THE BALTIC SEA REGION AND EU MARITIME SAFETY

Region Morza Bałtyckiego a bezpieczeństwo morskie UE

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Abstract

The article concerns the Baltic Sea region in the context of the maritime security of the European Union. The research problems in this article are therefore limited to the questions: how is the Baltic Sea region defined in scientific literature? How is the concept of maritime safety and security defined in political-strategic documents and literature? And also, what is the role of the Baltic Sea region in building the European Union's maritime safety? The article attaches particular importance to issues related to the multidimensional and ambiguous nature of concepts of maritime safety and security, and the maritime safety of a state, in terms of the functioning of the EU. The Baltic Sea and its specific characteristics affecting maritime safety in the region have also been analysed. The conclusions of the conducted research may serve as guidance in shaping maritime safety in the Baltic Sea region.

Keywords: The Baltic Sea, region, maritime safety, maritime security, The European Union.

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy regionu Morza Bałtyckiego w kontekście bezpieczeństwa morskiego Unii Europejskiej. Problemy badawcze w niniejszym artykule sprowadzają się zatem do pytań: w jaki sposób definiowany jest region Morza Bałtyckiego w literaturze naukowej? jak definiowane jest pojęcie bezpieczeństwa morskiego i bezpieczeństwa na morzu w dokumentach polityczno-strategicznych oraz literaturze? Oraz jaka jest rola regionu Morza Bałtyckiego w procesie budowania bezpieczeństwa morskiego Unii Europejskiej? Szczególne znaczenie w artykule nadano kwestiom związanym z wielowymiarowością i wieloznacznością pojęć bezpieczeństwa morskiego, bezpieczeństwa na morzu i bezpieczeństwa morskiego państwa, w aspekcie funkcjonowania UE. Analizie poddano również akwen Morza Bałtyckiego i jego specyficzne właściwości wpływające na bezpieczeństwo morskie w tym regionie. Wnioski z przeprowadzonych badań mogą posłużyć jako wskazówki w procesie kreowania bezpieczeństwa morskiego w regionie Morza Bałtyckiego.

Słowa kluczowe: Morze Bałtyckie, region, bezpieczeństwo morskie, Unia Europejska.

Introduction

The Baltic Sea is an important body of water, not only from the point of view of the countries having access to it, but also for the entire European Union and NATO. From the perspective of the states around it, the Baltic Sea provides tangible benefits, but also challenges and threats in the context of the need to ensure maritime safety. The responsibility to ensure safety, including maritime safety, lies mainly with state governments, but the nature of the modern security environment means that non-state actors are also involved in this process. One of the key non-state actors interested in the stability of the Baltic Sea region is the European Union, which adopted the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in 2009 and a few years later, the European Union Strategy for Maritime Safety (2014). In both documents, strategic objectives and priorities for the region can be found, as well as a holistic approach to ensuring maritime safety. The implementation of these priorities depends on the will of the Member States, but also on their maritime potential. This article analyses the Baltic Sea region and its importance in building maritime safety in the European Union. Attention is also drawn to the semantic context of maritime safety.

The research problem in this article is therefore limited to the questions: how is the Baltic Sea region defined in scientific literature? How is the concept of maritime safety and security defined in political-strategic documents and literature? And also, what is the importance of the Baltic Sea region in building the European Union's maritime safety?

The key hypothesis sought to be verified was the assumption that the Baltic Sea region is of major importance in the process of building the European Union's maritime safety and may, in some respects, be a model for the creation of regional cooperation mechanisms. Nevertheless, diversification and asymmetry among the countries of the region, and in particular the presence of the Russian Federation, hinders cooperation.

The research process made use of various research methods, and the main criterion for selecting them was rationalisation of its course and the possibility of obtaining objective results.

The study was carried out using theoretical and empirical research methods, used appropriately to the problems being solved. Addressing the identified research problems required the use of the following research methods: analysis – including analysis and critique of literature and other source materials, synthesis – to combine all separate and previously studied elements in order to generalise the facts resulting from the collected scientific material, as well as deduction and induction.

The article attaches particular importance to issues related to the multidimensional and ambiguous nature of concepts of maritime safety and security, and the maritime safety of a state, in terms of the functioning of the EU. The Baltic Sea and its specific characteristics affecting maritime safety in the region have also been analysed.

Among others, the demographic potential of the EU States around the Baltic Sea which is as follows:

- Denmark - 5.8 million
- Estonia – 1.3 million
- Finland – 5.5 million
- Germany - 83.1 million
- Latvia – 1.9 million
- Lithuania - 2.7 million
- Poland – 37.9 million
- Sweden – 10.3 million[1]

It is worth noting that EU countries bordering the Baltic represent more than 33% of the total population of the Union, so the common position of these countries can provide half of the votes required by the qualified majority procedure, which is the way a vast majority of legal acts in the EU are adopted (also called double majority).

Where the Council votes on a proposal from the Commission or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a qualified majority shall be reached under two conditions:

- 55% of EU countries vote "yay", i.e. 15 out of 27 countries
- the proposal is supported by countries representing at least 65% of the total EU population (*Qualified majority…*).

In light of the above data, cooperation in the Baltic Sea region can influence the decision-making process in the EU, including in the context of establishing maritime safety. Nevertheless, respect for the needs of countries and the EU in this regard depends, inter alia, on whether these countries have sufficient maritime capacity. It is therefore necessary, on the one hand, to identify priorities, to properly address maritime issues, and on the other, to have the potential and will to implement them on the part of both the Union and the Member States.

Literature review

The research process, resulting in this article, was initiated by reviewing the available literature and other sources concerning the issues examined.

The problems of maritime safety in the Baltic Sea region are a subject of consideration by many experts and analysts, both in Europe and the United States. Among the analytical studies, it is worth mentioning the 2017 work by Frank G. Hoffman entitled *Assessing Baltic Sea Regional Maritime Security*, in which the author analyses maritime security in the Baltic Sea region in the context of the challenges and threats posed by

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[1] Source: *Population on 1 January*. European Commision. Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en [Accessed 24 August 2020].

the Russian Federation after 2014. He draws attention to the crucial importance of the economy in the region and its vulnerability, both to direct military action and to hybrid threats. It is worth noting that the study conveys an American perspective on the security of states around the Baltic, and stresses the importance of maritime security in the region in order to safeguard the greater national interests of the US.

