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CELAC IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA (2010-2023)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to highlight the formation, development, and results of CELAC's activities, as well as to define its place in international relations at both the regional and global levels.

The scientific novelty is in the comprehensive analysis of the place and role of the regional international organization CELAC, its failures, and successful initiatives. The authors analyze the formation of CELAC as a representative body in relations with key world political actors – China, the EU, and Russia.

Conclusions. CELAC continues to be an important factor in international relations, especially in the context of the desire of Latin American and Caribbean countries to strengthen cooperation and coordination. The establishment of CELAC was one of the vivid manifestations of the 'left turn' with its state-nationalist bias and emphasized interest in solving pressing social problems in domestic politics by the state from the top-down and ensuring its independence from global actors, primarily the United States. CELAC is not a replacement for the cooperation and integration groups – Mercosur, CARICOM, ALCA, etc. The desire for CELAC to be an alternative body – especially to the OAS (The Organization of American States) – does not enjoy regional consensus and it would be difficult to achieve with the resources this body currently has at its disposal.

Although in general, CELAC's activities were ineffective (most of the region's problems had not been solved, including poverty, corruption, crime, etc.), there were examples of successful implementation of its decisions in 2013-2018. In recent years, we have observed the intensification of CELAC's international activities, aimed, first of all, at establishing mutually beneficial and partnership relations with the key actors of world politics and economy – the EU, the USA, and China. But Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, its desire for self-isolation, the sanctions of the Western world, and the condemnation of aggression by the UN – all this pushes the Caribbean countries away from Russia, although it does not completely negate their cooperation.

Keywords: regional integration, CELAC, Latin America and the Caribbean, international organization, China, EU, Russian Federation

CELAC у МІЖНАРОДНИХ ВІДНОСИНАХ ЛАТИНСЬКОЇ АМЕРИКИ (2010-2023)

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою статті є висвітлення становлення, розвитку та результатів діяльності CELAC, визначити її місце у міжнародних відносинах як на регіональному, так і світовому рівнях.

Новизна статті полягає у комплексному аналізі місця та ролі регіональної міжнародної організації CELAC, її прорахунках та успішних ініціативах. Автори розглянули становлення CELAC як представницького органу у взаємовідносинах із ключовими світовими політичними акторами – Китаєм, ЄС, Росією.

Висновки. CELAC продовжує залишатися важливим чинником у міжнародних відносинах, особливо у контексті прагнення латиноамериканських і карибських країн до зміцнення співробітництва та координації. Створення CELAC стало одним із яскравих проявів «лівого повороту» з його державно-націоналістичним ухилом і підкресленою зацікавленістю у вирішенні нагальних соціальних проблем внутрішньої політики державою «зверху вниз» і забезпеченні її незалежності від глобальних акторів, насамперед, Сполучених Штатів Америки. CELAC не є заміною групам співпраці та інтеграції – Mercosur, CARICOM, ALCA тощо. Бажання CELAC бути альтернативним органом – особливо ОАД – не має регіонального консенсусу, і його було б важко досягти за допомогою ресурсів, які цей орган наразі має у своєму розпорядженні.

Хоча в цілому діяльність CELAC була неефективною (більшість проблем регіону не вирішено, зокрема бідність, корупція, злочинність тощо), були приклади успішного виконання її рішень у 2013-2018 роках. В останні роки ми спостерігаємо активізацію міжнародної діяльності CELAC, яка направлена, насамперед, на встановлення взаємовигідних і партнерських відносин з ключовими акторами світової політики та економіки – ЄС, США, Китай. Але агресія Росії по відношенню до України, її прагнення до самоізоляції, санкції західного світу та засудження агресії з боку ООН – усе це відштовхує від Росії країни ЛАКБ, хоча й не перекреслює повністю їхню співпрацю.

Ключові слова: регіональна інтеграція, CELAC, Латинська Америка та Карибський басейн, міжнародна організація, Китай, ЄС, Російська Федерація

INTRODUCTION

Latin America is a region where various forms of regional integration are actively developing. The most notable organizations of an integration nature are OAS, UNASUR, ALBA, MERCOSUR, CELAC, SICA, etc. The diversity of organizations is related to the fact that integration processes in the region often face challenges such as political instability, differences in economic development, and social and cultural differences. However, these organizations continue to work on deepening integration and cooperation in the region.

