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## Lithuanian-German Relations in the Context of Global Geopolitical Challenges at the Beginning of 21st Century

The article puts forth several tasks. The first task is to ascertain the possible Germany's impact on the further development of Lithuania's geopolitical subjectivity. The second task is to identify the main principles of current Germany's geopolitical code. Thirdly, it will examine Lithuania's and Germany's interests in the context of eventual global geopolitical transformations and construct scenarios of development relating to the international environment. Fourthly it will construct the broad spectrum of possible scenarios (including positive and negative ones) on Lithuania's and Germany's bilateral relations. And fifth, it will ascertain the optimal model for Lithuania in shaping its relations with Germany.

### 1. Factors Determining Lithuania's Geopolitical Subjectivity: the Impact of Germany

Lithuania's geopolitical status directly depends on its global geopolitical situation because of the weak relative power parameters (internal potential) of the country. The global geopolitical situation depends upon the geopolitical tendencies in the geostrategic triangle consisting of the USA, the European Union and Russia. This is why the geopolitical projections of the main geopolitical subjects, particularly the USA, Russia and main European powers (Germany, in this case) and the configurations of those projections should be identified and predicted at the global, as well as at the regional level, before indicating the probable dynamics of Lithuania's geopolitical situation.

International organisations such as NATO and the EU perform the functions of power projection instruments for the great powers. This is why the interaction of power levers dynamics and the geostrategic choices of the main

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actors – the great powers – unavoidably have direct influence on the further development prospects of the international organisations mentioned above. If the currently existing international institutionalism does not provide the conditions to control the geopolitical interaction processes with other actors for the geopolitical subject, presumably the subject would seek to reform the functioning international organisations in a manner so that the new tendencies of institutionalism or de-institutionalism would increase their structural power. This leads to the conclusion that Lithuania's membership in NATO and the European Union does not eliminate its dependence on various tendencies of the great powers and their power balancing games or the redistribution of their geographic and/or sector spheres of influence. The conjuncture of Lithuania's geopolitical situation, conditioned by the instability and dynamism of the global geopolitical situation, is the main geopolitical challenge for Lithuanian foreign policy in the beginning of 21st century.

The German factor is very important in the context that Germany is the largest state with the greatest structural power in Western Europe. The transformation of European – Russian, American – European and even American – Russian relations is impossible without Germany's (self)-involvement in the global geopolitical schemes<sup>1</sup>. Such situations turn Germany into a very important player in the international arena, because of Germany's potential power for directing the further developments of the international system.

The European Union, for example, had been initially created as the reminiscence of Carolingian empire (i.e. the core of Western Europe) under the cover of Euro-Atlantism (the USA) and later has turned towards the concept of the Greater Europe, yet progressively still remaining under this cover. On the other hand the geopolitical concept of euro-atlantism or, more precisely the USA, which created the conditions for the development of the new power centre in Europe, is experiencing increasingly sharper contradictions with this new centre of power at the moment. Germany's bolstered idea of realising the independent Greater Europe concept through the European Union is the cause of such contradictions. The degree of this Euro-Atlantic collision or the critical limits of disagreements practically depends not on the position of France or any other European state, but on Germany's choice of its geopolitical code. It means that the degree of collision depends on the way Germany chooses for the realisation of its propagated vision of Greater Europe: would that be realized under the concept of Euro-Atlantism or contrary under the concept designed on limiting the spread of American influence to the European security system?

This example shows exactly the impact of such alterations in Germany's geopolitical code on Lithuania's geopolitical subjectivity. Lithuania could feel safe enough as the part of the democratic world, which dominates today, as long as the symbiosis between Europe (Germany) and the USA exists, because Lithu-

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<sup>1</sup> Belov V., "Russian Perceptions of Germany's Role in the EU and Europe" in Joop M., Schneider H., Schmalz U., eds., *Germany's European Policy: Perceptions in Key Partner Countries*, Berlin, 2002, p. 271.

ania's structural power correspond with the paradigm of the global spread of democracy. All of Lithuania's losses experienced while performing one or another possible geopolitical function are covered automatically from the resources of the whole democratic world in this context. But those losses could fall on Lithuania alone a split between the USA and the Europe (Germany) occurred in the Euro-Atlantic structures. If Lithuania could not bear the costs of the aforementioned losses, then it may become the geopolitical province either of Europe (in the best case) or Russia.

## 2. The Contemporary Geopolitical Code of Germany as the Derivation of Historical paradigms of German Foreign Policy

The current geopolitical code of Germany may be considered as the derivation of the various German foreign policy paradigms, which have come into play in various historical periods. Germany's strategic orientation towards atlantistic states was structured by Konrad Adenauer after the World War II and today still occupies the most important place in the hierarchy of those paradigms. The primary and main function of this orientation is Germany's geopolitical linking with the forpost of liberal democracy (the Atlantistic states) in aspiration, that Germany consequently would become the bridgehead of democracy instead of the geopolitically destabilising factor in Europe. Such strategy also may be considered as the doctrine of self-containment<sup>2</sup>. Some manifestations of the Ostpolitik tradition enforced by Willy Brandt in the 1970s are characteristic features of contemporary Germany's foreign policy. The decline of tensions between the East and the West is the essence of Brandt's "Policy towards East" and Germany is currently one of the geopolitical subjects calling for good relations (the cohabitation) with Russia in the spirit of it<sup>3</sup>.