Another analytical study on the subject is the analysis by E. Lucas entitled *The Coming Storm, Baltic Sea Security Report*. It concerns 9 countries, i.e. the 5 Scandinavian States (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) the three Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia), and Poland. The author stresses that the threats posed by the Russian Federation in the Baltic Sea region can only be addressed by combining the potentials of the aforementioned countries, effective cooperation and coordination, and support from the United States and the United Kingdom. Certainly, a weakness of the proposed solutions is the considerable diversity of these countries, especially the fact that they are not all members of NATO or the EU. Moreover, while the Baltic States and Poland agree on the need for a strong response in the face of Russia's aggressive policy, the Scandinavian countries are not monolithic in this respect. Finland is an example of a country that, on the one hand, intensifies cooperation towards the west, while attempting to engage in active dialogue with the Russian Federation. Given the length of the common border with Russia, it is in Finland's best interest to maintain a correct relationship with its neighbour and, de facto, to skilfully balance between NATO and the EU on one hand, and Russia on the other.

Among Polish works, it is worth mentioning the very interesting piece by T. Szubrycht entitled *Bałtyckie wymiary bezpieczeństwa* [*Baltic Safety Dimensions*]. The author analysed the specificities of the Baltic Sea, the states around it, the geopolitics of the region, the threats to security, and Baltic cooperation. This monograph provides many valuable guidelines regarding the manner of analysing the region; however, having been published in 2010, it fails to take into account changes resulting, for example, from the annexation of Crimea and the Russian Federation's return to a superpower policy.

When looking for general information about the Baltic Sea, its geological past, climate or even the morphology of the seabed, it is worth reaching for the book by K. Łomniewski, W. Mańkowski and J. Zaleski entitled *Morze Bałtyckie* [*The Baltic Sea*].

Another monograph which concerns the identified issues is M. Szulc's *Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego. Podejście makroregionalne i wielopoziomowe* [*EU Policy Towards the Baltic Sea Region. A Macro-Regional and Multilevel Approach*]. The monograph examined the objectives and principles of the European Union's policy towards the Baltic Sea Region as part of the so-called macro-regional approach and the importance of this process for the region, as well as for the EU as a whole. However, this study should be supplemented with an element related to the EU Strategy on Maritime Safety and its impact on the safety of the Baltic Sea basin.

Issues related to the maritime dimension of the EU's security and defence policy have been noticed relatively recently, as is reflected in the available literature on the subject. Most literature concerning this matter is in English. One interesting approach is proposed by I. Christodoulou-Varotsi, who, in her book entitled *Maritime Safety Law and Policies of the European Union and the United States of America: Antagonism or Synergy?* tries to explore to what extent EU and US actions, as leaders in implementing high standards in improving safety and protection of the marine environment, are paradigms for the rest of the world and the maritime community?

One of the key monographs dealing with the maritime aspects of EU security and defence is the work of B. Germond entitled *The Maritime Dimension of European Security Seapower and the European Union*. The book was published in 2015 and so far it is difficult to identify another that would provide readers with such a comprehensive understanding of the European Union as a global maritime actor, both on a conceptual and practical level.

Another book worth mentioning is *The Maritime Turn in EU Foreign and Security Policies: Aims, Actors and Mechanisms of Integration* penned by M. Riddervold and published in 2018. It provides knowledge on the organisation and functioning of maritime areas of the EU's security and foreign policy. It is the result of several years of research conducted by the author as part of a doctoral dissertation.

There are not many items among the Polish scientific literature concerning the EU's maritime safety, among which it is worth mentioning the articles by T. Usewicz entitled *Potencjał instytucjonalny i prawny UE w procesie kształtowania bezpieczeństwa morskiego* [*Institutional Potential of the EU in Shaping Maritime Safety*] (Usewicz, 2019) and *Strategia bezpieczeństwa morskiego Unii Europejskiej* [*Maritime Security Strategy of the EU*] (Usewicz, 2015).

Certainly, many other scientific articles and monographs could be mentioned here, which, directly or indirectly, refer to the examined issues; however, the author has confined herself to indicating those that have affected the research process and were helpful in writing this article.

BALTIC SEA REGION – Definitional Aspects

An analysis of the Baltic Sea region should start by defining the concept of "region" and the countries belonging to the region in question.

The concept of a region is interdisciplinary and appears in many sciences (including geography, sociology and economics). It is ambiguous, so there is no single universal definition, and some experts even claim it is simply impossible to clarify this concept. Others attempt to capture the essence of a region while identifying the factors that determine its creation (Dumała et al., 2009).

One of the definitions proposed by H. Dumała indicates that "A region is a spatially limited part of the Earth, which is a functional whole, defined by the relative position of states with a commonality of interests and characteristics determining their importance in the international power structure" (Dumała et al., 2009). The Encyclopaedia Britannica provides a definition of a region in the context of social sciences, according to which it is understood as

> a cohesive area that is homogeneous in selected defining criteria and is distinguished from neighbouring areas or regions by those criteria. It is an intellectual construct created by the selection of features relevant to a particular problem and the disregard of other features considered to be irrelevant. A region is distinguished from an area, which is usually a broader concept designating a portion of the surface of Earth. Area boundaries are arbitrary, established for convenience. Regional boundaries are determined by the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the section (Britannica).

Defining regions is a process that can be carried out regarding various criteria. The difficulties in extrapolating a definition, especially in the context of security and safety is addressed i.a. by B. Buzan and O. Waever (2003) in their book entitled *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*. The authors note that

> any coherent regionalist approach to security must start by drawing clear distinctions between what constitutes the regional level and what constitutes the levels on either side of it. (…) Distinguishing the regional from the global is less straightforward. The easy part is that a region must obviously be less than the whole, and usually much less. The tricky bit is actually specifying what falls on which side of the boundary.

One prevailing issue is the example question posed by the authors further in their book, i.e. should Russia be considered a global power or a regional one? (Buzan and Waever, 2003).

Most experts believe that the sine qua non factor in the existence of regionalism is geographical proximity. This view can be found, among others, in the already cited book *Regiony w stosunkach międzynarodowych* [*Regions in International Relations*], which notes that the main criterion for distinguishing international regions is the spatial factor. However, while proximity may be considered a necessary condition, it is not sufficient and does not form a region in and of itself (Dumała et al., 2009). The specificity of the modern international environment requires a different perspective to be taken into account. Indeed, in the opinion of some experts,

> when researching social phenomena, the geographical criterion may be too restrictive, and may therefore be perceived as unnecessary or faulty in its application. In such a case, it is often deemed that subjective criteria are dominant, or even substitute the geographical. And so, e.g. L. Fawcett points out that the institutional or cultural criterion may be dominant. (...) On the other hand, O. Illy considers that along with technological progress, especially in transport and telecommunications, the proximity criterion has partly lost its value (Mik, 2019).