One of the most successful and large-scale integration projects is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños; CELAC), which unites all the countries of the hemisphere, except for the USA

and Canada. The organization's sphere of interest includes political dialogue, economic cooperation, social and cultural interaction, security issues, etc. Thus, CELAC has become an important forum for deepening cooperation between American states and addressing key problems of their relations. The peculiarity of CELAC is that the organization is not limited to regional international relations, but is a collective representation in relations with the most important global players, primarily the EU and China.

Thus, *the purpose of this study* is to show the formation, development, and results of CELAC's activities, and to determine its place in international relations at both the regional and global levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the beginning of its establishment until today, CELAC continues to attract the interest of researchers and international analysts. Let us try to recall some works that are most interesting for us in terms of the studied issue and the purpose of the research.

D. Segovia¹ was one of the first researchers who analyzed the possibility of turning CELAC into a competitor of the Organization of American States (OAS). The researcher comes to the conclusion that the organization has become a "geopolitical reshaping of Latin America" and has a strong starting position that can not only turn CELAC into a powerful competitor of the OAS but also completely drive the latter out from the Latin American region. At the same time, "CELAC must work hard to prevent the ideological differences between its member states from reducing the mechanism to the usual rhetoric in favor of the unity of the Latin American peoples and the progression towards their objectives"². The work of Russian politologists V. Kheifets and L. Khadorich³ presents a similar idea, contrasting CELAC and the OAS. Although "the end of the US dictate is a matter of the near future", but the authors doubt that the regional system of international relations will abandon the OAS and come to the conclusion that "despite the existing contradictions in the positions of the states of the Latin American region and the United States, as well as the sharp anti-Washington rhetoric, economic and political circumstances make the renunciation of the OAS objectively disadvantageous for both sides. This means that the OAS remains part of the political reality, and not a relic of the past"⁴.

In 2017, a summarizing study by A. Suleymanov was published, reviewing the history of the establishment of CELAC, outlining the features of the organization's functioning, and identifying key areas of its activities based on the work of the summits of 2013-2017. The researcher concludes that although there are some shortcomings in the organization's work but in general, CELAC plays a positive role in the region and has certain prospects⁵.

Prospects for the spread of China's influence on the Latin American region are

¹ Segovia D. Latin America and the Caribbean: Between the OAS and CELAC. *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe – European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*. 2013. № 95. P. 97-107.

² Ibid. P. 105.

³ Хейфец В., Хадорич Л. Латинская Америка между ОАГ и СЕЛАК. *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*. 2015. № 4. С. 90-100. DOI: 10.20542/0131-2227-2015-4-90-100

⁴ Ibid. С. 98.

⁵ Сулейманов А.В. CELAC – новый механизм диалога в Латино-Карибской Америке. *Латинская Америка*. 2017. № 9. С. 49-60.

shown in the research paper by A. Borzov, Yu. Torkunova, and Yu. Agaev⁶. The authors uncover the intensification of political, trade, and economic ties between the PRC and Latin American countries through cooperation within CELAC and CELAC-China forums. The researchers conclude that China's political, economic, and financial influence in Latin America and the Caribbean will increase, and CELAC plays a direct role in this. E. Katkova and A. Eremin⁷, L.T.G. Oliveira and M. Myers⁸ also analyze the role of the mentioned organization in spreading China's influence in the region.

Some scholars are also interested in another vector of CELAC international cooperation – the European Union. L. Ruano gives a brief analysis of the development of relations between the countries of Latin America and Europe through the prism of cooperation within the framework of the EU-CELAC dialogue⁹. In turn, K. Vakarchuk reviews the EU-CELAC relations in a historical and political sense, identifying and studying the main stages and forms of cooperation: economic, political, cultural, and social¹⁰.

In the context of the EU-CELAC Summit in 2023, growing interest in these relations prompted the publication of a collection of research papers devoted to the results of the Summit and the prospects of EU-Latin American relations¹¹.

