canada, the Gouzenko affair had an unprecedented effect because it led to closer relations with the United States in the sphere of security and defence. But, on the other hand, Canada used this case to abandon isolationism and to start more activities on the international arena (Braun, 2019, pp.479-480).

During the Cold War Canada's relations with the U.S. were formalised in numerous bilateral and international structures, and the experts qualified such close relations as the asymmetrical partnership (Ostash, 2011). After World War II Canadian politics demonstrated the competition of the pro- and anti-American attitudes within ruling parties. The main issue was Canada's growing dependence on the United States. The liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau made attempts to change Canadian policy: the main aim was to avoid further dominance by the United States and to make Canadian foreign policy really independent. Since the 1970s, two main alternatives were chosen to prevent "absorption" of Canada by the southern neighbour: (1) to search for new partners abroad, and (2) to take an active part in international organisations. In fact, both tactics were oriented on distancing from the United States: to escape from the only one main partner by

diversifying regional dimensions of Canadian foreign policy and increasing the number of foreign partners; and to find some kind of counterweight to the USA on the international level (Bessonova, 2017, p.248). Tony McCulloch (2011, p.206) says that as a result 'the Canada-US-UK triangle is usually seen as declining in relevance, replaced by a plethora of other relationships, both bilateral and multilateral'.

Europe became one of the main new vectors of Canadian foreign policy. The first steps of active economic relations with Europe (excluding traditional ties with the United Kingdom) Canada started since the 1950s and it was mainly Western Europe. Eastern Europe before and during the Cold War was not a priority for Canada. Skilling (1966, p.4) underlined that 'Canada's attitude towards Eastern Europe has traditionally been one of almost complete indifference, reflecting its overwhelming concentration on the Commonwealth and the North Atlantic triangle'. In his opinion 'both in trade, and in cultural relations, the countries of this area, including the Soviet Union, continued to be largely *terra incognita* and, one might say, *terra non grata*' (Skilling, 1966, p.4). Since establishing Communism in this part of Europe Canadian policy towards CEE was subordinated to a more prioritised task: to prevent the spread of communism (Scurr, 2017, p.2). During the Cold War, this task influenced greatly the whole foreign policy of the majority of Western countries. As the main opponent was the USSR, policy towards Soviet Allies was determined by the relations with the Soviet Union. Eastern Europe, however, remained very low on the scale of priorities of Canada's national interest.

Canada's connections with CEE nations started within the immigration processes: the first groups of newcomers from the region appeared in Canada in the late 1770s, they were from Poland (Heydenkorn, 2019). Soon they were joined by groups of Ukrainians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Croatians, etc.

Official relations and diplomatic recognition of Canada and CEE countries were mostly connected with such events of world history and international relations as world wars (WW I, WW II and the Cold War).

First steps of the establishment of formalised relations with CEE countries were made after WW I, when Canada was still the British dominion and all foreign affairs were controlled by the United Kingdom. In 1919 there were established diplomatic relations between Canada and Poland (they were carried out by the Polish embassy in London and the Polish Consulate General in Montreal) (Poland in Canada, 2022). In 1920 it was negotiated on establishing a Czechoslovak representation with diplomatic powers in Canada (in October 1920 the Czechoslovak consulate was officially opened in Montreal; in January 1923 it was promoted to Consulate General; the main institution was the Czechoslovak Embassy in London) (Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ottawa, 2016).



Canada got full autonomy in the sphere of external affairs since 1931 due to the Statute of Westminster, and assumed control over its foreign relations. This made it possible to start another wave of recognition and formalisation of the contacts with CEE countries, which took place during and after WW II. During WW II Canadian government supported Allied governments, then in exile in London, by appointing envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary who should reside in that city and be formally accredited to each of them. In 1940 Canada acknowledged the exiled Czechoslovak government in London (Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ottawa, 2016), in 1942 established diplomatic relations with Polish and Yugoslavian government-in-exile (DeLong, 2020, p.72, p.99).