However one addresses the geographical criterion, it must certainly be accepted that geographical proximity alone does not create a region; there must also be other factors. Additional factors that cause ideas of regionalisation to emerge at a given place and time may be based on a variety of economic, institutional, military, cultural, historical, and other factors. P. Frankowski analyses the regionalisation process on three planes:

– normative – based on ideas;
– pragmatic – based on interests;
– institutional – based on institutional structures (Frankowski, 2018).

However, regardless of the analytical approach, doubts about the clear delimitation of certain regions are justified. Depending on the criteria applied, the breakdown by region will be different. Moreover, taking only the institutional dimension into account, which leaves the least doubt, assuming that the territorial scope of an institution is also an area of the region, even in this case it is sometimes difficult to make an unambiguous assessment. For example, if the European Union is a construct for regional cooperation and the borders of such a region match the EU's external borders, how should Norway be treated? After all, it is not a member of the EU, but because of the multitude of different links, both with the Member States and with EU institutions, Norway is difficult to ignore when defining this region. Many similar examples can be provided, which does not, of course, mean that the concept of region and regionalism is not a useful tool for analysing contemporary global governance.

When defining the Baltic Sea region, at least several approaches may be applied. Naturally, it includes countries with access to the Baltic Sea, i.e. Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, part of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and parts of Germany. Furthermore, due to the multitude of different links, Norway is normally also included as part of the region. "Norway is closely linked to the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and has taken active part in Baltic Sea Region cooperation on national, regional and local levels for many years" (Seaternes A.I., 2018). Depending on the perspective of a given researcher, countries with close ties to the region also include Belarus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Szubrycht 2010).

According to M. Szulc (2019),

in political terms, the BSR (auth. note – Baltic Sea Region), understood narrowly, includes: Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Denmark. When taking the entire catchment area into consideration, this list is expanded to include Norway, Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

The various regional cooperation formats bringing together countries of the Baltic Sea Region and countries closely linked to the Baltic Sea at different levels provide valuable guidance in this regard.

One of these is the Council of the Baltic Sea States, which was established in 1992 on the initiative of Germany and Denmark. Currently, its members include 11 countries of the BSR, i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania,

Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia, and the European Commission. Another example is the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, also known as the Helsinki Commission or HELCOM, the activities of which bring together: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the European Union (Helcom, n.d.).

A slightly broader approach to the issue of the number of countries closely linked to the region is presented by the European Union, which includes as many as 12 countries in the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea, i.e. eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden) and four neighbouring countries (Belarus, Iceland, Norway, Russia) (*EU Strategy…*), and that assumption has also been adopted by the author of this article.

Moving on to the characteristics of the Baltic Sea Region, it should be noted that it is "a highly heterogeneous area in economic, environmental and cultural terms, yet the countries concerned share many common resources and demonstrate considerable interdependence" (The Commission of the European Communities, 2009).

Interestingly, as noted by P. Frankowski (2018), "Any sort of asymmetry, whether economic, military, political, or territorial, existing within a geographical region, should lead one to strive for the creation of a regional system that upholds or nullifies this asymmetry. In the case of the Baltic Sea region, asymmetry is evident on almost every plane. Below are the basic characteristics of each of the countries considered to be a part of the region in question:

Table 1

The Baltic Sea region – selected data and indicators

	GDP per capita PPS (EU average =100) /place in the world	Territory (in thousands of km^2)	Population (in millions)	HDI Coefficient (http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/2019-human-development-index-ranking)
Denmark	129/31	42.9	5.8	0.930
Estonia	84/61	45.2	1.3	0.882
Finland	111/37	338.4	5.5	0.925
Germany	121/27	357.3	83.0	0.939
Latvia	69/81	64.5	1.9	0.854
Lithuania	82/60	65.2	2.7	0.869
Poland	73/66	312.6	37.9	0.872
Sweden	120/26	438.5	10.2	0.937
Belarus	-/95	207.6	9.4	0.817
Iceland	130/24	103.0	0.3	0.938
Norway	144/12	323.8	5.3	0.954
Russia	-/161	17.098.2	142.5 (data for 2017)	0.824

Source: Own compilation based on data from Eurostat and The CIA World Factbook 2018–2019, Sky-horse Publishing 2018.

The collected data shows that the region under analysis is highly heterogenic. GDP per capita measured according to purchasing power standards (PPS) is one of the basic indicators of economic activity, defined as the value of all goods and services less the value of all goods and services used to produce them per capita. It is expressed in relation to the average for the European Union set at 100. If the indicator in a given country is higher than 100, the GDP per capita in that country is higher than the EU average and vice versa. The basic data is expressed in PPS, i.e. a single currency which eliminates differences in price levels between countries, allowing meaningful comparisons of GDP between countries (*GDP per capita…*). Norway is definitely the country with the most economically advantageous location in the region, and apart from it, 5 other countries reached the value of over 100, with the average value for the region being 106.3 (the calculations do not take into account the Russian Federation and Belarus due to no data being available). All the countries in the region are highly developed according to the HDI ranking, which describes the

> summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions (*Human Development Index*).

It is worth noting that, in the world ranking taking account of GDP per capita, the country ranked last in the region (Russia) is 161st, while the country with the highest rank is Norway and is classified 12th. This shows how significant the asymmetries in the

standard of living of citizens in the region are. Major disparities are also evident in territory and demographic potential. There are 8 countries in the region where the population does not exceed 10 million and only 4 with a demographic potential above 10 million. The population of the Baltic Sea region accounts for more than 33% of the population of the entire European Union. The most populous and, at the same time, the largest country is Russia, Denmark has the least territory, and Iceland is least populous, with only a little over 300,000 people. These figures confirm the hypothesis of significant asymmetry in the region on many levels. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the particular characteristics of the modern international community require a slightly different approach. Analysis of individual indicators, such as the territory or population, in isolation from other areas of the state's functioning, contributes very little. Sometimes countries deemed small as regards their territory and populace have the capacity to shape the international situation in their surroundings and even globally. Furthermore, assessment of the impact of a country on its environment or its relations in a given region will depend on the context. As R. Steinmetz and A. Wivel point out when describing small countries and their potential:

> For instance, Romania is a great power in its relations with Moldova but a small state in its relations with Russia, and Sweden is a small state in the European Union but a great power in relation to the Baltic countries. Thus, we argue that being a small state is tied to a specific spatial-temporal context and that this context, rather than general characteristics of the state, defined by indicators such as its absolute population size or size of GDP relative to other states, is decisive for both the nature of challenges and opportunities and the small states' answer to these challenges and opportunities (Steinmetz, 2010).