As we can see, this issue is being studied by contemporary scholars, but it has a fragmentary coverage and is presented mainly from the standpoint of political science and futurological forecasting. Therefore, the problem of the place and role of CELAC in the international relations of Latin America has not been sufficiently studied and requires generalizations from the point of view of historical science and the creation of a holistic picture of the issue with an appropriate summarization of the results.

CELAC: FORMATION AND TASKS

At the beginning of the 21st century in the Latin American region, there have been significant shifts in the vision of the future of integration associations. A key role in the restructuring of regional international relations was played by the Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez, who sought to turn Venezuela into a leading player in Latin America and build his own system of regional cooperation based on anti-American principles. The main goal of Latin American regionalism was to ensure greater independence from the United States¹². At the same time, Russian researchers V. Kheifets and L. Khadorich indicate that the initiative to establish CELAC was put forward by two large regional

⁶ Борзова А.Ю., Торкунова Ю.А., Агаев Ю.И. Китай-СЕЛАС: новые тенденции в экономическом сотрудничестве. *Латинская Америка*. 2018. № 7. С. 32-46. DOI: 10.31857/S0044748X0000022-3

⁷ Каткова Е.Ю., Еремин А.А. Отношения КНР с регионом Латинской Америки и Карибского бассейна на современном этапе. *Вестник международных организаций*. 2022. Т. 17. № 2. С. 164-188. doi:10.17323/1996-7845-2022-02-07

⁸ Oliveira L.T.G., Myers M. The Tenuous Co-Production of China's Belt and Road Initiative in Brazil and Latin America. *Journal of Contemporary China*. 2020. Vol. 30. № 129. P. 481-499. DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2020.1827358

⁹ Ruano L. La Unión Europea y América Latina y el Caribe: una breve historia de la relación. *Revista Mexicana De Política Exterior*. 2018. № 112. P. 69-87.

¹⁰ Вакарчук К.В. Співробітництво країн ЄС з МЕРКОСУР та СЕЛАС: регіональний та глобальний вимір. Міжнародні та політичні дослідження. 2022. Вип. 35. С. 145-156. DOI: 10.18524/2707-5206.2022.35.261821

¹¹ Domínguez R., Sanahuja J.A. (Eds.). Una asociación renovada. Balance y perspectivas de la Cumbre UE-CELAC y las relaciones euro-latinoamericanas. Madrid: Fundación Carolina, 2023. DOI: 10.33960/issn-e.1885-9119.DT90

¹² Oleksenko R., Villasmil Espinoza J., Andriukaitiene R. Regional Integration Projects in Venezuela's Foreign Policy under the Presidency of Nicolas Maduro (2013-2018). *Eminak*. 2023. № 1 (41). P. 260.

powers – Mexico and Brazil, interested in the growth of national autonomy and the expansion of trade¹³.

It should be noted that CELAC did not emerge out of thin air. As the Ukrainian researcher Vitalii Kosmyna well noted, the association was established gradually and for a long time served as a kind of negotiating platform for resolving political conflicts in certain countries. It was based on the Rio Group, which was established in 1986, based on the Contadora Support Group. When the Rio Group began to cover in one way or another all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, while the practice of meeting of heads of state and governments, interested in solving major international problems, was preserved, the very format of the ‘group’ of countries, from the beginning, was aimed at solving local problems, no longer corresponded to the significantly increased level of those international forums. The meeting of the leaders of the region’s states on December 16-17, 2008 held in the Brazilian city of Salvador (state of Bahia) was named the 1st Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC). It was chaired by the President of Brazil L.I. Lula da Silva. The Salvador Declaration especially emphasized the vital need for “political, economic, social, and cultural integration” of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular, for successful interaction with the rest of the world¹⁴.

The authors, the initiators of the new regional structure, immediately defined two priority trends: intra-regional interaction aimed at comprehensive integration and joint actions to achieve development; and extra-regional ties, the strengthening of which was necessary to raise the status of the region at the global level. Accordingly, CELAC is positioned as a mechanism for realizing the interests of Latin American countries in the international arena. The community focuses on a political dialogue with other universal and regional intergovernmental structures, as well as individual states, aimed at coordinating joint efforts to address the global challenges of today¹⁵.