After the end of World War II, following the other states of the West, the Canadian government disapproved of the Communist takeover in Eastern Europe. That is why relations with this region revived only in times of *détente*. In the 1960s there was the next wave of the building of diplomatic relations with the East European states. In 1960 there were restored relationships with Poland and Czechoslovakia. Also, there were established diplomatic relations with Hungary (1964), Bulgaria (1966), and Romania (1967) (DeLong, 2020, p.22, p.44, p.73). Albania was diplomatically recognised by Canada in 1965 with no public announcement, but diplomatic relations were established only in 1987 (DeLong, 2020, p.13). As DeLong (2020, p.6) writes, the situation with East Germany was very specific. Canada did not establish formal diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic (DDR) until 1975, when the Federal Republic of Germany (1972), Great Britain (1973), and the United States (1974) extended diplomatic recognition to the DDR.

A very specific case during the Cold War and before the times of *détente* in Canadian policy towards Eastern Europe was connected with Hungarian Refugees to Canada in 1956. Canada had a restrictive immigration policy towards refugees from Europe after World War II, and was not welcoming refugees from Communist rule in Eastern Europe because of the fear of communist sympathisers and Soviet agents. But in 1956-57 Canada allowed a dramatic relaxation of immigration regulations in order to facilitate the speedy admission of thousands of applicants from Hungary and even provided free transport for everyone who came. Nandor Dreisziger (2008, p.42, p.58), who studied this issue, comments that the 'big welcome' for the Hungarian refugees was an exception to the rules which was mostly caused by domestic political affairs linked to the elections and in some way by the Suez Crisis.

At the times of *détente*, Canada was trying to use opportunities to pursue closer relations with the USSR as well as East European countries. As Canadian

researcher Cory Scurr argues in his dissertation, which is dedicated to Canada's foreign relations with communist Eastern Europe, that 'the primary goal of the government's policy was to attenuate Soviet control over Eastern Europe by fostering closer ties with select Eastern European nations. Engendering closer political, commercial, and cultural relations with the region, it was believed, would build bridges between East and West, break down ideological barriers, and ultimately reduce Cold War tensions' (Scurr, 2017, p.300). Another reason of the attempts of Canadian policy was to weaken the ties of East European countries with the Soviet bloc and to increase their political and commercial links with the West and to create opportunities for more independent directions in Canadian policy-making, both in and out of alliance frameworks (Scurr, 2017, p.48, p.298).

But in general, during the Cold War Canadian policy towards Central and Eastern Europe was aimed at preventing the spread of communism. Additionally, to traditional instruments such as diplomatic relations, mutual participation in different international organisations, Canada joined Western initiatives to limit economic and technological cooperation with the USSR and Eastern Europe.

*Canada's policy towards Central and Eastern Europe in a changing world after the Cold War*

Events in 1989 in Eastern Europe attracted attention of the whole Western world: Western policy towards the Communism was directed on its containment and elimination, but when it happened no one was ready and it was really unexpected.

The situation changed radically after the revolutionary events of 1989 in Eastern Europe. The geopolitical vacuum in that part of the continent caused a number of discussions between Western Europe and the USA. For Europeans, it was a chance to get rid of the American presence and to unite the continent, especially within the process of European integration. For the USA it was important to remain as a 'European state' and to find new reasons to be involved in European events (for example disputes about the necessity to transform NATO into a more political organisation because of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact).

For Canada more valuable were other issues: North American integration within the Free Trade Agreement with the USA signed in 1987 and hot debates in Canadian society between opponents (economic nationalists) and supporters (continentalists) of this agreement (Perlin, 1999). The main issue was the growing dependence of Canada on the United States. Thus, changes in Europe and the world gave Canada an opportunity to revise approaches towards its own foreign policy, diversify a number of partners and use new possibilities.

Canada positively reacted to the developments in Eastern Europe and joined the USA and West European states in their support of East European nations, who

started transit towards democracy and a market economy. Just after American initiatives to support the developments in Poland and Hungary, at the G7 summit in Paris in July 1989, then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney agreed that the Canadian government would participate in an international programme to provide economic and technical assistance to support liberalisation reforms in these two countries.