It should be remembered that most countries in the region are members of both the European Union and NATO, and it is from this perspective that their influence should be examined. Furthermore, the Baltic Sea is of exceptional importance in the context of the maritime economies of many countries. It is an extremely important transport corridor, both regionally and globally.

Turning to the importance of the region, both from a country-by-country perspective and from an EU-NATO perspective, it should be noted that:

- The Baltic Sea has an area of 160,000 square miles and is bordered by nine countries;
- By passing through the Danish straits or via the Kiel Canal through Germany, one can gain access to the North Atlantic;
- the three main passages are Great Belt (Storebælt), Little Belt (Lillebælt), and Øresund (Öresund);
- The straits are one of the world's eight major oil transit choke points and a busy maritime transportation route. Based on 2013 data, more energy passed through this chokepoint than the Suez Canal;

- More than 3.3 million barrels of hydrocarbon products move through the straits each day;
- More than 125,000 ships transit the straits each year, with more traffic exiting via the Kiel Canal;
- The Kiel Canal is 96 kilometres long and is the most heavily used artificial seaway in the world, with an average of 80 ships using the canal per day;
- The volume of traffic in the region has doubled in the last 20 years, and is expected to double again over the next decade;
- the region contains nearly 200 ports, while only eight are considered major facilities.
- These ports represent the major shipping outlets for shipping and international trade, and are vital to the economic prosperity of each state;
- Primorsk, outside of St. Petersburg, is Russia's major outlet for energy shipping. The Baltic Sea Region is also Russia's largest container shipping basin, critical to markets in Germany and elsewhere in Europe;
- there are undersea energy pipelines vital to commercial activity and heating in the area, In addition to energy pipelines, the region contains fibre optic cables and other key infrastructure that actors seeking to compete in an ambiguous and unconventional manner could target (Hoffman, 2017).

It can therefore be concluded that security and stability in the Baltic Sea region should be a priority, especially for the countries in the region, but also for many other states whose economies and security are linked to it.

This has become particularly important in recent years, when Russia started using its advantage and attempting to revise the existing international order. The overwhelming military potential of the Russian Federation is an essential element shaping the situation in the region. The table below shows the determinants describing the military sphere.

Table 2

Military potential in the Baltic Sea region – selected data and indicators

	Number of armed forces personnel (active service)	Defence expenditure (% of GDP)	Global Firepower index/ place in ranking	Number of reserve personnel
Denmark	16,000	1.32%	0.7878/49	45,500
Estonia	6,500	2.14%	2.5893/119	12,000
Finland	21,500	1.5%	0.8498/59	280,000
Germany	182,650	1.38%	0.2186/13	30,000
Latvia	5,300	2.01%	2.0145/102	8,000
Lithuania	18,500	2.03%	1.4752/83	7,000
Poland	118,000	2.00%	0.3397/21	75,400
Sweden	30,000	1.1%	0.5304/32	0
Belarus	45,500	1.2%	0.8179/53	300,000
Iceland*	-	0.3%	-	-
Norway	24,000	1.08%	0.5277/31	40,000
Russia	1,013,628	3.09%	0.0681/2	2,000,000

Source: own compilation based on the CIA The World Factbook and Global Firepower – 2020 World Military Strength Rankings.

*Iceland does not have regular armed forces (this function is performed by: the Coast Guard, the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit, the Police, and Anti-Terrorist Unit), the cornerstone of its national security policy is membership in NATO and a bilateral agreement with the United States.

As shown above, only the Russian Federation has a significant military advantage in the region. In the Global Firepower 2020 ranking that includes 138 countries, it ranks second, just after the United States. Next is Germany (ranked 13th), and Poland ranked 21st. The weakest of the analysed states are Latvia and Estonia ranked 102nd and 119th respectively. The average for EU countries in the Baltic Sea region is 60 (while 60th place in this ranking was held by Ethiopia) and it is therefore difficult to talk about the significant potential of these countries, especially on an individual basis. For example, accounting for the number of soldiers in active service, it appears that the analysed EU countries together do not even equal half the potential of the Russian Federation (398,540 vs. 1,013,628). Even greater disparities can be seen in the ability to mobilise reserves. Certainly, similar comparisons and summaries taking into account only the values expressed in absolute figures are, in each case, a simplification and do not take into account qualitative factors (such as the level of training and equipment of soldiers in individual countries); nevertheless, to some extent they reflect the power structure and illustrate the disproportions in the region in question, as well as the approach to defence-related issues of each country.

Here it is also worth taking into account the capability to manufacture arms and military equipment. According to data published by SIPRI in 2018, only a few countries in the region have companies that are major players on the market:

Table 3

Key arms producing countries in the Baltic Sea region (2016)

Country	Number of companies	Share of total arms sales in 2016 (%) (100 largest producers)
Russia	10	7.1%
Germany	3	1.6%
Sweden	1	0.7%
Norway	1	0.2%
Poland	1	0.3%

Source: Own compilation based on SIPRI Yearbook 2018 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, Oxford University Press 2018, p. 226.

Moreover, only four countries (the Baltic States and Poland) allocate the NATO-required GDP percentage to defence-related expenditures. For certain this has its source partly in the historical experience of these countries and the conviction that the actions of the Russian Federation in and outside the region continue to pose a serious threat. Awareness of the real threat, Russia's geographical proximity, its potential, as well as its ability to mobilise significant forces and resources quickly, is a reason to seek external security guarantees, such as the North Atlantic Alliance and the presence of US forces.