Subsequently, in the documents of the CALC summits, the issue of comprehensive regional integration appeared among the main tasks. Thus, in the Action Plan approved at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean held on November 6, 2009, in Jamaica, attention was focused on “unity, cooperation, and regional integration”. At the 2nd CALC Summit (the same as the 21st Summit of the Rio Group), which was held on February 23, 2010, in Mexico and was called the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development, the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States was announced, which was to inherit the main achievements of the Rio Group and CALC and the corresponding agreement was signed¹⁶.

According to the leaders of the left-wing radical countries of the region, such as Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, the organization was supposed to become an alternative to the OAS, controlled by Washington. On the eve of the meeting in Caracas, Hugo Chávez expressed his confidence that “in time, the new organization will replace the outdated OAD”. In turn, the leaders of Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Uruguay, Peru, and most of the Caribbean countries considered CELAC

¹³ Хейфец В., Хадорич Л. Латинская Америка между ОАГ и СЕЛАК... С. 91.

¹⁴ Космина В.Г. Утворення СЕЛАК – новий етап в історії латиноамериканської цивілізації. Наукові праці історичного факультету Запорізького національного університету. 2012. Вип. 33. С. 249.

¹⁵ Хейфец В., Хадорич Л. Латинская Америка между ОАГ и СЕЛАК... С. 91-92.

¹⁶ Космина В.Г. Утворення СЕЛАК... С. 249-250.

not as a project that competed with the OAS, but as a new political dialogue mechanism designed to ensure the implementation of previously reached agreements between countries-participants and the development of integration relations between them. In general, according to A. Suleymanov, CELAC was initially conceived as a qualitatively new regional structure, different from the OAS – without the participation of the USA and Canada and with a different agenda¹⁷.

The direct inauguration of the organization took place at the 1st CELAC Summit (same as the 3rd CALC Summit), held in Caracas on December 2-3, 2011, under the chairmanship of the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez. According to A. Main¹⁸, much preparation went into the founding summit of CELAC and during the two days that the leaders of the 33 Latin American and Caribbean member states were convened, long and intense discussions took place. Originally scheduled to be held in July, the Summit was postponed until December to allow time for the host country's president, Hugo Chávez, to recover from cancer treatment. By the end of the day on December 3, 22 documents had been approved by all the governments, including a Caracas Declaration establishing various principles and orientations for the new organization; a Caracas Action Plan, setting a concrete work agenda on multiple issues; a Statute of Procedures defining the organization's basic structure and decision-making process; and 19 statements on issues varying from coca chewing to democracy.

The Caracas Declaration also committed member countries to advancing the “political, economic, social, and cultural integration” of the region. The Caracas Action Plan outlined a dense work agenda touching on various areas of collaboration that had been developed between Latin American and Caribbean governments. Those included energy cooperation, addressing hunger and illiteracy, boosting intra-regional trade, and cooperation around humanitarian and environmental challenges. At the top of the agenda were the plans for addressing the impact of the international financial crisis and designing a “new international financial architecture”. The way forward, as outlined in the Action Plan, was for CELAC to develop mechanisms to “strengthen and deepen the integration of our economies”. That Action Plan also committed the group to developing a “strategy to design a new regional financial architecture... based in the principles of justice, solidarity and transparency” and to working to “redesign international financial institutions” such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank. The Plan stated that decision-making within those institutions should be democratized and conditionality attached to loans should be “eliminated and/or rendered more flexible”¹⁹.

The organization was aimed at increasing hemispheric cooperation in social, economic, and security matters, and was also expected to become the main representative body of the region, providing a space to amplify the continent's voice on the international stage. Unlike the Organization of American States (OAS), the US and Canada were not represented within the bloc, which also aspired to neutralize the US influence within the region.

During the 1st Summit, representatives from the region's 33 states discussed the founding principles of the organization, as well as its structure and the development of

¹⁷ Сулейманов А.В. CELAC... С. 50.