Jeanne K. Laux (1994, p.172) states that the issue of how best to meet the challenge of transition in Central and Eastern Europe appeared as the top agenda of policy debate within and among Western governments. It was discussed and soon decided to reorient politics of support and to take funds from the Third World countries by forwarding financing first of all to Poland and Hungary as countries that officially started democratic reforms. Later on, the assistance was extended to Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

As it is noted in the Records of the Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe (Government of Canada, 2015) on October 4 1989, Cabinet approved an economic assistance package for Poland and Hungary, originally budgeted at \$22 million. It was the 'Programme for Cooperation with Poland and Hungary'. In May 1990, the Program was extended to become the 'Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe' which worked until 1994 when it was folded into the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). To assist Central and East European nations in their national-building process and transit towards democracy became one of the goals of Canadian foreign. On the other hand, it was a good chance for Canada to increase its own role on the international arena by strengthening the multilateral approach in world politics.

The majority of funds were delivered through the Department of External Affairs' Economic Development Fund (EDF). The Task Force evaluated applications from Canadian and European companies, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies to provide technical assistance to various projects in Central and Eastern Europe. Among the main vectors of support, it is worth mentioning: training for management, education, finance, democratic development, human rights, municipal government and urban affairs; development projects relating to agriculture, environment, telecommunications, transportation, and legal and cultural institutions. Canadian firms were also assisted in investing in Central and Eastern European markets and in developing links with local business communities.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the unsuccessful August coup d'état and the collapse of the Soviet Union caused the last wave of formalisation of Canada's relations with the newly created states in Eastern Europe. On 26 August 1991, few

days after the Soviet coup d'état attempt, Canada established diplomatic relations with three Baltic states – Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Diplomatic recognition of independent Ukraine happened on 2 December, 1991, the next day after the Ukrainian independence referendum. Diplomatic relations with Moldova were established in February 1992, with Belarus – in May 1992 (DeLong, 2020, pp.18-89). 31 December 1992 Canada diplomatically recognised independent Czech Republic and Slovakia, formerly parts of the Czechoslovakia.

Post-communist countries were not among the priorities of Canadian policy, but they occupied a special place in Canadian politics because of Diaspora. Immigrants of East European origin compose the third major group which arrived to Canada after newcomers of English or French origin. According to the Census 2016, Canadians who pointed their origin as of Eastern European were 3,431,245, among them the most numerous are Ukrainian (1,359,655) and Polish (1,106,585) minorities (Statistics Canada, 2017). According to Census 2021 Ukrainians are in top-10 ethnical groups in Canada (3,5 % of the total Canadian population) (Statistics Canada, 2021). East European Diaspora holds a very active position, and is organised into different communities and institutions, which try to influence on bilateral relations of Canada with the countries of their origin. Diaspora's activities are not under analysis in this paper, so we'll only name one of the Diaspora structures – the Central and Eastern European Council in Canada. This Council includes the Albanian Community in Canada, the Czech and Slovak Association, Estonian Central Council, Hungary Congress, Latvian National Federation in Canada, Lithuanian-Canadian Community, the Canadian Polish Congress, and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (CEEC, 2021).

As many representatives of Central and Eastern European Diasporas moved to Canada because of political reasons they pay attention to the issues of promotion of human rights and democratic governance in their home countries. Usually, diasporas deal with monitoring and publicising human rights and democratic freedom infractions (Geislerova, 2007, p.96). As then-Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada Joe Clark (1990) noticed 'Virtually no other nation possesses the web of intense personal connections to Eastern and Central Europe that we have in Canada. That gives Canadians a special interest, and a special capacity, in helping those societies become prosperous and free'.