In conclusion, the Baltic Sea Region is an area of strategic importance for maritime transport and the economies of many countries. At the same time, it is one of the regions in which the Russian Federation is trying to alter the existing international order. One significant aspect determining the power structure in the region is certainly the presence of NATO forces and membership in the Alliance as well in the European Union of the overwhelming majority of Baltic Sea Region states. From the perspective of many states, NATO is a fundamental guarantor of security. However, as Russian policies in the Baltic region in recent years indicate: "Russian threats and covert actions, such as nuclear threats, violations of airspace and suspicious undersea activity, subversion of political integrity, and intense disinformation campaigns, increasingly challenge the security, stability, and prosperity of U.S. allies" (Hoffman, 2017). Such a policy is fostered by the significant asymmetry between the potentials of Russia and that of other states. Certainly, Russia's aggressive policy is the most serious threat to the countries of the region, but is it the only one?

Maritime Safety and Security in the EU Context – Conceptual Aspects

In the marine environment, safety and security are concepts whose correct interpretation determines the functioning of many actors, both on a state and international basis. These terms are often misinterpreted, ambiguously identified and incorrectly translated without taking account of the context. This may lead to an unclear division of competencies and a lack of clear interpretation of these same elements.

On the basis of Polish literature, for the first time the concepts of *maritime safety*, *maritime security* and *maritime safety of the state* were widely and comprehensively described by T. Szubrycht in his book *Bezpieczeństwo morskie państwa. Zarys problem* [*State Maritime Security: an Outline*], and subsequently in collaboration with an team of authors in *Strategiczna Koncepcja Bezpieczeństwa Morskiego RP* (SKBM RP) [*Strategic Conception of Poland's Maritime Security*]. He defined the concept of maritime safety as:

> a subjective assessment of the level of threats and challenges in terms of human activity in maritime water bodies, which is a result of technical, procedural, and personnel imperfections, amplified by hydro-meteorological conditions. It includes security in terms of: life and property, natural environment, navigation, and natural resource extraction. (Szubrycht, 2011)

According to T. Szubrycht (2011), a state's maritime safety is a

> process (state) where it is possible to counteract or minimise all the challenges and threats in maritime areas. Its purpose is to ensure effective enforcement of binding legal provisions (both domestic and international) and the territorial integrity of a country's maritime domain. Guaranteeing this is also supposed to create conditions to ensure that bodies of water deemed vital to the state are used in accordance with the national will and interest.

On the other hand, the concept of maritime security is, in line with the provisions of the SKBM RP,

> an overriding term defining both maritime safety and the maritime safety of the state. It means a state on the Global Ocean, where international and national laws are enforced effectively, where freedom of navigation is guaranteed, and where citizens, infrastructure, transport, the natural environment, and marine resources are effectively protected. (BBN, 2017).

In foreign literature, the concepts of *maritime security* and *maritime safety* are often mentioned as two elements of the same whole, closely correlated with each other, but which should be distinguished from each other. The fundamental difference is that *security*, in principle, concerns threats and risks caused by humans (intentional), whereas *safety* refers to unintentional threats and risks. This division is very important as it affects the functioning of many actors, their competencies and tasks.

Another semantic problem identified by experts is interpretation of the same terms in different ways. A classic example of a term interpreted depending on the context and intentions of the person using it is "security". As noted by the authors of *Maritime*

Surveillance in Support of CSDP, The Wise Pen Team Final Report to EDA Steering Board, this term is sometimes understood as action and sometimes as a condition or objective. This is especially evident when comparing the military nomenclature with Regulation (EC) No. 725/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004, on enhancing ship and port facility security. In the case of interpretation by the uniformed services, security is usually a state, but generally not requiring any action unless the status quo is disrupted. That Regulation defines maritime security as a "combination of preventive measures intended to protect shipping and port facilities against threats of intentional unlawful acts". In the NATO dictionary, the term *security,* translated into Polish as *"bezpieczeństwo",* means "the condition achieved when designated information, materiel, personnel, activities and installations are protected against espionage, sabotage, subversion, terrorism and damage, as well as against loss or unauthorized disclosure" (NATO, 2017). The dictionary also includes a definition of *civil protection*, which means "activities undertaken by emergency services to protect populations, properties, infrastructure and the environment from the consequences of natural and technological disasters and other emergencies" (NATO, 2017).

In the context of maritime safety in a maritime environment, while there is no definition of maritime safety/security, it does provide a definition of *port security*, according to which it is "the safeguarding of vessels, harbours, ports, waterfront facilities and cargo from internal threats such as: destruction, loss, or injury from sabotage or other subversive acts; accidents; thefts; or other causes of similar nature" (NATO, 2017).

These definitions indicate that *security* and *safety,* as understood by NATO, are interchangeable. The NATO AJP-3.4.5 doctrine on the military contribution to stabilisation and reconstruction adopts *Safe and Secure Environment (SASE)* and *Freedom of Movement* as two main objectives of military support for the reconstruction of a given territory. The establishment of SASE is intended to provide the population with "the freedom to pursue daily activities without fear of persistent or large-scale violence. Such an environment is characterized by a local norm of public order (NATO, 2015), physical security, territorial security, a state monopoly on violence and protection of civilians. A SASE allows other S&R activities to proceed" (NATO, 2015). It can therefore be concluded that in this context, *safe* means a desired, expected state. A state which is the objective of NATO's action in a region which requires reconstruction and stabilisation.

The Alliance Maritime Strategy (NATO, 2011) uses the term *maritime security:*

> As part of broader efforts to address security threats arising in the maritime environment, NATO maritime forces can contribute to the maintenance of a secure and safe maritime environment given their unique capabilities and routine blue water activities. Existing national and international legislation is sufficient to allow Allies to undertake a range of maritime security operations; however, there may be scope for further enhancing mutual awareness and, where possible, operational harmonisation, among national legal authorities and practices. Maritime security is a suitable area for cooperation with partners.

In the EU nomenclature, and specifically in the European Union Maritime Security Strategy, "Maritime security is understood as a state of affairs of the global maritime domain, in which international law and national law are enforced, freedom of navigation is guaranteed and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment and marine resources are protected." (Council of the European Union, 2014).

In the author's opinion, this document should be called the European Union Strategy on Maritime Security and Safety. That is, of course, if it is assumed that maritime security and safety is the overarching term defining both maritime safety and a State's maritime security, while taking into account the specificities of the European Union and the global objectives it sets for itself in this document.

So far, the semantic analysis of concepts related to safety in the marine environment point toward a conceptual chaos, and the source documents of the European Union, NATO and Poland differ in their interpretation.

