

**GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOSTRATEGIC IMPLICATION OF POSSIBLE NAVIGABLE CHANNEL
DANUBE-MORAVA-VARDAR-THESSALONICA****ГЕОПОЛИТИЧКИ И ГЕОСТРАТЕГИСКИ ИМПЛИКАЦИИ ОД МОЖНИОТ ПЛОВЕН
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Абстракт: Трудот се занимава со геополитичка анализа на можната реализација на стратегискиот проект за пловен канал Дунав-Морава-Вардар-Солун. Претставени се историските интенции за изградба на еден таков канал кој би претставувал надградба на веќе постоечкиот пловен речен систем Рајна-Мајна-Дунав. Притоа, се потенцираат геополитичките, геоекономските и геостратегиските импликации и се укажува на можното геополитичко и геостратегиско редефинирање на регионот на Југоисточна и Централна Европа.

Клучни зборови: геополитика, геостратегија, пловен канал, Кина, Југоисточна Европа, Централна Европа.

Abstract: The paper deals with the geopolitical analysis of the possible implementation of strategic project on navigable canal Danube-Morava-Vardar-Thessalonica. Presented historical intentions to build such a canal would represent over structure of the existing river system navigable Rhine-Main-Danube. The highlight geopolitical, and geoeconomic and geostrategic implications and suggests potential geopolitical and geostrategic redefining the region of Southeastern and Central Europe.

Keywords: geopolitics, geostrategy, navigable channel, China, South- Eastern Europe, Central Europe.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of linking the Danube to the Aegean Sea is an idea dating back to the last century. The possibilities for such connection arise from geographical and topographical characteristics and predispositions on the ground. This means that meridian direction of extension of the rivers Morava and Vardar and the possibility of connecting them through

South Morava and Pčinja allows certain assumptions about the implementation of the navigable river route.

What is missing in this physical- geographical preference, and this paper will attempt to give its contribution to the completion of the importance of time sailing the Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica, is the modern geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic aspects of its meaning. As an illustration, the length of the floating route along the river Danube to the Black Sea and through it to the Aegean Sea is around 1889 km. By building a floating road Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica, this length would be about 700 km. But is cutting the route a benefit of navigable canals or behind it is another interest that may be new geopolitical and geostrategic space structuring of the Southeast Europe and beyond. In this context, it will be analyzed and Chinese geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in South Eastern Europe and in Central Europe, is the states of the Visegrad group . The paper starts from the assumption that the ship channel is feasible, which obtained the first positive signal to Chinese investors, although even now surfacing all technical, financial, environmental and political problems that are real. Overcoming them will be assuming the geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic analysis.

NAVIGABLE CANAL DANUBE-MORAVA-VARDAR-THESSALONICA: FANTASY OR REALITY?

For the first time navigability of the river had to be mentioned in the period after 1841 when the first recorded attempts at raising the issue of Morava navigable. From 1818 to 1841 Kragujevac was the capital of Serbia. Hence, the possible interest of creating buoyancy of the Morava River. The French were first interested in such a project. At that time the so-called small "zip" ships arrived at Chuprija the town, located about 60 km. from Kragujevac. The aim was to explore opportunities for buoyancy of Morava. During the rule of Milos Obrenovic, French - Serbian steamer company was established for river traffic on the rivers Danube, Sava and Morava. During the period of 1844 to 1864, this company called "French - Serbian steamer company" brings together its interests with "French Main Steamer Company" founded by decree of Napoleon III on September 14, 1850 and that the main task was to establish river traffic on the rivers Danube, Sava and Morava.

Serbia showed great interest in the regulation of the Morava River, which crosses the country in the middle and that determines the export of Serbian goods, and imports of goods necessary for Serbia. Navigable Morava represents the best way to make it the main commercial road of Serbia. In July 1859, a French company asked from Milos Obrenovic an exclusive license for their steamer to move the Morava River for a period of thirty years. After lengthy negotiations, the contract was signed on September 18, 1860. However, due

to questionable business qualities of the French company, the contract was terminated in 1864.

