

Europe of Regions - Marek Rozkowski, July 2022

The European Union, searching for its place in a changing world, is undergoing steady evolution of its political, economic and military formats. Direction of this evolution will determine its future strength, prosperity and relevance. Political blocks in European Parliament or current regional economic, political or military cooperation such as: Visegrad Group, Three Seas Initiative, Weimar Triangle etc. can not generate substantial loyalty of populations within those areas or long term political stability. One of the possible scenarios is a gradual transformation of EU into closely cooperating regions, eventually becoming autonomous provinces. The regions that were already before historically successful, prosperous, resilient and capable of holding loyalty of its respective populations. The scope of this autonomy would with time emerge in future debates between interested countries and with Brussels. There are 4 major areas that can fulfill this function: Western Europe, Intermarium, Central and Nordics. Below is a proposed map and description of each region.



West: The traditional Western Europe, includes France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal. The core countries here; Italy, France and Germany were continuously, in the close political, economic and cultural ties as provinces of the Roman Empire until the 5th century AD, the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Since the 7th. century, the contiguous administrative space, formally often included territories of contemporary France, Germany, and Italy in various configurations; initially as Carolingian Empire then Holy Roman Empire till 19th. century, and lately as European Economic Community. This area is the continent's economic and military heartland, often projecting its influence far beyond its borders.

Intermarium: This regional group that currently coalesces in the eastern Europe, including de facto Polish-Ukrainian alliance at its core, and the Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. With time this group could be also joined by Belarus when the Russian domination of the country is removed and democracy restored. For centuries this region has been united politically as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, initially formed into one political organism due to Teutonic and Russian military threat. The Commonwealth proved to be quite resilient and lasted over 400 years, counted from Union of Kreva in 1385, a personal union, where King Jagiello's assumed the throne of Poland and Lithuania, until Commonwealth partition in 1795. The restoration of the Intermarium proposed after First World War by Józef Piłsudski, was only partly successful due to the reluctance of some nations to participate in the project. The current cooperation will help winning, or concluding on acceptable terms, the kinetic war with Russia, and facilitate Ukrainian accession process to EU and military alliance to NATO or other security guarantees. The Polish, Ukrainian and Baltic's close military and economic cooperation is likely continue to grow, even after the imminent Russian threat is removed.

Central Europe: The Central Region, territoriality corresponds roughly with former Austro-Hungarian Empire combined with the Balkans. Most of this area belonged formerly to the Roman Empire. Since the fall of Western Roman Empire in the 6th century, it was often under common political jurisdiction, first in Byzantine Empire, then Ottoman Empire and late in Austro-Hungarian Empire. There is no dominant leader here. Some countries such as Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia are preferring closer ties with Germany for economic benefits, some, specially closer to Russia, such as Romania and Slovakia, may gravitate towards Intermarium for security reasons. Long standing ethnic tensions, that were in the past the source of many conflicts, were reduced thanks to EU policies allowing for a free movement of people, goods, services and information. With a gradual accession to EU and NATO of the additional countries of the former Yugoslavia and improved economic situation, those tensions will be further gradually reduced. This countries will continue a close cooperation with each other and the rest of EU, creating in time, a distinctive part with regional loyalties and culture.

Nordics: This region includes Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. Norway is not a EU member, but it is well integrated with EU economy, a strong member of NATO and part to Schengen Treaty. Those countries, close to each other historically, culturally, and, with the exception of Finland, ethnically, are under constant Russian military pressure. The country of Estonia could choose, instead of Intermarium, to become a part of Nordic region, due to its ethnic closeness with Finns and the longstanding historical ties with Sweden. With the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO in 2022, the region will enhance its security allowing for a peaceful development.

Common or similar history, geography, ethnicity and customs of those four regions will provide a necessary cohesiveness to hold them together; unite in good times and helping each other to bridge the tough times. Regional political organizational structure is superior and preferable to before mentioned ad hoc groupings, or confederacy of quarrelsome national states, or, imposed from the top, heavy-handed centralization of federal state, dominated by Germany. From the foreign policy perspective, it would be much easier to achieve consensus within each region first. Final decision can be later worked out between four regions, and not, as it is done now, almost an impossible task to reach consensus between over thirty countries.