Germany supports the EU's enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and backs deeper European integration towards federalism. Such policy makes allusion one of the main elements of the Greater Europe concept, e.g. expansion of the European Union, which would be composed of all countries of European civilisation and would even step in the area of neighbouring civilisations consequently creating the system of satellite states around it in the East and thereby increase Germany's influence on those countries. The paradigm of the Greater Europe together with the concept of Atlantism dominate in today's Germany and those paradigms may either be coherent or conflict with each other depending on the way of the implementation of the Greater Europe vision: would it be implemented under the cover of an American provided "hard" power shield or without it.

<sup>2</sup> Hacke Ch., *Die Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – von Konrad Adenauer bis Gerhard Schröder*, Ullstein Verlag, 2003, p. 521-584.

<sup>3</sup> Belov V., (note 1) p. 274.

On the other hand, the concept of Greater Europe competes with the vision of Carolingian Europe in the current German foreign policy. The concept of Carolingian Europe expresses the supranational Western European commonness and also indicates Germany's geopolitical orientation towards some kind of political-economic core of Europe and the deeper European integration on the basis of this core, which means an orientation to the "two-speed Europe" model. The strategic partnership between Berlin and Paris is the expression of the Carolingian Europe vision in German foreign policy<sup>4</sup>. Such a geopolitical axis makes preconditions for a fusion of the most important Western European countries into one geopolitical subject. Germany needs an alliance with France to increase and preserve its influence on the EU and to limit the American unilateralism<sup>5</sup>.

However, the paradigm of Carolingian Europe incites the dissolution of Germany in democratic supranational structures, especially in the European Union. On the other hand, this German geopolitical code may be called the post-national one and it is based on the congruity of the EU and Germany. The European Union becomes one of the most important global power centres in the world and Germany as a leader (or one of the leaders) of it automatically acquires a means to realise its global geopolitical interests as well as the interests of the EU<sup>6</sup>.

Germany acts not only as one of the components of the supranational EU, but as a national power as well. Germany's policy towards Russia is the demonstration of just this and the later is interested in a bilateral form of the same relations too. Consequently the European Union places higher value criteria as the precondition for the cooperation with Russia, more strictly than Germany's government tends to do. It seems that German foreign policy has a tendency for cohabitation with Russia that directly correlates with the paradigm of Brandt's Ostpolitik.

Russia is not the only space for realisation of economic, energetic, trade and cultural interests for Germany, but also has a possibility of playing an active role in the concert of global great powers. It is important to take notice of the fact that Russia has set its priority not on the relations with Germany as the part of the EU, but on the relations based at the national level.

Anyway, the German balancing policy in its relations with Russia does not exceed the limits of the transatlantic system at the moment. Germany uses the "Russian card" usually during the deep crises in the Euro-Atlantic relations as the lever in its short-run tactical geopolitical combinations. The reality shows that such amplitude of geopolitical constructions could not be described as a traditional balancing of powers, because it does not neglect the basic German connection with the Western Atlantist based security structures.

It seems that the decisive influence on the further development of the German geopolitical code would be conditioned by the general tendency of an

<sup>4</sup> Hacke Ch., *Challenges for German Foreign Policy at the beginning of the 21st Century*. Oxford: Europaeum, 2004, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Laurinavičius Č., Motieka E., Statkus N., *Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai. XX amžius*. Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Vilnius, 2005, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> Buras P., Cichocki M.A., "German European Policy – a Polish Perspective" in Joop M., Schneider H., Schmalz U., eds., *Germany's European Policy: Perceptions in Key Partner Countries*, Berlin, 2002, p. 201-202.

international system development and the role of the USA would be very important at that point.

The turn towards priority of the American national interests instead the ones of the international community by the current government of the USA may weaken the general tendency of international institutionalism. This could stimulate the other countries to define their national interests, also stimulating the decline of collective security instruments. In this case German the geopolitical code may become more strictly based on the national interests of this greatest Western European power and it would make Germany return to the traditional policy of balancing<sup>7</sup>.

### 3. The Scenarios of Germany's Course in the Context of Global Geopolitical (the USA – the EU – Russia) Ones

Four main scenarios on the relations development between Russia, the USA and the EU can be outlined<sup>8</sup>:

- Transcontinental alliance (Russian - American - European axis);
- An isolation of Europe (Russian – American axis);
- Euro - continental alliance (Russian – European axis);
- Euro-Atlantic alliance (American – European axis).

#### 3.1. Germany's Role in the Transcontinental Alliance

Politically it is the scenario of a conjuncture alliance that has formed after 11 September 2001. The more formal reasons for this is a common fight against international terrorism.