Canada joined the initiatives of G-7, OECD, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development which were aimed at the support and assistance towards the CEE region. The main declared aims were to encourage the post-Communist transition towards open market-oriented economies, to promote private and entrepreneurial initiative in Central and Eastern Europe. The general approach was to combine economic and political reforms. In 1990 the Renaissance Eastern Europe Program

was created in Canada. It was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Bureau of Assistance for Central and Eastern Europe; and it was aimed to increase the involvement of Canadian companies prepared to invest to new market economies in the region and to establish long-term business relationships (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1994).

One of the instruments of Canadian assistance to post-Communist countries was the federal agency – the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). CIDA was formed in far 1968 to realise international development cooperation programs in such regions as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas. Focus on Central and Eastern Europe was added in 1995, when CIDA became responsible for Canada's official assistance aimed on the support of democratic development and economic liberalisation initiatives in the mentioned region (Canadian International Development Agency, 2010). General areas of Canadian support within CIDA were humanitarian aid, private sector, development, education, environment, health, equality between women and men.

A special branch that was responsible for the programmes in that part of Europe was formed (Canadian International Development Agency, 1998). It covered Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The stated objectives of the branch were to support democratic development and economic liberalisation by building mutually beneficial partnerships. Humanitarian assistance, nuclear safety (first of all to improve the safety of Soviet-designed nuclear power stations), transition to market-based economies, facilitation of Canadian trade and investment links with the region, the encouragement of good governance, democracy, and adherence to international norms were named among the main vectors of support (Canadian International Development Agency, 2000).

Within CIDA activities in the 1990s, more than 20 countries from Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR received financial and technological support from Canada. The projects CIDA funded spanned several countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, the former USSR, and Yugoslavia. With CIDA's financial and technical support were created projects and initiatives led by institutions, associations, Canadian and international non-governmental organisations, and private sector enterprises. CIDA also cooperated with diasporas by engaging its representatives as development actors and policy stakeholders in three key ways: through supporting research, funding projects, and promoting dialogue (Geislerova, 2007, p.104).

One of the programmes administrated by CIDA was Canada Corps (2004-2006, afterwards restructured), a new initiative that was interpreted as a key mechanism for providing governance assistance to developing countries. The first mission consisted of 500 Canadians who came as election observers to the Ukrainian presidential election on 26 December 2004. The main idea was ‘to mobilise Canadians of all ages and backgrounds, providing new opportunities for individuals to contribute to capacity building in the developing world’ (Government of Canada, 2005, pp.23-25).

In 2008 it was enacted Official Development Assistance Accountability Act, which regulates Canadian aid to respond to global injustices, understood in terms of poverty, inequality, and human rights violations since 2008 (McKee, 2015, p.448). In 2009 the Government of Canada announced the reshaping of its aid agenda and cut down the number of countries under the CIDA support. Partly that was caused by the world financial and economic crisis, partly because countries of Central and Eastern Europe already were included into European and Transatlantic structures. A new approach was announced, focusing on three priority themes: increasing food security, stimulating sustainable economic growth, and securing the future of children and youth. Since that time, CIDA has concentrated on the support of programmes of only 20 countries of the world (so-called ‘*countries on focus*’), and among them, only one country from Central and Eastern Europe remained: it was Ukraine (Canadian International Development Agency, 2009b). Other countries were supposed to receive Canadian aid in other ways and forms (humanitarian assistance, partnership in multinational cooperation, work of Canadian NGOs, etc.) (Canadian International Development Agency, 2009a). In general, CIDA’s activities greatly influenced the democratic developments in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2013 by the decision of the government CIDA was folded into the Department of Foreign Affairs (now – Global Affairs Canada) (CBC News, 2013).

Now Canadian ties with Central and Eastern Europe are developing through the shared membership in such international organisations as the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Government of Canada, 2020).

#### *Central and Eastern Europe in current Canadian foreign policy*

New vectors of Canadian foreign policy are directed to almost all regions of today’s world. As Irvin Studin (2016) noticed: ‘Canada has a four-point game this century’. The author connected these main four points with America, China, Russia and Europe and described his position from the geographical point of view

(America is at the southern border, China is at Canada's western border, a melting Arctic puts Russia directly at Canada's northern border, and the EU is evidently at the eastern border).