A proper approach to semantic issues is a sine qua non condition for the effective division of competencies among the various actors, as well as for effective communication and cooperation. According to L. Feldt, Dr. P. Roell, and R.D. Thiele, authors of the article *Maritime Security – Perspectives for a Comprehensive Approach*, the concept of maritime safety should be distinguished from maritime security. (Feldt et al., 2013) The authors refer to the definitions contained in the report "Maritime surveillance in support of CSDP, The wise pen team final report to the EDA steering board", where maritime security is

> the combination of preventive and responsive measures to protect the maritime domain against threats and intentional unlawful acts. Comment: The proposed definition, by including both preventive and responsive measures, aims to cover both law enforcement (civilian and military) and defence operations. Also, the term "maritime domain" (defined below) is more inclusive than just "shipping and port facilities" (which appears to exclude crews and other personnel), which were the items to be protected according to the EU Parliament and Council approved text. The enhanced definition, by concentrating on the unlawful use of the maritime domain, makes Maritime Security an international and interagency, civil and military (...). Both constabulary and defence agencies have distinct and direct responsibilities in Maritime Security. (del Pozo F. et al., 2010).

Another definition in the aforementioned document is maritime safety defined as

> the combination of preventive and responsive measures intended to protect the maritime domain against, and limit the effect of, accidental or natural danger, harm, damage to environment, risk or loss (…). Maritime Safety, by the use of the inclusive term "maritime domain", is understood to refer to dangers to the ship, its crew and its passengers, and/or cargo, and to navigation; it also covers the prevention of pollution from ships, and includes sanctioning illicit pollution and intervention to limit damage of incidents; finally, liability and compensation for damage incurred by ships are also part of Safety (...). The number of agencies with responsibility in Maritime Safety is extensive: constabulary, traffic control, fishery protection, customs, environmental protection, search and rescue, are but a few with

direct responsibility in one or several aspects of Safety and stewardship of marine resources. The Defence Department, despite its extensive capabilities, should normally be seen as having supporting or subsidiary responsibility, rather than primary responsibility in the field of safety (del Pozo F. et al., 2010).

An important element for a proper understanding of the above definition is to precisely explain what the authors mean by "maritime domain". The document describes it as "all areas and things of, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea or ocean, including all maritime-related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo and vessels and other conveyances" (del Pozo F. et al., 2010). Narrowing the concept of security only to "shipping and port facilities", as in Regulation (EC) No. 725/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on enhancing ship and port facility security, unreasonably restricts the performance of duties by many government agencies (del Pozo F. et al., 2010). Here, it is also worth recalling the definition of maritime domain in the context of the EU. According to the authors of the cited document, a maritime domain is

> That part of the maritime domain encompassed by the EU Member States´ Territorial Waters, Exclusive Economic Zone, Continental Platform, and Search and Rescue Areas, as defined by UNCLOS/SOLAS, together with all cargo and vessels flagged, beneficially owned by, or bound to the EU, as well as any Area of Operations outside the above that has been declared for an EU Maritime Operation. (del Pozo F. et al., 2010)

The above definition gives rise to a number of implications. The key conclusion that arises is that both the safety and security of the EU maritime domain are of strategic interest to the Union. The multitude of elements comprising this domain further complicates the situation in terms of standardising the existing nomenclature or clearly separating tasks and competences.

In addition, the aforementioned document also contains other elements confirming the need to separate *maritime safety* from *maritime security.* Maritime security operations are defined as "operations carried out by a Security or Defence agency with the aim of achieving or restoring freedom from threat or intentional unlawful acts in the maritime domain." (del Pozo F. et al., 2010) These operations are normally carried out by more than one agency, e.g. mutual support between the police and navy in sea operations. Therefore, the dual "supporting/supported" roles should be clearly defined and adopted in the operational requirements (del Pozo F. et al., 2010). On the other hand, maritime safety operations are

> operations carried out by an agency with responsibility in the realm of safety, with or without the support of Security or Defence agencies, in order to police the maritime domain against risks to safety or the environment, due to the failure to observe internationally accepted safety rules. (del Pozo F. et al., 2010)

These operations can also be carried out by several agencies and therefore similar arrangements for supporting/supported roles are adopted in the course of their implementation, though in this case the Ministry of Defence may have a supporting role. It is worth mentioning that this document also identifies what should be understood as EU maritime zones. According to the authors, these are: the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the North Sea (del Pozo F. et al., 2010).

To sum up, the terms maritime security and maritime safety are properly defined in the European Union nomenclature and should be distinguished from each other. A slightly different interpretation of the same terms can be found in the conceptual apparatus of the North Atlantic Alliance and in Polish literature on the subject. This may create problems in the form of imprecise division of competencies and responsibilities within various maritime actors.

Maritime Safety of the Baltic Sea Region and the EU

The EU's maritime safety is an important issue for both maritime and landlocked countries. As has already been pointed out, in the above-cited document *Maritime surveillance in support of CSDP…*, the Baltic Sea is one of the EU's maritime zones, alongside the Atlantic Ocean, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the North Sea. The safety of EU citizens, secure and uninterrupted energy supplies, communication, research and development are just part of the challenges that the European Union is attempting to address in this region.

Regarding the Baltic Sea Region, there are also a number of threats faced by individual states as well the European Union and North Atlantic Alliance.

The most important of these is the policy of the Russian Federation, for which the Baltic Sea is a "sort of a strategically important window on the world" (Kuczyński, 2019).

The toughening of rhetoric on the part of the Russian Federation in international politics has been evident in particular since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the Baltic Sea Region is increasingly threatened by provocative action on its part. Russian threats, cyclical violations of airspace and maritime areas (especially those of Finland and Sweden) are only some of the threats to the security and stability of the region. Furthermore, Russia also issues threats concerning the use of nuclear weapons. "Putin and various spokesmen rhetorically threatened neighbours with Russia's nuclear sabre, with 'specific threats, including many by Putin himself, the likes of which have not been heard since the days of Nikita Khrushchev" (Miller 2016). "The conduct of nuclear exercises with mock attacks on Sweden and Poland subtly reinforce Russian rhetoric" (Grady, 2016). In addition, Russian investments in military capabilities, including modernisation of the navy and advanced anti-ship cruise missiles, the strengthening of Russian capabilities in the Kaliningrad Oblast through the purchase of an integrated S-400

air defence system and Iskander-M surface-to-surface missiles (Hoffman, 2017), anti-ship systems (Bastion, Baltic), and electronic warfare systems (e.g. Krasukha and Murmansk-BN), are of concern in the Baltic Sea region.