¹⁸ Main A. CELAC: Speaking for Latin America and the Caribbean. *Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)*. 2011. 6th December. URL: <https://cepr.net/celac-speaking-for-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

¹⁹ Ibidem.

a series of cooperative projects in education, energy, and technology. Each head of state was also given the opportunity to address the Summit and make proposals concerning issues pertinent to the Latin American and Caribbean region. Venezuelan president and official host of the inauguration Hugo Chávez said: “For how long are we going to be the backward periphery, exploited, and denigrated? Enough! Here we are putting down the fundamental building block for South American unity, independence, and development. If we hesitate, we are lost!”²⁰. In the end, the Venezuelan leader noted: “A giant has been born, and its name is CELAC, we are making Bolívar’s dream come true”²¹.

Thus, in 2011, a powerful integration organization appeared in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which was designed to address the key issues of the region in all spheres. At the same time, despite quite serious ideological and political differences between the leaders of many states, the main documents at the founding summit were adopted unanimously. According to V. Kosmyna, Latin America, together with the Caribbean countries, is consolidating and seeking its own ways of inclusion in the global systems of economy, politics, law, etc²².

SUMMITS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND THEIR DECISIONS (2011-2021)

CELAC summits in 2013-2019 were held in Chile (2013), Cuba (2014), Costa Rica (2015), Ecuador (2016), and the Dominican Republic (2017)²³. The summits planned in El Salvador (2018), Bolivia (2019), and Mexico (2020)²⁴ were not convoked, but the following ones – in Mexico (2021) and Argentina (2023) did take place.

The subjects of discussion at the annual CELAC meetings were economic cooperation, disarmament, decolonization, nuclear non-proliferation, settlement of territorial disputes and civil wars, migration policy, climate change, issues of indigenous peoples, and the fight against poverty, hunger, and terrorism. In the Santiago Declaration, adopted as a result of the 1st Summit held on January 27-28, 2013 in Santiago (Chile), the agreements on political, economic, and cultural integration in the region were reaffirmed.

At the 2nd CELAC Summit held in Havana (Cuba) on January 28-29, 2014, the central issue was the problem of poverty, hunger, and social inequality. The representatives of the participating countries took the initiative to expand the international activities of the organization: to hold a CELAC-China bilateral forum, and to establish dialogue mechanisms with the Russian Federation, which was stated in clause 75 of the final declaration. Against the background of the growing number of armed conflicts on the planet, CELAC in 2014 declared LAC a zone of peace and security.

At the 3rd Summit (January 28-29, 2015, San Jose, Costa Rica), special attention was paid to the problems of small island states, the protection of children’s rights, and the state of education. The delegates decided to erect a monument to the victims of slavery. A separate communique was adopted on each of the 26 issues discussed at the Summit.

The 4th Summit was held on January 27, 2016, in Quito (Ecuador). In addition to

²⁰ Boothroyd R. CELAC, Counter-OAS Organisation Inaugurated in Caracas. *Venezuelanalysis.com*. 2011. 6th December. URL: <https://venezuelanalysis.com/news/6668>

²¹ Tucker L.L. Bolívar, Los Andes del Perú y la libertad de América. *América Latina*. 2011. 7th December. URL: <https://www.alainet.org/es/active/51398>

²² Космина В.Г. Утворення СЕЛАК... С. 250.

²³ Космина В. Латинська Америка після «лівого повороту»: нові виклики // Вчені записки ТНУ імені В.І. Вернадського. Серія: Історичні науки. 2017. Том 28 (67), № 2. С. 55.

²⁴ CELAC. URL: <https://celacinternational.org>

traditional issues, the point of cooperation with other international organizations was brought up. In the Action Plan to 2016, adopted as a result of the Summit, the participating countries stated the need for further intensification of relations with China, Russia, India, and Turkey.

The 5th regional meeting, held in Punta Cana (Dominican Republic) on January 25, 2017, was devoted to the problems of global protectionism, transnational crime, the blockade of Cuba, cooperation between countries in the tax sphere, etc. Opening the Summit, Dominican President Danilo Medina Sánchez said that due to the models of protection of specific industries adopted by the USA and the European Union, “the specter of protectionism is roaming around the world, in the past – the cause of our impoverishment, and in the future – trade wars”²⁵.