The official position is more variable. Among the current priority vectors of Canadian foreign policy, there should be named North America, the Arctic, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and North Africa (Government of Canada, 2021b). As it is pointed on the official website of the Government of Canada: 'Canada and Europe share a long history, common values, and close ties. Canada has developed strong bilateral relationships with the institutions of the European Union (EU), as well as with most European countries inside and outside of the EU' (Government of Canada, 2020). We see that Europe is not divided into sub-regions; Central and Eastern Europe are not separated from the rest of Europe; the main criterion of division is membership in the EU.

Europe is interpreted as one of the main priorities for Canadian foreign policy after the United States of America. In current interpretations we can also see that the United Kingdom is not mentioned separately; probably this is an argument in the support of the position of that group of experts who underlined that 'the North Atlantic Triangle' concept should not be used for explanation of today's Canadian external affairs.

Canada's foreign policy has changed its main focus: from warning on its own sovereignty and security (traditional tasks during the 19th and almost the whole 20th centuries) to orientation on the values which are important for the whole of mankind. In a statement on Canada's foreign policy priorities, then-minister Christia Freeland noted that the main task for Canada is 'a path towards a collective goal of a better, safer, more just, more prosperous, and sustainable world' (Government of Canada, 2017a).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the core Canadian national values are declared as follows: territorial integrity, human rights, democracy, and respect for the rule of law, and an aspiration to free and friendly trade. Mentioned values are evaluated as 'shared values' with Europeans, and they are named as the first among the spheres of cooperation with Europe together with 'trade and political relations', 'cooperation on international security', 'security and defence in Europe' (Government of Canada, 2020). And such spheres of cooperation with Europe now cover former Communist countries of Europe.

On the official website of the Government of Canada it is mentioned that Eastern Europe together with Eurasia (former Soviet Union) became important

in the last few decades and that Canada strongly stands for the democracy and freedom in this region (Government of Canada, 2020).

In current frame of Canadian policy towards Europe the main priority is given to the bilateral relationships with the institutions of the EU, to cooperation within Canada – European Free Trade Association. And special attention is paid to only one country – Ukraine (Government of Canada, 2020).

This special attention is accented on the development assistance to this East European state according to the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act. In the reports to Parliament on the Government of Canada's Official Development Assistance, Ukraine is pointed as the only European country which now receives Canadian assistance.

As it is mentioned on the Government of Canada web page, Ukraine is a country that is still struggling to consolidate democracy and lay the foundations for economic prosperity. Following the *Euromaidan* and 'Revolution of Dignity' in late 2013 and early 2014, Ukraine 'committed to implementing democratic and economic reforms in line with its European aspirations'. However, Russian aggression, which started in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea, 'continues drawing Ukraine into a bloody conflict in the east of the country, which has placed significant pressure and uncertainty on the Ukrainian government's ability to carry out its much-needed reforms' (Ukrainian Canadian Congress, 2017). As we see, not only security issues but unfinished reforms attract the attention of official Canada.

Russian aggression against Ukraine led to a number of discussions among the political establishment, experts, and researchers about security issues in the region as well as the danger of Russian interfering in the affairs of other European countries. Ostap Kushnir (2017, p.130) argues that Kremlin explains the annexation of Crimea from the perspective of international law (the right to every nation for self-identification) and safety reasons (the threats for the Russian-speaking minorities in Ukraine). But Russia's disregard of international law by addressing it did not convince international society: Western states imposed sanctions on Russia in order to moderate its geopolitical ambitions and prevent the Kremlin from further interference into Ukrainian affairs. Putin's intention to protect Russian-speaking compatriots abroad as a part of the Russian hybrid war makes it necessary for the Central European states to pay special attention to Russia. NATO's states have already begun to capture the experience of Ukrainian soldiers regarding Russian hybrid tactics and technologies (Dorosh, Ivasechko and Turchyn, 2019, pp.67-68).