The real reason is the inclination of the great powers towards the restoration of their classical institute - the concert. All three or even four the actors are self-sufficient centres of power, which together practically determines the structure of the international system. The G-7 or G-8 summits also have some features of the concert<sup>9</sup>.

The balancing among self-sufficient centres of power is an immanent and natural state. The current situation and the one in the nearest predictable future does not provide the conditions for the confrontation of these power centres. So the form of balancing is the concert, when all the actors are more or less satisfied

<sup>7</sup> Laurinavičius Č., Motieka E., Statkus N., (note 5), p. 254-255.

<sup>8</sup> Motieka E., Statkus N., Daniliauskas J., "Global Geopolitical Developments and Opportunities for Lithuania's Foreign Policy". *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2004*, Vilnius: Lithuania Military Academy, 2005, p. 27-66.

<sup>9</sup> Coulombis Th.A., "Toward A Global Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Concert of Powers?" *Contemporary Issues in International Politics*, Ankara, 2004, p. 8.

with the current situation, with China being the least satisfied one. The concert relaxes the balancing of power so diminishing the value-based relations. That's why the alliance among The USA, the EU, Russia and, partly, China may not be firm even if it de facto exists until now and may exist for a rather long time in the future.

Such a scenario does not mean that there will be any significant changes in Germany's geopolitical code for some time, but the disruptive elements of this code would be generated further simultaneously. First of all the Euro-Atlantic ties would be further weakened and the need for Germany's national reflection would increase in such a case.

Furthermore, this scenario would increase the area of the EU's influence and the importance of the German factor would be growing simultaneously during that process. It spontaneously would lead to tensions between the institutions of the EU and Germany's national interests. The recovery of German economy in the future may suspend the growth of this tension, but it is likely to be an only temporary occurrence.

The transcontinental alliance globally is an alliance of the highest level. But meanwhile it is amorphous structure with low intensiveness, which has the ability to connect the more intensive alliances of the lower level.

The transcontinental alliance scenario would be likely to provide the conditional calm for the short-term<sup>10</sup>, but there is the possibility that it would cause a serious erosion of the Western democratic institutions and the basic reconstruction of Germany's geopolitical code in the long-run perspective. The reconstruction of Germany's geopolitical code would move towards the code of a traditional national state and it would be inevitable in the case of the disintegration of the Euro-Atlantic alliance. But the evolutionary transformation of Germany's geopolitical code is also possible, if the concert of great powers once created would survive a sufficient time without confrontation. Germany would become a recognised leader of the EU then and the EU itself respectively would become a strategic counterbalance to the USA, Russia and China.

### **3.2. Germany's Role in the Scenario of Isolation of Europe**

The scenario of isolation of Europe may be projected as an outcome of American – Russian alliance. Such scenario practically would lead to the subversion of Europe and the EU, especially from the side of Russia and the USA. The European Union's (or Germany's) resistance capabilities to the destruction of such scale referring only to its own resources and its geoeconomic ties with East Asia and Latin America is very low. Such scenario inevitably would mean the revolutionary alteration of Germany's geopolitical code. This revolution would catalyse the process of Germany's geopolitical "re-nationalisation" and its retreat from the paradigm of post-nationalism, which incites Germany's 'melt-

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

down' in the EU and that of Atlantism, which connects Germany with the transatlantic security structures.

The probability for the realisation of this scenario is low. The elements of it emerged during the Iraq crisis in the form of alliance among the USA, Russia and Israel, but the "checks" system came into work with European (including Germany) efforts to appease the tension with the USA and adequate corresponding moves of the Americans.

### 3.3. Germany's Role in the Euro-Continental Alliance

The euro-continental alliance scenario has strong triggers in the German as well as the Russian sides. The concepts of euro-continentalism in Western Europe and neo-euroasism in Russia operate in this direction. The unavoidable mutual economic interdependence between Russia, because of its need for capital and the EU and its need for energy resources, may incite the movement to the euro-continentalist direction<sup>11</sup>. But this would be unlikely to expand further than a close geo-energetic cooperation, theory concepts, or public relations campaigns<sup>12</sup>.

This scenario should be considered more factual, if the EU would completely relax the euro-atlantic bounds and would create the strategic armed forces that were adequate and comparable to the American ones. It would undoubtedly mean the systemic cleavage in the American – German axis and the emergence of favourable conditions for the implementation of the German projected vision of the independent (from atlantist bounds) Greater Europe. Germany would become the core power of the EU also possessing its nuclear potential in this case. It is clear that the USA would not agree with such a course of the European Union (and Germany). The strategic receding from the USA implicated by the euro-continental scenario would be very dangerous for Europe itself as well.

### 3.4. Germany's role in the Euro-Atlantic Alliance

The alterations in Germany's geopolitical code would not be crucial if the intensity of euro-atlantic ties would increase. This would make the American – German axis even stronger (the reminiscence of Adenauer's geopolitical code) and Germany's "meltdown" in the European Union's institutions would accelerate increasing its turn to the post-national geopolitical paradigm.