Serbia has not given up on the possibility of buoyancy of the Morava River. So in 1867 were carried out the first serious research capabilities of the Morava River to allow river traffic. For the purposes of research, a special ship called "Morava" was designed, commanded by Ante Aleksic, an engineer officer, who made separate measurements of the mouth of the Morava River near Chuprija city. Since then, it was recommended the introduction of permanent river traffic the Morava River, but this intention has never appealed because of lack of necessary infrastructure investments.

In 1904, efforts were made to revive the idea of buoyancy from the Danube to the Aegean Sea. In that time there has been an attempt to bring the project to England and Germany which should be the main investors. Influential financial circles in England and Germany were being contacted, and also some suggestions have been given to make Americans interested in specific project U.S. firm in New Jersey, in 1907, made a preliminary project for navigable route, Morava and Vardar, which at that time was called "line of European economic gravity in relation to the Suez Canal". (Jovanovski, 2011.)

In 1909, to the Serbian and Turkish government, by Nikola Stamenkovic, a professor of Faculty in Belgrade, was submitted a report and estimate of the cost to build a navigable route Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica. However the political situation, especially the relationship of Europe to the Balkans, put out of reality all possible ideas and political support for the project. In 1912 Balkan wars start and immediately after them, a new geopolitical reality in the Balkans and approaches to remediation damages. Therefore, any activity directed toward the realization of navigable route Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica was dying to 1961.

After that year, there were numerous studies and projects dealing with the possibility of creating a navigable canal Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica. In these studies, almost all technical parameters of the channel: route, hydrological and geological composition profiles of the route, the sailing route structure, and structures of the wider catchment area of Morava and Vardar are determined. Although designed for the needs of the Yugoslav economy, the projects can be useful in the present conditions.

With the eventual construction of the navigable channel (Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica), the Region will gain access to navigable roads (Rhine - Main - Danube) of developed Europe, while Europe would get access to warm seas which would be shorter than existing route through the Black Sea. Connecting the pools of the rivers Morava and Vardar, extending their beds, construction of canals and construction of hydropower and final connection of Morava and Vardar to Thessaloniki, is a significant factor in many ways.

Primarily, it will enable transport of goods and people, the flow of rivers will be regulated, production will be driven and economies of countries will receive a new impulse. It will also solve problems with power supply. Cutting routes to the Mediterranean, will allow Central Europe to connect to the Suez Canal. In fact, the route through Belgrade, the Danube, the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea is approximately 1,880 km. The new navigable channel Morava-Vardar to Thessaloniki would be around 700 km, which is largely cut navigation route from Central Europe to the Mediterranean Sea.

It is assumed that the ship channel would be long from 655 to 700 km and will start from the Great Morava, then proceed through the South Morava, Vardar and Pchinja and end in Thessaloniki. Serbian - Macedonian - Greek navigable Stream will be a continuation of the sailing system Rhine -Main - Danube. (Radaković, 2012)

Given the weak an economy of the countries through which route is to pass, the most interested country to deliver the entire project is China. At present study of feasibility of the project is prepared by the Chinese corporation "China Gezhouba Group". The corporation is known for hydropower complex "Three Gorges" on the River Jangcengjang. Serbian government signed an agreement with the corporation of making feasibility study. It is assumed that the ship channel will allow transportation of goods by ships which will be with loads of 1,300 to 1,500 tons which can fit in the sailing ship channel mode Rhine -Main - Danube.