Canada shows unprecedented support to Ukraine. Since January 2014 there was committed more than \$785 million in assistance to Ukraine, using such



instruments as: development, humanitarian and financial assistance; the Peace and Stabilisation Operations Programme; the Canadian Police Arrangement (Government of Canada, 2021a). In coordination with foreign partners and allies, Canada has imposed sanctions against hundreds of Russian and Ukrainian individuals and entities.

In September 2015, Canada launched Operation UNIFIER, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) military training and capacity-building mission in Ukraine. This mission has been extended until 31 March 2022. 24,535 Security Forces of Ukraine (SFU) candidates have participated in the training provided via 510 course serials spanning all lines of effort since the start of the mission (statistics on 1 April 2021). Since January 2014, the Government of Canada provides a broad range of projects to strengthen security, promote economic stability and growth, advance democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and promote a civil society.

Canada's help to Ukraine includes supplying non-lethal military gear (including equipment such as: communications systems used for field operations, a mobile field hospital, explosive disposal equipment, medical kits used for military field operations, night vision goggles) (Government of Canada, 2021c). And it is not the full list of Canada's help to Ukraine.

Such support can be explained by few reasons. First of all, Canada gradually defends international law, territorial integrity, human rights, and the development of democracy all over the world. Russian aggression towards Georgia in 2008 and towards Ukraine since 2014 was caused among other reasons by promises of NATO membership to these two countries and by Russian claims to the territories and peoples in Russia's Near Abroad. Tanya Narozhna (2021, p.76) explains Russia's aggressive foreign policy as a confrontation to the refusal of the West to recognise Russia as a great power. Putin justified this aggressive foreign policy by the concept of 'Russian World' defending Russian interests, especially against the West, and asserting Russia as a great power. Canada's policy which is based on universal values opposes such an approach. Canada's policy towards Ukraine as well as to the rest of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is focused on democratic transformation, political and economic reforms, and integration into Euro-Atlantic and international structures and institutions (Government of Canada, 2011). Bohdan S. Kordan (2018, p.7) says that Ottawa's policy towards Ukraine has been consistent at the macro-level, because it is subordinated to the national interest first of all. He underlines that support of Ukraine in democratic transformation, political and economic reforms completely resonated with Canadian interests.

Many top Canadian officials openly supported Ukraine in their public speeches, interviews, visits. Then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper was the first G-7 leader to visit Ukraine and he repeatedly criticised Russian President Vladimir Putin for his takeover of Crimea. He also said he'll push for Russia's expulsion from the G8 (Parry, 2014). Official support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine was also expressed by other high-ranking officials: current Prime Minister of Canada J. Trudeau, by all the Ministers of Foreign Affairs since 2014 (J. Baird, R. Nicholson, S. Dion, Ch. Freeland, F.-F. Champagne, M. Garneau). Canada stands on clear position: Crimea, occupied by Russia, is recognised as Ukrainian.

The second reason is Russia-Canada relations in the Arctic region, where Canada is interested to defend its own national interests, and Russia is one of the claimers of territory changes in that region. As Maryna Rabinovych (2017, p.81) argues Canada seems to pursue a double-track policy, aiming to both support Ukraine and create conditions for a substantial long-term partnership with Russia in the Arctic. Natalia Viakhireva (2020, p.44) supposes that Russian-Canadian cooperation continues in the Arctic, though mostly in multilateral frameworks. She considers that the Arctic region was one of the most productive areas in the Canada-Russia relationship before the crisis of 2014 and it remains the area the least affected by the crisis. But there is another opinion. Rafael Luna noted that the situation in the Arctic is now more difficult for Russia than prior to the crisis in Ukraine, because Western sanctions against Russia were primarily directed to Arctic resource extraction and many projects were cancelled or postponed. Western sanctions aimed to restrict financial borrowing and export of technologies to Russia (Luna, 2019, p.112).