The elements listed above are referred to as Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities, i.e. "generally speaking, the ability to remotely deter an opponent in a given geographical region, ensuring oneself military or political-military control over that region" (Dura, 2019). Interestingly, according to Swedish analysts, Russian capabilities in this scope in the Baltic Sea Region are smaller than the Russians claim. According to the report *Bursting the Bubble. Russian A2/AD in the Baltic Sea Region: Capabilities, Countermeasures, and Implications*, developed by the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) following the annexation of Crimea, there was a tendency to unconditionally accept the information provided by the Kremlin regarding Russia's potential. According to the authors of the report, three major errors were made in the assessment of A2/AD capacity in the Baltic Sea Region, i.e.:

- "confusing the maximal nominal range of missiles with the effective range of the systems;
- disregarding the inherent problems of seeing and hitting a moving target at a distance, especially targets below the horizon;
- underestimating the potential for countermeasures against A2/AD-systems" (Dalsjö et al., 2019).

In particular, surface-to-air missile systems currently create much smaller A2/AD bubbles than is often assumed and a number of countermeasures are possible. Experiences from Syria also raise questions about the actual capabilities of such systems in combat, relative to their nominal capabilities. Anti-ship and anti-land systems pose a greater threat but, here too, countermeasures are available (Dalsjö et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, as the report's authors point out, the situation is dynamic and a possible increase in efforts to modernise the Russian Armed Forces should be taken into account, as this in turn may result in the weaknesses of Russian A2/AD capacities in the region being overcome.

Therefore, both the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union must take into account Russia's revisionist approach to the Baltic Sea Region and, in particular, the difficult situation of the three Baltic States: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. According to the authors of the RAND Corporation report *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank. Wargaming the Defence of the Baltics* "After eastern Ukraine, the next most likely targets for attempted Russian coercion are the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania" (Shlapak et al., 2016). Importantly, as stated in the report:

In a series of war games conducted between summer 2014 and spring 2015, the RAND Corporation examined the shape and probable outcome of a near-term Russian invasion of the Baltic states. The games' findings are unambiguous: As currently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members. Across multiple games

using a wide range of expert participants in and out of uniform playing both sides, the longest it has taken Russian forces to reach the outskirts of the Estonian and/or Latvian capitals of Tallinn and Riga respectively is 60 hours (Shlapak et al., 2016).

Such a situation would force NATO to escalate the conflict or admit failure, which in turn would have unpredictable consequences for the whole Baltic Sea Region. Furthermore, the question of NATO solidarity and a rapid response to such a situation remains valid, especially in the context of words such as those of Newt Gingrich, a political ally of US President Donald J. Trump, who, when talking about Estonia's defence, stated that "he was 'not sure that he would risk a nuclear war over some place which is [in] the suburbs of St Petersburg" (Stuttaford, 2016).

From the perspective of the European Union, destabilisation of the Baltic Sea Region would have very serious consequences. A shift in power and the possibility of engaging the countries of the Baltic Sea Region in conflict would bring disturbances in the maritime economy of the whole region, as well as other countries and entities dependent on trade with Baltic ports or making use of the Baltic "sea highways".

> The Baltic Sea Region is a unique centre of maritime economic activity, which is threatened by Russia's overtly aggressive behaviour and could be destabilized by its more indirect methods. The region is a critical hub of economic activity that has numerous vulnerabilities to both direct military action and to hybrid threat activity (Hoffman, 2017).

It is worth noting that neither Sweden nor Finland are NATO members nor under the obligations imposed by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, but both are constantly looking for ways to strengthen their position against Russia. Thus, in a situation of conflict between NATO and Russia in the Baltic Sea Region, it is expected that they will support the North Atlantic Alliance, even if only by making their airfields and ports available for NATO assets. "It has been clear for several years that, in their actions and plans, they (Russians – authors note) regard not only NATO members Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark, but also Finland and especially Sweden as their opponents" (Warsaw Institute, 2019). Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Baltic States as well as Sweden and Finland, as members of the European Union, can count on support from other EU Member States under the mutual defence clause of Article 42 (7) of the Treaty on European Union. Although this clause, like Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, does not impose an obligation on countries to provide military assistance, it is certainly important for those that are not formally under NATO's "security umbrella".

Russia's aggressive policy is a serious threat, but not the only one faced by states and other actors involved in building security and stability in the Baltic Sea Region. As one of the key actors in this area, the European Union must account for all manner of other challenges and threats in its policies, such as:

- the unresolved Euro-banking crisis;
- massive and broadly uncontrolled immigration from the Middle East and Northern Africa;
- the British exit ("Brexit") from the EU with potential consequences for Scotland and Catalonia;
- rising far-right populism in Europe and in the United States.

These areas of crises are interlinked and partly mutually reinforcing (Makarychevand, 2017). In addition, the Baltic Sea region is vulnerable to the threats identified in the "European Union Maritime Security Strategy", and in particular:

- o cross-border and organised crime, including maritime piracy, and armed assault on vessels, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, organised criminal networks facilitating illegal migration, arms and drugs trafficking, smuggling of goods, and contraband;
- o terrorism and other intentional illegal acts at sea and in ports against ships, goods, crews, and passengers, ports and port facilities, as well as critical maritime and power infrastructure, including cyber-attacks;
- o the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear;
- o threats to freedom of navigation, such as denial of access to the sea and straits, and blocking of maritime transport routes;
- o environmental risks, including unsustainable and unauthorised exploitation of natural and marine resources, threats to biodiversity, IUU fishing, degradation of the environment due to illegal or accidental discharges, chemical, biological, and nuclear pollution, in particular chemical weapons and unexploded ordnance discharged into the sea;
- o the potential safety impact of natural or man-made disasters, extreme events, and climate change on the maritime transport system and, in particular, on maritime infrastructure (Rada Unii Europejskiej, 2014);

In turn, the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region notes that, on the one hand, the region has the potential to become a global leader in the field of maritime safety and security, while on the other hand, maritime traffic is expected to grow, thereby increasing the risk of accidents and environmental exposure to pollution. At the same time, three priority issues have been identified, i.e.:

- achieving a leading position by the region in the field of maritime safety and security;
- strengthening protection against major crises at sea and on land;

– reducing the scale and impact of cross-border crime.

It is worth emphasising that the European Union has already had tangible successes in creating maritime safety in the Baltic Region. One of the most significant is the Baltic Sea Maritime Incident Response Project (BSMIR), which

> looks at the level of preparedness of eight Baltic States, as well as Norway and Iceland, for the possibility of major maritime accidents involving various sectors. The result of this nine-month project is a final report, presenting recommendations for international coope-ration (*Strategia bezpieczeństwa…*).