SERBIAN, MACEDONIAN AND GREEK "INSIDE" VIEW

Most interested country to start the project of sailing route from the Danube to Thessalonica, it seems, is the Republic of Serbia. These conclusions stem from the strong effort that Serbian Minister of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning Milos Bachevikj makes. Planned partners for the major project which is to be the second European navigable highway which through the Rhine - Main - Danube channel will connect the Aegean Sea and the North Sea should be Chinese companies. Minister Bachevikj talked with Chinese Dzhhezuba Group Corporation which prepared the project feasibility analysis and research on the feasibility of the project. According to them, the realization of a ship channel for Serbia would be solution of floods and droughts. Thus the Morava River is to protect against flooding of 70000 to 80000 hectares of farmland of the highest quality, and the same will be the irrigated during periods of drought by means of cross channels. Agricultural production will be increased by three times; while along the Morava will operate from 5 to 7 hydropower plants with installed capacity of 300 to 400 megawatts of electricity. Strong support of the project in Serbia comes from their leader, Tomislav Nikolic. (Avakumovic , 2013)

The control of the canal and the river Morava in essence should give Serbia dominant geopolitical position in the region. Thus, Serbia will become indispensable regional player whose geopolitical and geostrategic geoeconomic potential importance will be valorized in many ways.

Macedonia also supports the project navigable channel Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica. Support is confirmed by the Prime Minister of Macedonia, Nikola Gruevski, whereas is potentiated great economic potentials have been highlighted.

If we analyze the project "Vardar Valley" and keep in mind that despite investor Macedonia is China Development Bank, then it becomes understandable that basically both projects should be complementary. In Macedonia, at the moment, is realistically feasible project "Vardar Valley" because of the shorter term performance and advanced stage of detailed elaboration of it.

In April 2011, President of the Chinese corporation CWE (China International Water & Electric Corp.), Wang Yu, Vice Peshevski and then Minister of Economy Fatmir Besimi and representative of China Development Bank, Fan Xing, and the government signed a memorandum of cooperation. CWE was bound for the 18 months to prepare a feasibility study for hydroenergetic use of the river Vardar, which should show how much of the water will be used for power generation and irrigation as well as for drinking.

Basically, the "Vardar Valley" is a multipurpose project and aims to boost several sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture, tourism and industrial sectors taking into account the environment. Regarding the energy sector moving rail will be necessary which will allow construction of 12 power plants in the Vardar Valley. Developments in the transport indicate that the current railway does not work, isn't reliable and is so slow that there are not many users. Increasing the use of railway as a way of transport would offer greater economic opportunities and will have additional positive impacts on the environment. The construction of dams will affect the agricultural sector. Improved hydrological regime will secure sufficient quantities of water for irrigation. Construction of dams will improve the water regime of the river Vardar and will provide greater protection from flooding.

This project is of local and regional significance. The foundation will improve the energy supply of the Republic of Macedonia and will make it less dependent on external factors. It means to improve its geopolitical and geoeconomical position in terms of the immediate surroundings.