Germany may set the implementation of the Greater Europe geopolitical concept or more precisely the expansion of the European structures into the traditional Russian sphere of influence as its priority if the policy of Russia's

<sup>11</sup> Bahgat G., "Terrorismus und die Ölversorgung des Westens. Die Energiepartnerschaft mit Moskau", *Internationale Politik*, 2003/3, p. 11-17.

<sup>12</sup> Daniliauskas J., Janeliūnas T., Kasčiūnas L., Motieka E., *Šiaurės šalių geostrateginė svarba Lietuvai*. Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2005, p. 65.



'containment' would become more intensive. But the German projected vision of Greater Europe would be implemented under the cover of America provided that "hard" power is needed in this case.

### **3.5. The Coherence/Conflict Problem of Lithuanian and German Interests in the Context of Global Geopolitical Scenarios**

Germany's participation in the global concert of the Great Powers provides the rather open amplitude of geostrategic choices for it. The analysis of Germany's role in various global geopolitical scenarios demonstrates that the development of Lithuania's geopolitical situation may be directly affected by Germany's choices about its geopolitical orientation.

The "re-nationalization" of German foreign policy would be the most unfavourable scenario for Lithuania, because it would mean a return to the traditional politics of the balancing of power in Europe and the traditional anarchy of national states in the international relations. Such a course of matters would create an advantageous situation for the realization of Russian geopolitical projections.

Germany's move towards the Carolingian or "two-speed Europe" geopolitical paradigm may spear Lithuania from the process of the German foreign policy's "re-nationalization". But possibly Germany's orientation to the core of the EU may create the conditions, which would turn Lithuania towards the political and economic periphery inside the EU.

The vision of the Greater Europe symbolizes Germany's aim to create the system of satellite states around itself. This may turn Lithuania into geopolitical and geo-economic province of Germany and the EU. It could practically mean Lithuania's subordination to the German geopolitical projections. The vision of Greater Europe may become especially dangerous for Lithuania, if it would be developing as the counter to Atlantism.

Lithuania should be interested in strengthening Adenauer's geopolitical paradigm (Atlantist "self-containment") in the German foreign policy agenda, because the domination of this concept would limit the opportunities for Russian geopolitical manoeuvres in the European security system.

The symbiosis of Germany projected the Greater Europe vision (the expansion of European structures into the area of post-soviet CIS). And an American implemented Russian "containment" strategy would be very useful for Lithuania in an attempt to construct the mechanism for effective control of Russia's geopolitical power.



## 4. German Policy Towards Lithuania: Geopolitical and Geoeconomic projections

### 4.1. Eventual German Policy towards Lithuania

#### 4.1.1. The Context of Russia

Lithuania may be important for Germany in the perspective of German – Russian relations; it also may perform some various functions. Lithuania may be considered by Germany as a geopolitical barrier (or bridgehead) in the case of the Russian threat or as connection (the bridge) in the case of cooperation. Lithuania also may be recognized as the sphere of Russia's interests in some sets of circumstance, if it would thereby help Germany to overcome the "hurdles" for its cooperation with Russia.

Germany, geopolitically, may be also interested in Lithuania as a helpful link between it and Russia for the development of their relations<sup>13</sup>. But this link may provide only some specific functions, mainly those of transit and economics, because Russia and Germany tend to keep direct relations in the political sphere. Lithuania's efforts in the implementation of active foreign policy that are directed towards the growth of a regional centre, would have some important influence on the gravitation of post-soviet states towards the West. But this could be taken sceptically by Germany, if its relations with Russia would improve. Such Lithuanian policy would be considered as initiative against the interests of Russia in this case. If the strengthening of Russian – German relations would stay as one of the main German foreign policy priorities, Germany probably would not support Lithuania's ambitions and its active foreign policy and may even try to block it.

#### 4.1.2. The Context of Central and Eastern Europe

Lithuania may be useful for Germany in an attempt to limit the Polish ambitions on increasing Poland's influence inside the EU. Germany may become more active in its relations with Lithuania with intention to influence Poland\*. Such a course of events would have a negative influence on Lithuanian foreign policy. Germany's motives for this may be:

- to reduce the Polish influence on the region and make Poland more dependent on Germany;

<sup>13</sup> Heimsoeth H.-J., "Der Ostseeraum im Wandel. EU-Erweiterung, Nordliche Dimension und Zusammenarbeit mit Russland – Die Prioritäten der Deutschen Präsidentschaft im Ostseer". *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2001/2(8), p. 36.

\*Meanwhile there is a notable tendency in coordination of actions between Poland and Germany in the field of foreign policy during the last few years. The best example is a policy towards the neighbours of the European Union and especially Ukraine. Lithuania would be left apart in this case, because Germany and Poland acts in the form of bilateral relations here.

- to isolate Poland as an ally of the USA;
- to create obstacles for eventual strategic alliance of Poland, Lithuania and other Baltic States in the region;
- to implement the strategy directed to weaken the countries of Central and Eastern Europe or the Baltic countries at least in the benefit of Russian interests so improving relations with it.

Germany may be very interested in Lithuania's potential in keeping or restoring relations with Belarus. Lithuania's relations with the representatives of Belarusian opposition may be very useful in the "post-Lukashenka" era. Even current contacts with the official structures of Belarus and knowledge about it may be very important for Germany, especially in the sectors of transportation and energetic.