During 2016-2017, new political regimes were established in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and a number of other countries. Their governments came together with the US as fierce opponents of the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. As a result, the leaders of several leading states of the region – Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile were not present at the 2017 Summit. The Venezuelan crisis deepened the current contradictions, and the result was the temporary suspension of its activities in CELAC, which sharply reduced the effectiveness of the organization. During 2018-2020, it was not possible to convene CELAC summits, and in 2019, Brazil decided to withdraw from the association (withdrawn in January 2020)²⁶.

Finally, in 2021, sharp contradictions between the organization’s members were resolved and the 6th CELAC Summit was prepared to be held on September 18 in Mexico City, Mexico. The key topic of the meeting was the discussion about the role of the OAS in the region, but any fateful decision had not been made. Instead, the decision was made to establish the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (Agencia Latinoamericana y Caribeña del Espacio, ALCE) and the Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Response to Natural Disasters Fund (Fondo de Adaptación Climática y Respuesta Integral a Desastres Naturales, FACRID). In the final declaration, the organization adopted several statements: declaring LAC a zone of peace, condemning the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, asking the IMF to soften the debt obligations of countries in the region, intensifying the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and calling for compulsory vaccination, fighting corruption in the region, protection of human rights, declaring LAC a ‘nuclear-weapon-free zone’, etc²⁷.

In 2022, the summit was not held, but CELAC representatives met on January 7, 2022, at the 22nd Meeting of CELAC Foreign Ministers. It was chaired by Mexico and Argentina as outgoing and incoming Presidents Pro Tempore, respectively. Argentina’s Foreign Minister S.A. Cafiero presented the proposed 2022 Work Plan, which had 15 points: 1. Inclusive post-Covid-19 economic recovery; 2. A Latin American and Caribbean health strategy; 3. Space cooperation; 4. Science, technology and innovation for social inclusion; 5. Comprehensive disaster risk management; 6. Education; 7. Strengthening CELAC’s agenda and as an institution to fight corruption; 8. Food safety; 9. A dialogue with extra-regional partners; 10. The integration of Latin American and Caribbean infrastructure; 11. Environmental cooperation; 12. To develop and

²⁵ Сулейманов А.В. CELAC... С. 51-52.

²⁶ Oleksenko R., Villasmil Espinoza J., Andriukaitiene R. Regional Integration Projects... P. 267-269.

²⁷ Declaración de VI Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la CELAC. 18 de septiembre de 2021. Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Exteriores (Venezuela). URL: <https://bit.ly/3S2GMuL>

improve CELAC's operations; 13. To improve the situation and condition of women in the member countries; 14. Digital transformation and cooperation; and 15. Culture²⁸.

The 7th Summit, which was held on January 24, 2023, in Buenos Aires (Argentina), was quite productive in terms of decision-making and was marked by the return of Brazil to participation in CELAC.

The Summit adopted a rather comprehensive declaration outlining the situation in the region on a wide range of issues, including post-pandemic economic recovery, food and energy security, health strategy, environmental cooperation, science and technology, digital transformation, infrastructure, and more. A number of future initiatives were approved: a meeting of CELAC economic ministers to consider the economic recovery plan; updating the CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025; and continuing the implementation of the CELAC Plan for Self-Sufficiency in Health Matters to strengthen local and regional capacity for the production and distribution of vaccines, medicines, and essential items.

Regarding international relations, the decision to hold the CELAC-EU summit in 2023, as well as the CELAC-China summit in 2024, was ratified.

11 issues were reflected in separate statements: the issue of the Malvinas Islands; ending the United States' economic, trade, and financial embargo against Cuba; women's empowerment and gender equality; fight against terrorism; fight against the illegal circulation of firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition; declaration on nuclear disarmament; regional energy integration; conservation of oceans and their sustainable use; and others²⁹.

It can be stated that over the 12-year history of the organization, it has managed to overcome a certain crisis that threatened, if not its collapse, then the loss of authority. Even though most of the issues adopted at the seven CELAC meetings were of a declarative nature, the organization nevertheless has had certain successes in establishing relations with world leaders and addressing the region's pressing problems (fighting the pandemic, the problem of hunger, overcoming the economic crisis, environmental protection, etc.).