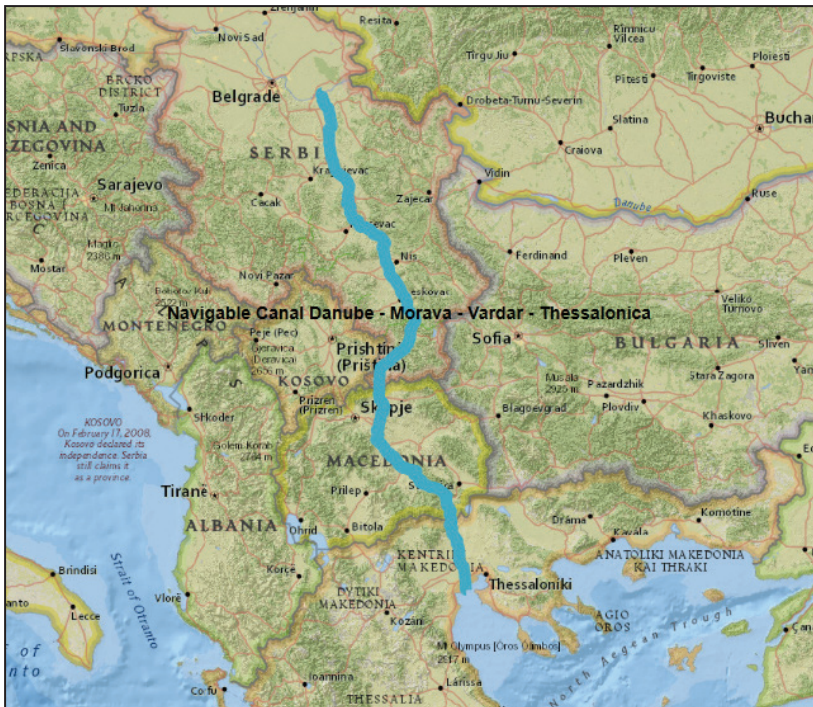


Map. 1 Electro potential of Republic of Macedonia including Vardar Valley

Greece is in a major economic crisis. One of the priority geopolitical interests is the control of the valley of the river Vardar, as a way to mainland Europe. If China's fully involved in the construction of the channel, Greece could have problems with strategic partnership with the U.S. and NATO. Poor or no response in political circles in Greece clearly indicates that the navigable channel has not been considered as a serious option that could be realized. However, the strong investment policy of China, which will be discussed later, suggests that the eventual construction of a navigable channel Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica will not be hampered. On the other hand, a major geopolitical priority of Greece is the control of the valley of the river Vardar onto continental Europe.

Benefits of Serbia, Macedonia and Greece from the project are reflected in the fact that these countries will become unavoidable factor in traffic terms, connecting southern Europe to central and western parts of the continent. Also, with this navigable channel the

countries will be able to connect with navigable canals Rhine -Main - Danube which is most important in Europe, and through that channel with the system related flows of the rivers Seine and Rhone in France, and Oder and Vistula in Poland and the Czech Republic. Ships of these waterways through channel Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica would be guided to the Aegean Sea, which is a crossroads of routes to Southern Europe, Africa and Asia. The Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica navigable channel will significantly change the geopolitical situation, primarily of Serbia and Macedonia and will change its meaning in international politics.



Map. 2 Navigable Canal Danube – Morava – Vardar – Thessaloniki

CHINA'S GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOECONOMICAL INVASION ON SOUTHEAST EUROPE- historical and contemporary aspects

The Period of Communist China suggests that until the late seventies of last century, China has not taken direct action in the Balkans. Despite close cooperation with Albania, this was largely determined by the attitudes of Soviet counter communist penetration. Conditions have changed in the summer of 1978, when Beijing proclaims coherent policy influence in Southeastern Europe.

The so-called "New" China was born in December 1978 at the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party of China, which are otherwise considered as the most important session after the Cultural Revolution. On that indicated session, were adopted decisions that are essential to the turn of the development of China primarily in economic terms. (Павлов, 2005)

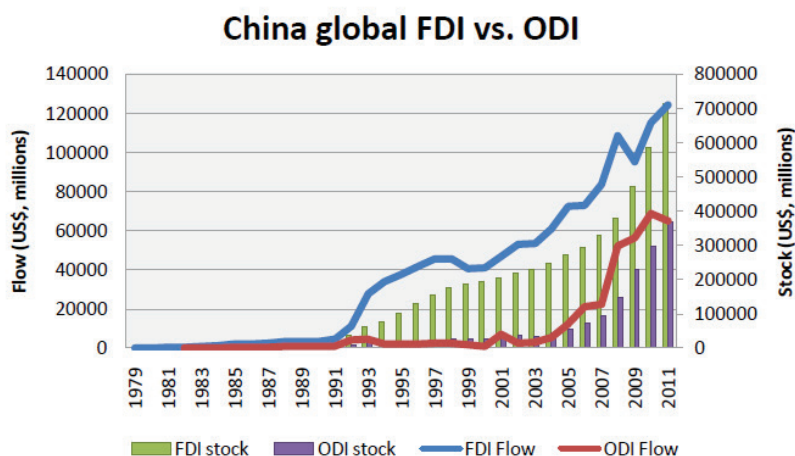


Figure 1. China to rest of world FDI (into China) vs. ODI (out of China), flow and stock, US\$, millions, 1979 to 2011.