In addition, some countries in the region are involved in the European Coast Guard Functions Academy Network (ECGFA NET) initiative, which aims to strengthen inter-national cooperation in the training of coastguards. "The European Coast Guard Func-tions Training Network was established by 18 CGF training institutions to improve practical collaboration. The Network assembles cross-sectoral training expertise and re-presents all CGFs" (*Summary report…*). Another excellent example of regional coope-ration is the Baltic Sea Border Services Cooperation Conference (BSRBCC), which

> is seen as a flexible regional tool for daily inter-agency interaction to combat primarily cross-border crime and environmental protection of the maritime areas, able to adjust with time and changing conditions. Cooperation partners are Police, Border Guards, Coast Gu-ards and Customs (BSRBCC, n.d.).

These examples of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region are only some of the struc-tures developed over the years. The region has great potential and experience in esta-blishing cooperation at a regional level, including in the field of security and defence, key of which are the Baltic Sea States Council, Baltic Council, Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8), the Northern Dimension, Helsinki Commission HELCOM, Committee for the Development of the Baltic Sea Region VASAB, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation BSSSC, and European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, NORDEFCO.

> The added value of Baltic cooperation is the multiple combinations of partners – govern-mental, local, and non-governmental – which foster the development of unique expert ne-tworks, enabling information to be obtained and joint, coordinated actions to be taken. Intergovernmental political cooperation is complemented by a valuable project dimension (MSZ, n.d.).

However, experts note that: "the latest developments in the BSR suggest we should not overrate the capabilities of regional institutions to mitigate conflicts that normatively and politically divide neighbouring countries" (Makarychevand, 2017). Lack of solida-rity and divergent interests can lead to "individual – rather than regionally coordinate – strategies towards Russia" (Makarychevand, 2017).

Summary

The European Union is currently comprised of 27 countries, of which as many as 22 have access to the sea. This means that more than 81% of EU citizens should be aware of the importance of access to the sea, both for their country and for the Union as a whole. It also means that at least 22 out of 27 representatives of the Member States in the Council of the European Union should support the proposed secondary legislation aimed at strengthening maritime coordination and cooperation.

The Baltic Sea region is of great importance to the European Union. As pointed out by P. Mickiewicz, "The Baltic Sea may not be the most important European sea or maritime waterway, but its role as a transport route is significant" (Mickiewicz, 2012). It is also an area of strategic competition between NATO, the EU and Russia, as well as a region of major economic importance.

The region has significant maritime potential, which means that most countries are able to exploit their coastal position to generate significant benefits. The attraction of coastal regions, both for individuals and investors, is apparent.

> The catchment area extends over 1.7 million km² and is home to about 85 million people. (…) The Baltic Sea is one of the most heavily trafficked seas in the world, accounting for up to 15% of the world's cargo (Klopott, n.d.).

Seaside regions are usually better developed than inland, and developed port and tourism infrastructure constitute centres for the exchange of services, goods and capital, along with thoughts and ideas. The EU is pursuing a policy aimed at developing socio-economic links between the Member States of the Baltic Region and the rest of the Union. "There are about 2000 ships in the Baltic marine area at any given moment and about 3500–5500 ships navigate through the Baltic Sea per month. More than 50% of the ships are general cargo ships" (Matczak, 2018).

The Baltic Sea Region is also an area readily visited by tourists. The tourist potential of the region is constantly growing,

> Although the number of vessel calls has remained rather stable over the last 15 years, the number of passengers has increased more than four times: from 1,072,000 passengers in 2000 to 4,297,000 in 2015, with an average annual growth rate of 9.7% (Klopott, n.d.).

Marine transport of passengers and goods are key determinants of the region, but not the only ones. Another traditionally developed maritime sector is fishing, mainly on an industrial level. "Industrial fishery in the Baltic provides herring (Clupea harengus) and sprat (Sprattus sprattus). It is an important branch of industry for the Baltic Sea, yielding 300,000 tonnes of fish annually" (Lassen, 2011).

However, the economic and social development of the region depends on whether state governments and the European Union will be able to ensure maritime safety in this area. It should be stressed that stability and safety are a sine qua non for the region's development and for increasing the benefits resulting from access to the sea. A regional

approach, taking into account the particular characteristics of the region, the specific needs arising from dynamically changing situations, as well as the cooperative mechanisms already in place, are crucial for the effective establishment of maritime safety.

The Union should coordinate and inspire the enhancement of regional cooperation, should be the initiator of such actions, but should also guarantee the implementation of provisions contained in such documents as the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region or the European Union Maritime Security Strategy.

The revised Action Plan on EU Maritime Security Strategy sets out a number of priorities for building maritime security.

> The Action Plan builds on relevant sectoral and regional maritime security strategies and policies applicable to EU sea basins and shared maritime spaces in the global maritime domain, as well as other relevant EU policies, with a view to affirming the role of the EU as a global maritime security provider. Promoting global maritime security is a key strand of work in implementing the EU Global Strategy in line with the principles of the EUMSS (the European Union Maritime Security Strategy) (Council of the European Union, 2018).

The document highlights the role of the EU in promoting maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, as well as the importance of the maritime domain in ensuring internal and external security, correlating these aspects with the well-being and protection of EU citizens, as well as the sustainable development of coastal states. A number of tools and initiatives have been identified which aim, inter alia, to develop capacity in ensuring EU maritime security, such as: the Civilian Capability Development Plan (CCDP), Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

Member States may and should make use of the opportunities offered by the European Union, both in the context of expert support and in the context of financing specific actions. The importance and development of maritime capacity is undervalued in many Member States, including Poland. It turns out that having access to the sea is far too little in order to make effective use of the opportunities associated with it, to address challenges properly and to overcome threats effectively. It is therefore extremely important to raise public awareness in this area. Support of the broadly understood society for the development of initiatives to strengthen maritime capacity is a prerequisite for recognising these needs at a political and strategic level and, consequently, for their continued funding.

Only through constant development of individual states' own capabilities (ensured, inter alia, through an adequate level of defence and security expenditure, including maritime security), combined with cooperation and the continued presence in the region of forces and resources of all the concerned countries in the region, supranational actors, EU institutions and agencies, as well as the North Atlantic Alliance, can Russia's aggressive actions be halted and other threats be combatted effectively.

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