#### 4.1.3. The Context of Baltic Sea Region

The main attention of Germany is focused on the Kaliningrad region in the area of the Baltic Sea. This region may interest Germany not only for the satisfaction of Russian geopolitical interests, but also for practical, economic and transportation reasons. Closer cooperation with Lithuania may become one of priorities of German foreign policy for the purpose of enhancing Germany's inclusion into the set of problems concerning Kaliningrad. Germany may be interested in accelerating Kaliningrad's inclusion into European structures through Lithuania. Lithuania may become some kind of "mediator" between Kaliningrad region and Germany, because the latter hardly may act in this Russian region directly due to mainly historical reasons.

#### 4.2. German Geoeconomic Interests in Lithuania

The growth of German exports is one of the most important goals of Germany's foreign policy. Lithuania is not important for Germany in this perspective, because the Lithuanian market is small and the purchasing power of its people is low still comparatively.

Lithuania may be important for Germany only as a place of transit or a middle-link to German production. That may become very important, if Germany would implement the strategy of its influence and expansion towards the East trying to gain ground in the Russian market. The port of Klaipėda should interest Germany in this case.

The German enterprises interested in expanding their exports to Russia and China may also be interested in the logistical and infrastructural development of Klaipėda's port and the objects servicing it.

Some German companies may be planning to transfer their enterprises to Lithuania after its accession to the EU, because the cheaper Lithuanian labour force and more favourable taxation system would provide for very important advantages in expansion of their exports to the East.

### 4.3. The Threats to Lithuania from German Foreign Policy

The misbalance of structural and relative power between Lithuania and some of its neighbours, especially Russia, causes serious threats to the country's political independence. Germany's impact on Lithuania may be ambiguous in a given situation. Germany could use its tools for political pressure rather easily and they would not cause very important costs or threats to it. The attention to such actions may be rather low in the international arena. The threat to Lithuania would become even more serious, if Germany would join any others country's pressure, adding onto it. The common actions of Russia and Germany are considered as the most dangerous combination of external pressure.

Germany's influence on Lithuanian energy security may be very important<sup>14</sup>, because it is one of the main consumers of Russian energetic resources and one of the most influential members of the Russian – European energetic dialog. These features potentially make Germany's influence on the intensity and dynamics of energy threats very important. Russia even could change its position as to Lithuania's place, in the common Russian – European energy policy according to the needs of Germany because of the importance of the later.

Germany's position on priorities relating to projects guaranteeing the piping of Russian gas and oil to the EU may be very important to Lithuania. Germany's intentions for development of the Baltic Sea gas pipeline system are not advantageous for Lithuania in this context, because Lithuania practically would not participate in the projects of the Russian gas piping to the EU and would remain only a final consumer of Russian gas, probably even losing the monopoly of gas transit to Kaliningrad region in the case the branch of Baltic Sea gas pipeline would be directed to this Russian region. Such situation would increase Lithuania's dependence on Russian energy resources. German support to Russia in implementing energetic projects flanking Lithuania increases the danger that Lithuania would remain the final consumer of Russian energy resources. Therefore they could not successfully integrate into the European energetic system and would not have any alternatives to the Russian energy resources.

German investments to Lithuanian energy objects, often are considered as a counterweight to the Russian capital. But the German alternative should be considered very carefully, especially if there are indications that German companies invests in Lithuania only to satisfy the interests of Russia or just to meet the formal criteria of capital origin, which should be euro-atlantic one<sup>15</sup>. The common companies, consortiums or something like that with Russian capital is usually created to fulfil those criteria.

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<sup>14</sup> Landsbergis V., "Putino – Schroederio paktas – galimas Europos politinio žemėlapio perbraižymas", ELTA, 2005 09 07.

<sup>15</sup> Bagdonienė S., "Dujos prieš ES vienybę". OMNI naujienos, <http://www.omni.lt>, 2005 09 16.

## 5. Lithuanian Policy Towards Germany: Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Projections

### 5.1. Lithuanian – German Relations in the Context of the European Union

The analysis of German geopolitical and geoeconomic projections towards Lithuania indicates the asymmetry in Lithuanian – German relations. This asymmetry occurs because German political and economic importance to Lithuania is considerably higher than Lithuania's to Germany. That is why Lithuania should be interested in the activation of bilateral relations, especially political ones, with Germany. The intensive Lithuanian – German relations proportionally would be most useful to Lithuania first of all.<sup>16</sup>

One should bear in mind the fact Lithuania and Germany are in the different groups of states inside the EU when their positions are evaluated. There are a lot of differences in the approach to many institutional and political problems between Germany and Lithuania. The former is an active supporter of federalism and deeper integration. The latter has a rather reserved outlook on the strengthening of the federal elements inside the EU and they completely oppose the idea of "Two-speed Europe", because it would inevitably push Lithuania into the periphery. The Lithuanian position towards the USA and relations with them are very different from those of Germany. Lithuania is pro-American in international issues and Germany is one of the most prominent critics of current American foreign policy among the members of the EU.