(Source: Chinese Outbound Investment in The European Union, European Chamber, January 2013, p.6)

The period after the collapse of the bipolar world order and the bloody disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, prevent China to deepen ties in the SEE region, primarily in Albania, Yugoslavia and Romania. As Balkans restored its stability, so China's applied a new strategy to restore its influence. That strategy, primarily concerned the increases in trade, investment in clean (renewable) energy and the creation of new political alliances. The average economic growth of 10 % in the past decade represents a major driver for increased Eurasian trade. At that time bilateral trade between China and Europe

has increased by four times, i.e. from 101 billion euro's in 2000 to 395 billion in 2010 when it formed the second largest world economic relations. To assert their economic power over Europe, Beijing tries through strategic investments to enter the Balkan Peninsula, initially in Greece. Moreover, Beijing is trying to trace the long-term modern route of the "Silk Road" through Euro-Asian space. (Poulain, 2011)

Initially, China's trade relations with Southeast Europe were focused on the biggest markets in the region, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. In 2010, bilateral trade of China with Romania totaled 2.6 billion euro's, 1.1 billion euro's in Croatia, and Bulgaria about 630 million euro's. Yet the potential of these markets are much larger. Just to illustrate, Austria, with a population nearly as Bulgaria registered the same year bilateral trade with China worth 8.2 billion euro's. Apart from Albania and Montenegro small market, where China's second trading partner after the EU, the Western Balkans have not sheer opened their doors to Chinese investments. For Serbia, despite 20 % annual growth in trade with China, China is the 8th trading partner of Serbia. Similar is the situation in our country, where China is the 7th trading partner. However Southeast European market has great potential for accessing Chinese products. Hence, Beijing applies tactic of opening of large shopping centers near major roads and highways and densely populated areas in the region. The largest "Chinatown" in the Balkans was opened on 11 July 2011 in Afumati, a small town on the outskirts of Bucharest. From Afumati Chinese products are directly sold in the Romanian capital inhabited by over 2 million people. Similar "Chinatown" centers are opened in Serbia, near Belgrade, Croatia near Zagreb, while negotiating is in process to open a similar center in the outskirts of Sofia in Bulgaria. Besides this approach, especially Chinese car companies, companies in the field of metallurgy and mining have a strong investment impact in Southeast Europe, particularly in Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania and Kosovo.

To boost trade with Southeast Europe, China has made significant investments in Greece. Since the beginning of the debt crisis in Greece, China plays a proactive role by buying Greek bonds. It also announced plans to increase trade with Athens to 8 billion by 2015 and the establishment of a special Chinese -Greek forwarding development fund of 5 billion dollars. However, it seems that most strategic move was made during the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to Greece in 2008 at the height of the debt crisis. It signed a contract worth 3.4 billion euro's which allowed the Chinese company "China Ocean Shipping Company" (COSCO) to build and put into use a part of the port of Piraeus. The agreement entered into force on 1 October 2009, which also enabled the Chinese company to improve the capacity of the port by building the third port in the set. Before starting these projects, Beijing decided to stop using ports in Naples and Istanbul and direct maritime traffic via Greece. An important point for the analysis in the paper, is offering "China Ocean Shipping

Company" (COSCO) to operate the Thessaloniki port and connect the railway and through the Balkans to Central Europe. These planned actions by the Chinese takeover of Greek ports and railways aim to turn Greece into southern rival Rotterdam in northern Europe. In other words, China sees Greece as a modern port for linking Chinese factories with consumers in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. These estimates are the result of geostrategic position of Greece that allows such plans of China. Good relations between Greece and China confirmed recently. From 15 to 19 May 2013, the Greek Prime Minister Samaras earned visit to China in order to promote good relations and attracting Chinese investment and ranking of Greek products in the Chinese market. On this trip the Greek Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Trade, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Development and Merchant Marine as well as a group of 60 Greek businessmen.