New developments in the region show that Canada needs a less active and weak Russia. For example, in April 2021 Russia wants to stretch out imaginary lines on the ocean floor and below it. This caused worries about consequences for other Arctic countries like Canada. As CBC News informed, 'the new submission would push Russia's claim all the way up to Canada's exclusive economic zone, an area 200 nautical miles from the coastline, in which Canadians have sole rights to fish, drill and pursue other economic activities' (Tranter, 2021). So for Canada, such a situation in the Arctic is similar to the case with Ukraine when international law and territorial integrity are neglected. As Luna (2019, p.102) argues 'certainly, the crisis in Ukraine has negatively affected Russia's plans for the region [*the Arctic*]'.

That is why Canada's support of Ukraine against Russia fits Canadian interests in the other regions of the world where Russia is involved.

The third reason is the active support demonstrated by Diaspora in Canada – both Ukrainian and East European as a whole. In many cases, representatives of the Diaspora show their solidarity with their historical motherland's position.

Sydoruk and Tyshchenko in their research compared the attitudes of Central European countries towards the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. They underlined that the countries of Central Europe officially unconditionally support the territorial integrity of Ukraine at the present stage and condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine as a violation of its sovereignty and basic principles of international law (Sydoruk and Tyshchenko, 2018, pp.100-101). The authors said that there exist some differences in attitudes, which may be explained by historical heritage, homeland security issues, current political situation, economic interests, and significance of the transatlantic relations. But in general, policies of Central European and Baltic countries on the 'Ukrainian' issue can be considered common in fundamental issues.

The same attitudes are demonstrated by the representatives of the Central and Eastern European Diaspora in Canada. Mentioned above Central and Eastern European Council in Canada (abbreviated CEEC) expresses its total support to Ukraine. A number of statements were published to support Ukrainians during *Euromaidan*, and afterward – to support them in their struggle with Russia. For example, CEEC supports the decision of the Canadian government and Canada's Department of Global Affairs to apply economic and travel sanctions against 114 individuals and 15 entities in response to Russia's aggression in the Black Sea and the Kerch Strait, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and the war that Russia has been waging against Ukraine (CEEC, 2019). This Council also supports events and cases of the struggle for democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, criticising facts of suppression of the development of civil society in Russia and Belarus. CEEC initiated many public events where the situation in Ukraine and potential danger for Central and Eastern Europe were discussed, popularised information about how Canadian authorities support such nations as Ukraine and Belarus. Diaspora is a very important player, so we can completely agree with Marketa Geislerova (2007, pp.92-93) statement that diasporas are increasing their influence in both domestic and foreign policies, and for Canada, such a situation offers new opportunities for multi-track, multi-cultural diplomacy.

### **Conclusions**

Central and Eastern Europe occupies a unique place among Canadian national interests. Canadian perception of the terms 'Eastern Europe' and 'Central and Eastern Europe' is determined by the developments in international relations and in the region by itself. During the Cold War the term 'Eastern Europe' was mainly used towards the states in the Eastern part of the European continent which was under Soviet control. After the Cold War this region was called 'Central and Eastern Europe', and now it includes a number of post-communist countries of

Europe ('old Eastern Europe') and the former USSR ('new Eastern Europe'), which started their transition towards democracy. So 'Eastern Europe', which consists of the former Soviet republics, became a part of 'Central and Eastern Europe'. Now nations of CEE are at different stages of the reform process, and the region is still characterised by great diversity.

Central and Eastern Europe never played an important role for Canada, because the main vector of Canadian external relations was oriented on the so-called North Atlantic Triangle. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canada's foreign policy top priorities evolved: from a monocentric orientation on the UK/US towards multilateralism and active participation in international organisations and institutions. After World War II, when Canada abandoned isolationism, Central and Eastern Europe was considered within the framework of Canadian policy towards the Soviet Union. During the Cold War Canada's attitudes to the region mirrored the general Western approach which was aimed at preventing the spread of communism. When it was possible, Canada was searching for opportunities for more independent directions in its own foreign policy-making, as it was during a short period of *détente*.