To sum it up German and Lithuanian positions and interests inside the EU diverge more than coincide. Their influences on the EU's decisions are also very different. German position on common European policy issues often clash with Lithuanian one and the influence of Germany on Lithuania may counter each other only in coalition with the EU members sharing the similar or identical interests.

German and Lithuanian positions also differ in the field of further enlargement of the EU, because Germany tends support the enlargement in the Southeast direction (e.g. allow the Ukraine to join the EU) instead of the Eastern one as Lithuania does. Lithuania would be interested in the alteration of German position here and set the reduction of economic differences inside the EU and enlargement towards the East or the intensification of relations with the EU's Eastern neighbours at least as German priorities. It would be useful for Lithuania to increase Germany's involvement in the European Neighbourhood initiatives, achieve the shift from neighbourhood policy to partnership in the case of the Ukraine, Moldova, and post-Lukashenka's Belarus and strengthen the EU accession perspective for, at least Ukraine. The enlargement of the EU into Eastern Europe may shift the balance inside the Union itself by shifting the gravitation of EU's power (or weight) centre to the pro-American regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

<sup>16</sup> Gerasimavičius V., "What is Germany for Lithuania?", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2001/2(8), p. 110.

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## **5.2. Lithuanian Interests in the Context of Russian – German Relations**

Lithuania is permanently in danger of becoming the geopolitical trade object, because of its geopolitical situation between Germany and Russia. The seriousness of this threat is witnessed by the practically implemented agreements between Russia and Germany in some various periods of history and current close and intensive cooperation between German and Russian governments especially after Vladimir Putin was elected as the President of Russia. The coincidence of Russian and German geopolitical activity would inevitably lead to the division of their influence on the regions between them, thereby eliminating the unclear spots in geopolitical map of Europe.

The current situation provides favourable conditions for such a compromise because Germany is looking for possibilities to strengthen its influence on Europe and Russia is looking for opportunities to remain an active player in the European affairs<sup>17</sup>.

That's why the decreasing coherence of German and Russian interests is Lithuania's basic long-term interest. It would be useful for Lithuania, if Russia and Germany would not be close allies. The coherence of Russian and German interests may be useful to Lithuania only until it would become the geopolitical trade object for them.

## **5.3. Lithuanian Policy Towards Germany in the Context of Strategic Polish – Lithuanian Partnership**

Lithuania should avoid the situation of worsening relations between Germany and Poland because this would leave a negative effect on Lithuanian – Polish relations. It would not be useful for Lithuania, if the intensified Lithuanian - German relations would be used against Poland by Germany, or Germany would try to exploit Lithuania aiming to diminish Polish influence on the region. The Lithuanian – German relations should not be developed on an anti-polish basis. The inclusion of Poland in common initiatives is the best way to avoid it and neutralize the possibility of Poland's isolation. Lithuania's policy towards Germany should be based on the no damage principle to the Lithuanian - Polish strategic partnership.

## **5.4. Lithuania's Economic Interests in Germany**

One of the most important interests for Lithuania is its inclusion into the international energy infrastructure projects connecting Russia with Germany. It would guarantee not only the incomes from transit, but it also would increase

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<sup>17</sup> Belov V., (note 1) p. 271.

Lithuania's geo-energy importance in the region. That's why the most important economic interest of Lithuania, is the assurance of Germany's support for its energy projects, which would turn Lithuania into an important transit country closely connected with European energy systems instead of the final consumer of Russian energy resources. It is strategically important to introduce Lithuania as the useful mediator instead of a possible hurdle in the German – Russian relations. Germany would tend to give Lithuania away into Russian sphere of influence, if the German government would consider it as a potential economic or political hurdle in its relations with Russia. Lithuania would be able to influence Germany's position on Russia as much as its mediator role would be important to Germany. Lithuania should construct a clear mechanism of political and economic mediation that would not allow for economic intermediaries to be dependent on the influence of Russia or Russian capital for achievement of the aforementioned goal. The intermediaries should base themselves on the European values and rules, and lean on the Western capital.

## 6. The Scenarios of Lithuanian – German Relations

### 6.1. An Overview of Current Lithuanian – German Relations

The current Lithuanian – German relations could be described as rather passive and cautious. Lithuania considers Germany as the potential depressor of its interests especially inside the EU. Germany currently does not consider Lithuania as a potentially useful partner either. Germany's obscurity about its role in the future Europe and international system is probably the main cause of this situation.

The character of German – Russian relations probably would be the most important factor determining Germany's role in Europe. In fact it is a choice between two great strategies: the Osteuropa versus the Mitteleuropa<sup>18</sup>. If Germany would chose the first one, then its strategic activity would be directed towards Russia and the countries between them like Lithuania, Poland, the Ukraine and Belarus. The choice of the second strategy would demonstrate Germany's efforts in creating its own sphere of influence in the Central and Eastern Europe and its interests would be first of all directed towards the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia in this case.