Beijing's intention is to invest in infrastructure projects in the region of Southeast Europe. This policy is aimed at creating a network of ports, logistics centers and railways to improve the quality and speed of distribution of goods, from East to West. New routes that correspond with the famous "Silk Road" will extend from Western China through Central Asia, Iran and Turkey through the Bosphorus will exit on the Balkan Peninsula. This way transportation will be cheaper than passing through sea routes and the Gulf of Aden which is devastated by the activities of pirates. It is estimated that the cost of transportation to the new route "Silk Road" is to reach USD 111 per ton, compared to more expensive option through the Gulf of Aden which is 167 dollars per ton. Modern railway will shorten the time of travel of Chinese goods by 36 days with a cargo ship, just 10 days by freight train.

On the other hand, China is strongly involved in Southeast Europe through investments in the energy sector of the region's countries. In Romania, the Chinese corporation for electrical equipment already presented the plan to invest in a new thermal power plant with an output of 500 MW and a value of 1 billion, while Chinese Nuclear Power Company plans to build two new reactors at the nuclear plant, "Cerna water". Beijing also will undertake the construction of a hydropower plant with capacity of 1000 MW and worth 1.3 billion euro's. In neighboring Bulgaria, China Nuclear Power Corporation expressed interest to build a new 1000 megawatt unit of the nuclear power plant. In Serbia, the Chinese Exim Bank has agreed a loan of 1 billion euro's on Electric Serbia's modernization of Serbian power grid and builds a new power plant in Kostolac. Chinese companies are not only prepared to take greater risks than their European rivals, but also offer services that are far cheaper in the market. Example of a new thermal power plant coal in Bosnia and Herzegovina in place Stanari, for which Chinese company received 500 million euros, or about half of the offered prices of French company and Canadian -Polish consortium.

China is the world leader in the so-called "Clean energy". With global investments in the sector of 34.6 billion dollars in 2009, China bypasses Southeast Europe. Chinese companies plan to build a 2 MW solar power plant in Ihtiman, western Bulgaria. In 2011, electricity Greece signed an agreement with a Chinese company to build a system with wind power from 200 to 300 MW. That same year, as already mentioned, Chinese companies signed memorandum of cooperation with the Government to build 12 hydropower plants along the river Vardar (Vardar Valley). It is assumed that the cost of performance will be around 1.5 billion euros and 85 % will be financed through a loan from the China Development Bank. (Poulain, 2011)

CHINA BREAKTHROUGH TOWARDS CENTRAL EUROPE - THE GOAL VISEGRAD GROUP

Enhanced investment policy of China in the region of Southeast Europe and plans for the construction of a ship channel Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica, give good conditions for further insights into Central Europe, ie countries of the Visegrad Group. Visegrad Group is an organization of four Central European countries, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The organization was formed in 1991 after the fall of the Berlin Wall with a single common goal of joining the four countries to the European Union. Contradictory is that at that time the EU did not exist, but there were plans to move the European Economic Community in the Union. The second contradiction is the fact that these countries have a long history of internecine disputes over territory between numerous mutual collisions. Even more surprising is the fact that this organization has only one common institution Visegrad Fund has a budget of just three million.

The question is what is the real purpose of the formation of the Visegrad group? It is evident that the EU had an interest to ensure peace in the area of Central Europe in the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Also, even greater interest had the U.S., NATO which were probably led by the theory of Halford Mackinder the one who rules over Central and Eastern Europe, will rule the "heart" of the continent.

Until statement V4 group of 12 May 2011 establishing a common battle group (about 3,000 troops) under the command of Poland, goals and intentions of its existence were clear. As Friedman points out, first because of declining threat from Russia, V4 group turns to the West. Second, the economic prosperity of the group V4 is only possible with the European Union. And third, the strong U.S. involvement in the region and NATO to ensure their strategic interests. But the situation in the last period is changed. Namely, Russia headed by Yeltsin makes serious reform and slowly but surely, today, has grown into a global geopolitical and geostrategic partner. Simultaneously from early intervention in Georgia in 2008, Russia recognizes that is intended to restore areas of concern that former

