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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SINO-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

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Introduction

One of the largest civilizational projects voiced by Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, was the idea of creating the Silk Road Economic Belt which can rightly be attributed to China's foreign policy. This doctrine was first officially introduced in 2013. Then, during his visit to Astana, the leader of the People's Republic of China proposed to create an economic zone of the Great Silk Road, making economic ties between the Eurasian countries closer. Later, the idea of a land route of the Silk Road was added to its maritime counterpart, and the overall project was named "Belt and Road Initiative". In 2017, the Belt and Road Initiative was officially included in the Chinese Constitution. Its main goal is to create and lead a new kind of globalization, attracting countries and companies into Chinese orbit and taking advantage of Chinese investment and industrial benefits.

For Ukraine, joining the Belt and Road Initiative is a unique opportunity, as it will be able to contribute to the creation of a new economic order in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Procrastination in setting priorities in this area may lead to its removal from strategic decisions on building mutually beneficial regional relations.

The main purpose of this work is to analyse the political cooperation between Ukraine and China and its future prospects, as well as to identify key vectors for further development of Belt and Road initiative partnership.

Research results and their discussion

The bilateral relations between People's Republic of China and Ukraine were established in 1992 and developed rapidly until 2004. This was primarily due to the high level of political dialogue, the creation of the necessary legal framework and practical implementation of agreements reached in various areas of cooperation, namely in trade and economic, military-technical, scientific-educational and cultural area.

The development of the strategic partnership between 2005 and 2010, which began to focus more on the European Union and the United States than on China and other Asian countries, was interrupted by changes in Ukraine's foreign policy as a result of the Orange Revolution. However, at that time Ukraine was actively working on the implementation of previously signed agreements with China, especially in the military-technical sphere and technology exchange.

In early 2010, China began to revive relations with Ukraine. The result was the decision to establish a Cooperation Commission between China and Ukraine at the

level of Deputy Prime Ministers of the two countries, as well as subcommittees on cooperation in economy and trade, science and technology, as well as in agriculture and space, culture and education [1].

During 2014-2016, the Ukrainian side focused on the problems of restoring territorial integrity and domestic political processes, as well as relations with the EU and the United States, which at that time had already been declared by the Constitution of Ukraine. During this period, the Ukrainian government pursued a policy of distancing itself from China and sought to deepen its partnership with another Asian country, Japan. Thus, it becomes clear that the Ukrainian authorities at that time ignored the implementation of basic agreements and arrangements concluded with China, for example, "Strategic Partnership Development Program between Ukraine and China for 2014-2018".

Today, China is a conscious supporter of Ukraine's European integration and has always described Ukraine as an "important state in Europe" [2; 3]. The Government of the People's Republic of China has supported Ukraine's signing of an Association Agreement with the European Union and now it is considering Ukraine's involvement in building the New Economic Belt. If the Chinese plan is implemented, Ukraine will have a fundamentally new geopolitical place "the first European country on the Silk Road" and may become more politically subjective [4].

In 2020, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky gave an interview to the Chinese news agency Xinhua, during which he discussed cooperation with China. He noted that first of all, China has always been and remains one of Ukraine's foreign policy priorities, and Ukraine is ready to work on finding new opportunities for further expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation within the Cooperation Commission between the Governments of China and Ukraine. The President also stressed that Ukraine was one of the first countries to support the Belt and Road Initiative and that it has both the necessary economic and industrial potential to participate effectively in this ambitious project and its unique geographical location on the EU's eastern border, on the way from Asia to Europe, as well as between the Black and Baltic Seas [5].

Conclusion

The Belt and Road Initiative has become a key dimension of China's economic, foreign policy and foreign economic policy. Today, this initiative looks like one of the most attractive geoeconomic projects for Ukraine. Currently, its key advantages are inclusiveness, openness, benefits for all participants, transition to unified trade rules, integration and coordination of development programs and strategies. Also, the Chinese project does not contradict Ukraine's desire for further economic cooperation and economic integration and can strengthen Ukraine's advantages in this process, provide incentives for economic development in general.

As there is no strategy for the development of China-Ukraine relations under the Belt and Road Initiative, the following tasks need to be addressed:

- to understand the importance of China's foreign economic and foreign policy, we need to explore how else to normalize more the official format of international relations and to hold more regular political dialogues between the governments of Ukraine and China,
- to lay the foundations of mutual cooperation and to form new models of cooperation in the field of investment and transportation,
- to create appropriate conditions to facilitate the construction of regular services by attracting transit traffic from China to the European market,

- to create a long-term platform for industry, financial sector and business community to share suggestions and perspectives.

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