The more intensive activity of Germany was observed in the regions of the Central Europe and the Balkans during the last decade, which is what the flows of investments and tourists as well as peacekeeping missions in the Balkans indicate. That leads to a conclusion about the domination of the forces supporting Mitteleuropa strategic course in Germany.

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<sup>18</sup> Laurinavičius Č., Motieka E., Statkus N., (note 5) p. 255-258.

Such a situation provides little opportunities for notable changes in Lithuanian – German relations if the basic factors should remain stable. The Lithuanian – German relations would remain inert and being kept in the rutinised bilateral form. They could be considered as a little bit more intensive as average (e.g. in the context of the EU) than relations with any other member state in the multilateral contacts and this is in the best case. But the differences in interests lead to the possibly for an increase in the number of disagreements between Germany and Lithuania. They also strengthen the opinion about Lithuania's and Germany's dependence to the different groups of member-states and their presence on the different "sides of barricades". The search for opportunities to strengthen the bilateral relations and alter the current situation is necessary for Lithuania.

The purposeful intention towards relations intensification from the side of Lithuania and/or Germany may radically change the situation. These efforts could create the preconditions for a few various scenarios of Lithuanian – German relations in the mid-term.

## **6.2. Strategic Partnership *de facto*: Lithuania as the Geopolitical Link**

Strategic Lithuanian – German partnership *de facto* may emerge if Germany would set its priority on the development of its relations with Russia or more widely with CIS using the geopolitical advantages of Lithuania for this. Lithuania's importance to Germany would increase according to this scenario, because Lithuania would become one of the most important countries performing this key geopolitical link function between Germany and Russia.

The role of the geopolitical link would mean an active Lithuanian policy as a mediator in various levels and sectors. The Lithuanian – German partnership on various levels would mean that Lithuania would be more included. This would at least incite Lithuania's participation in Germany's cooperation with Russia on the regional (the relations between Russia or CIS and the EU), international (between Germany and Russia) and federal (between German lands and Kaliningrad region) grounds<sup>19</sup>.

There are some necessary preconditions for this scenario:

- Germany should understand that Lithuania could add an important "surplus value" in developing its relations with the East. It should consider that Lithuania is capable of performing some specific functions that were not in the direct Russian – German relations. These suggestions could be provided by the Lithuanian lobby as well as German or even Russian ones in the form of concrete projects;
- Russia should be convinced that Lithuania's participation in the Russian – German dialog is useful or at least not harmful to its national interests. Germany could do it more effectively.

<sup>19</sup> Heimsoeth H.-J., (note 13) p. 31-40.



- Lithuania should demonstrate its advantages over the other potential candidates for a role of geopolitical link e.g. Poland and Latvia.

This scenario is useful to Lithuania, because it increases the number of alternatives for Lithuanian foreign policy and also helps Lithuania to understand German geopolitical intentions as well as its foreign policy decisions also providing possible space for the coordination of the latter with Lithuania.

A real strategic partnership with Lithuania could provide Germany the means for indirect handling of some issues, which it could not handle itself directly e.g. the Europeanization of Kaliningrad.

The basic threat of this scenario is the possible or eventual transformation from a geopolitical link between two great powers to their trade object<sup>20</sup>. This threat could be countered only by Lithuania's usefulness to Germany. As long as Germany considers having Lithuania as a partner more useful than possible concessions from Russia on the other fields, this threat would not arise. Lithuania's role in the Kaliningrad's integration into the common structures with the EU could be one of the opportunities in the creation of notable "surplus value".

Lithuanian – German strategic partnership *de facto* would indicate Germany's willingness to take more responsibility in defending Lithuania's interests.

The probability of the implementation of this scenario is rather low, because currently there are no signs that Germany would consider Lithuania as providing apparent "surplus value" in its relations with Russia and Germany relies on the direct bilateral relations instead.

### 6.3. Formal (Institutional) Strategic Partnership

This scenario would mean only the declarative German – Lithuanian strategic partnership would be truly implemented only from the Lithuanian side. Germany would formally recognise the Lithuanian efforts and the importance of these efforts in shaping the relations with Russia and its regions (Kaliningrad). But Lithuania's real inclusion into the realm of international cooperation would be inconsistent and occasional.

Practically such a given situation would indicate that Lithuania is not considered as a useful partner by Germany and the German tendency to keep the direct relations with Russia would persist. But the formal (institutional) strategic Lithuanian - German partnership could be used by Lithuania for the institutionalisation of its relations with Germany. This would lead to the creation of more official mechanisms for cooperation like institutions, agreements, declarations and so on allowing Lithuania's formal participation, at least, in the processes important for securing its national interests.

Lithuanian – German relations were in some kind of formal partnership during the last decade. Germany declared itself the advocate of Lithuania, but

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<sup>20</sup> von Berg D., "Lithuania, Germany and the European Union". *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 1999/4, p. 4.

had not shown any notable interest in Lithuania and the cooperation between both countries was only formal.