USSR had had. The economic crisis in the EU, particularly in Greece provides a clear vision for economic stability of the group V4. The question is whether the measures taken to rescue the EU as an entity is really about or favor only of Germany. Poland and the Czech Republic as the strongest central European economies still have a great desire to enter the euro zone. The only country of the group V4 which has adopted the euro is Slovakia in 2009. Regarding NATO's ability to provide real security "umbrella" over group V4, two questions are being opened. First, the strategic concept of NATO since 2010, NATO plans to expand its fields of interest in non - European regions, while there is only one brigade intervention in Poland in the event of a conflict, far less than the opinions of Poland for the forces defense of the North European plain. Second, seriously puts into question the seriousness of European armies to defend Europe without help from U.S. allies. Sure, centrally set intervention in Libya, where NATO didn't have political will nor the military participation of most of its members. All this poses new questions about the possibility to guarantee the safety of the Visegrad Group by NATO. (Fridman, 2011).

This shift raises new questions and analyzes, as well as specific measures by the Visegrad Group. In early 2013 the group started with V4 joint combat exercises, while the forces of group V4 should become operational in 2016. Visegrad Group in 2011 has a new role, through the Eastern Partnership cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is no coincidence that the U.S. has offered a missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. Because of the resistance of the Czech population, the plan is diverted towards Romania and Bulgaria and Poland received medium range missiles. U.S. interest in the region of the Visegrad group is to prevent dangerous approximation of Germany and Russia. How is it possible to show the time, given that Germany has a primary role in trade with countries of the Visegrad group, while Russia is a major exporter of energy in the region. What is particularly striking in the last five years is data indicating that China three times increase s its exports in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. (Obradović, M . 2013) Hence, the possible correlations for the strong support of sailing through the Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica which will allow them greater economic involvement in the region. But also realizing the potential future impact of the Shanghai security organization in which China is allied with Russia. The area of Southeast Europe, specifically Greece, Macedonia and Serbia is a geopolitical space that China needs to "win" to exercise its influence in Central Europe. Thus, using the economic crisis in the European Union, and the crisis in the NATO operation (different views of Member States on military interventions) becomes a serious geopolitical player in the region.

CONCLUSION

Ship channel Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessalonica is an excellent analytical framework for making geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic analysis. Contemporary geopolitics through its geoeconomic instruments seeks to achieve economic dominance of certain geographical areas. For this purpose, the major geopolitical players are making every effort through investments in various projects to achieve geopolitical goals. In the present case analysis, the Chinese state seeks the project for ship channel Danube - Morava - Vardar - Thessaloniki to achieve economic dominance in the area of South East Europe, with the ultimate purpose of bringing to the Central European economies. The eventual realization of this major strategic project will greatly cause redefining geopolitical interests and allow greater political, military and economic influence of China.

Project of navigable channel is of interest for the EU for reasons that will be linked with the existing navigable system Rhine -Main - Danube. This link will cut the flow of goods and people from Central Europe to the Mediterranean, and later to the Suez Canal.

States in the region, Serbia, Macedonia and Greece generally accepted strategic project. However it seems that Serbia is most interested and most have done in terms of initial contacts with China and signed a contract to start construction. In the case of Macedonia, there is still the dilemma of the need of such a project, given the fact that China is also interested in the "Vardar Valley". However, the two projects are of strategic interest to the geopolitical, geoeconomic geostrategic position of the Republic of Macedonia. With this implemented, Macedonia to some extent may exceed their position of Land Locked Country, although priority should be the "Vardar Valley" which state, among other things, would provide greater energy security by exploiting hydropower potential of river Vardar. Greece has intensified economic cooperation with China, which indicates that the realization of the strategic project has run into resistance from Greece. Moreover, one of the priority geopolitical interests of Greece is the control of the valley of the river Vardar as a precondition for output to continental Europe.

Finally we can conclude that from the geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic aspect, sailing channel Danube - Morava - Vardar to Thessaloniki is extremely important. For China as a major promoter and interested state for investment in the project will open up new perspectives for selling Chinese goods, but also accomplishing political influence in Central Europe. The fragile economies of Serbia, Macedonia and Greece sailing route will be a new momentum for further economic boost, but also a change in their geopolitical and geostrategic importance in international relations.

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