After the end of the Cold War, the place of the countries of the eastern part of Europe among Canadian interests has changed. Canada was actively involved in the support of the processes of the transit to democracy in the region. When post-Communist European nations entered the EU, they began to be considered within the framework of Canadian policy towards Europe, which is one of the top priorities for current Canadian foreign policy. Post-Soviet states ('new Eastern Europe') occupy a specific place: on the one hand, they started democratic transformations and became recipients of Canadian and international assistance, as well as 'old Eastern Europe'. So, they can be considered within Canada's policy towards Central and Eastern Europe as part of general policy towards Europe. But on the other hand, 'new Eastern Europe' is too much connected with Russia and therefore is considered more within the framework of Canada's policy towards Russia, not Europe.

Canada's current policy towards Central and Eastern Europe continues in the same vector as it was since the revolutionary events in 1989. New 'Eastern Europe' still needs Canadian technical and financial support in its path to democracy and a free market economy. But additionally, to the mainstream of Canadian policy in the region (support of democratic and economic developments) there are added security issues caused by the Russian aggression to Ukraine.

In general, today's Canada's policy towards the region and bilateral relations with the nations of Central and Eastern Europe are based on common values and approaches on issues such as support for human rights and democracy, territorial

integrity, and the rule of international law. Canada is a donor country for a great variety of projects and programmes that have been and are being implemented in this part of Europe. The policy towards the region allows Canada to deal with new partners abroad, and to take an active part in international organisations and processes. At the beginning of the 21st century, Canada as a middle power tried to use different methods and mechanisms to protect its own national interests in the international arena, and Canada's involvement in the democratic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe made it possible to consider Canada as an important and notable international actor.

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## ЦЕНТРАЛЬНА ТА СХІДНА ЄВРОПА У КАНАДСЬКІЙ ЗОВНІШНІЙ ПОЛІТИЦІ

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У статті розглядається місце Центральної та Східної Європи серед пріоритетів зовнішньої політики Канади. Активність Канади в міжнародних подіях почалася у ХХ столітті та еволюціонувала від моноцентричної орієнтації на Велику Британію, а згодом Сполучені Штати до багатосторонності і участі у міжнародних організаціях та інституціях. В роки Холодної війни основним вектором політики Канади у регіоні було запобігання поширенню комунізму та послаблення зв'язків цих країн із радянським блоком. На той час політика щодо Центральної та Східної Європи була частиною політики Канади стосовно Радянського Союзу. Після революційних подій 1989–1991 рр. вона трансформувалася на технічну і фінансову підтримку трансформації до демократичних змін у регіоні та еволюціонувала у контекст канадської політики щодо усїєї Європи. З 2014 року її мейнстрім в регіоні доповнили питання безпеки, спричинені російською агресією проти України. Події повномасштабної російсько-української війни, яка розпочалася 24 лютого 2022 року, у цій статті не висвітлюються, оскільки вони потребують окремого дослідження. Незважаючи на те, що Центральна та Східна Європа ніколи не була пріоритетом для Канади, активність у цьому регіоні з 1989 року допомагає державі утвердитися як помітному міжнародному гравцю. Сучасна політика Канади та двосторонні відносини із країнами Центральної та Східної Європи базуються на спільних цінностях і підходах до таких вимірів, як підтримка прав людини і демократії, територіальної цілісності та верховенства міжнародного права. Канада є країною-донором для багатьох проектів і програм, які реалізовувалися і реалізуються у цій частині Європи. Політика щодо регіону дозволяє Канаді мати справу з новими партнерами за кордоном, брати активну участь у міжнародних організаціях і процесах. На початку ХХІ століття Канада як середня сила намагається використовувати різні методи та

механізми для захисту власних національних інтересів на міжнародній арені, а залучення цієї країни до демократичних перетворень Центральної та Східної Європи дозволило розглядати її як важливого і впливового міжнародного гравця.

**Ключові слова:** Канада; Центральна та Східна Європа; зовнішня політика Канади.