In fact, this scenario coincides with Lithuania's interests. The formal partnership may already be developed and has intensified without basic changes in German interests, which would be necessary in the case of true strategic partnership. Lithuania's risk to become a trade object between Germany and Russia is less in the case of this scenario, because Lithuania may remain practically closed for the economic and political influence of Germany.

The probability of this scenario is average, because it is based on the current situation in Lithuanian – German relations and the efforts of one partner are sufficient to intensify the relations.

#### **6.4. Lithuania: Economic and Political Bridgehead for Germany**

The expedient effort by Germany to aggressively increase its influence towards the East is the main element of this scenario. Germany could try to use the strategic situation of Lithuania for achievement of these goals by creating the political and economic conditions favourable for such policy in the future. Lithuania could become the bridgehead for Germany strengthening the strategic German expansion into Russia.

Germany would try to expand its influence on Lithuania's foreign and internal policy decisions first of all. Those decisions should be influenced in the way they conform with Germany's strategic and tactical tasks in expanding to the area of CIS.

This scenario would mean that Germany is a rival of Russia in at least at some political aspects. An aggressive German expansion to the East should inevitably collide with the Russian response.

Lithuania could perform various functions as the German bridgehead:

- it could provide the advantageous geostrategic position for further expansion of German influence towards the East;
- it could implement an active policy towards Belarus and the Ukraine reflecting Germany's interests;
- it could maintain some influence over the region as the barrier to the possible expansion of Russia.

The subjectivity and autonomy of Lithuania would be questioned in any of these cases, because Lithuania would be considered not as a partner, but as an instrument to achieve Germany's goals.

The implementation of this scenario would mark the rather radical change in German foreign policy. It is not very likely of this in the near future, because it requires a lot of economic and political resources and currently there is no political will to implement an aggressive geopolitical expansion towards the East from Germany's side.

This scenario is disadvantageous for Lithuania, because of its relative passivity and loss of geopolitical subjectivity. Lithuania would face the threat of

becoming nothing more than a tool for the implementation of German interests. But an active German role in Lithuania may be a better outcome than the aggressive domination of Russia.

### **6.5. Lithuania as a Trade Object between Russia and Germany**

This scenario would indicate the full contempt of Lithuania's autonomy and subjectivity as well as Germany's intentions to keep only direct relations and coordinate German interests at least the ones in Central and Eastern Europe only with Russia itself.

Three conditions should be fulfilled for the realisation of such scenario:

- there should be projects and strategies as to the active increase of Russian and German influence in the Central and Eastern Europe;
- Russian and German interests should coincide in this region;
- The relations between Russia and Germany should be warm with the tendency towards negotiations and agreements instead of concurrence and confrontation.

It seems that currently there exist "two and half" out of the three required conditions with the doubt as to Germany's efforts towards creating projects on the active increase of its influence in Central and Eastern Europe. But the interests and intentions of Russia in this region do not leave any doubts<sup>21</sup>.

Lithuania may be included in the Russian – German agreements as the trade object, either the main or complementary one. That's why the probability and danger of such scenario is rather high.

The scenario may be modified. The division into German and Russian spheres of influence could be based on the sector principle (e.g. Germany influence the political and, maybe military decisions of Lithuania and Russia the economic ones) instead of geographic one.

The role of the trade object either partial or complete would be least favourable scenario for Lithuania, because it creates the danger of being included into the Russian sphere of influence and to become a Russian bridgehead.

The probability of this scenario would be considered average to high according to the historical experience and the increasing aggressiveness of Russia in the region.

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<sup>21</sup> Laurinavičius Č., Motieka E., Statkus N., (note 5) p. 329-330.

## 7. An Optimal Model of Lithuanian – German Relations

The strategic partnership with Germany *de facto* or the formal (institutional) one, would most likely fit Lithuania's interest the best. Lithuania's role could be increasingly more active in the international relations arena in both cases. Germany would then respond to those Lithuanian aspirations and will determine the form of relations between two states. They may be either truly strategic or strategic only formally.

Germany's euro-atlantic orientation or the refusal of it, and Germany's place in the middle-run or long-run geopolitical strategy of the USA would become one of the most important factors shaping future Lithuanian – German relations on global scale. The probability of a real strategic partnership between Germany and Lithuania would be low, if Germany would depart from its euro-atlantic geopolitical orientation.

If Germany would choose the orientation towards Central and Eastern Europe instead of the East at the regional level, Lithuania's possibilities to intensify its relations with Germany and form a strategic partnership *de facto* would become increasingly low too.

Even Lithuania's notable efforts to intensify its relations with Germany may be overshadowed by bilateral direct Russian – German relations.

Meanwhile the cooperative relations between Lithuania and Germany could form if there would occur some events useful to Lithuania, like:

- the setback of Russian – German relationships encouraging Germany to prevent the spread of Russian influence;
- the growth of Germany's role in the American geopolitical strategy directed towards surrounding Russia so weakening its power;
- the increase of intensity of German – Russian relations requiring for more mediatory states.

The formal (institutional) strategic partnership is the most valid form of German – Lithuanian relations if the global and regional situation would remain undefined. Such a scenario may be encouraged by Lithuania's efforts in intensifying its relations with Germany.