CELAC AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REGION IN RELATIONS WITH KEY INTERNATIONAL ACTORS (EU, CHINA, AND RUSSIA)

An important function of CELAC in the international space is the positioning of the continent's interests. Within the framework of the organization, the mechanism of the CELAC-EU, CELAC-China, and CELAC-Russia summits was launched.

CELAC-EU. Relations between LAC and the European continent have always had a strategic nature, which was formed based on historical ties between the countries of the New World and their metropolises. In 1999, the EU and LAC countries at the 1st EU-LAC Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) decided to implement a new format of bilateral relations, based on the system of the EU-LAC summits. Thus, the EU-Latin American

²⁸ 22nd Meeting of CELAC Foreign Ministers. Mexico-Argentina Joint Statement. January 07, 2022. *Gobierno de México. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.* URL: <https://bit.ly/48AUE4U>

²⁹ Nota A La Prensa N. 31. VII Cumbre de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC) - Buenos Aires, 24 de enero de 2023. *Ministério das Relações Exteriores.* URL: <https://bit.ly/3TH0WM9>; Declaración De Buenos Aires, 24 de enero de 2023. *Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe (SELA).* URL: <https://bit.ly/48b2geE>

summits became a stimulus for relations, even though their results could have been better because the decisions taken were not always effectively translated into specific goals³⁰.

The Brazilian summit resulted in two documents: the Rio Declaration, which included the commitments of the participants to form an intercontinental political alliance, and the accompanying Priorities for Actions, which contained a list of specific steps aimed at implementing the agreements reached in the field of economic, trade, and cultural cooperation, as well as partnership in environmental issues³¹.

In order to coordinate cooperation between the EU and the LAC, summits were held every two years alternately in Europe and one of the Latin American countries. Summits were aimed at strengthening relations between the EU and Latin America in the fields of politics, culture, education, science, economy, and sustainable development. The process that began in Rio in 1999 was continued at the EU-LAC summits in Madrid (2002), Guadalajara (2004), Vienna (2006), Lima (2008), and Madrid (2010). The content of six EU-LAC summits is presented in the research paper by I.V. Koneva³², and a summary table of meetings held from 1999 to 2018 can be found in the research paper by J.A. Quevedo-Flores³³.

According to the results of Madrid Summit (2010), a Declaration and an Action Plan were adopted, encompassing key trends, one way or another related to the topic of the Summit: 1) science, research, innovation, and technology; 2) development, environment, climate change, biodiversity, and energy; 3) regional integration; 4) migration; 5) education and employment; 6) drug problem. At the Summit, a decision was made to establish an investment fund, the money from which would be directed to modernize infrastructure in Latin American countries³⁴.

The 7th summit, called European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean Summit, which became the first summit in the EU-CELAC format, was held in January 2013 in Santiago (Chile). It resulted in the adoption of the Action Plan, which reflected issues of cooperation in the fields of science, research, innovation, technology, environment, climate change, energy, biotechnology, regional integration, migration, education, employment, gender policies, combating the spread of drugs, investment, and entrepreneurship for sustainable development. The Santiago Declaration, published as a result of the meeting, noted the deepening of the strategic partnership between the EU and LAC (CELAC-EU Dialogue) under the theme: 'Alliance for Sustainable Development: Promoting Investments of Social and Environmental Quality'³⁵.

Thus, the Santiago Summit became the basis for new relations between two subjects of regional integration, namely: the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The Santiago Declaration and its Action Plan

³⁰ Quevedo-Flores J.A. Las Relaciones Unión Europea-América Latina y el Caribe 1999-2019. Veinte Años de Asociación Estratégica Birregional Eurolatinoamericana. *Latin American Journal of International Affairs*. 2019. Vol. 9 № 3 (octubre-diciembre). P. 52.

³¹ Конева И.В. Трансатлантические отношения ЕС – Латинская Америка в конце XX – начале XXI вв. *Научный диалог*. 2013. № 1(13): История. Социология. Экономика. С. 117.

³² Ibid. С. 117-121.

³³ Quevedo-Flores J.A. Las Relaciones Unión Europea-América Latina y el Caribe 1999-2019... P. 53-54.

³⁴ Конева И.В. Трансатлантические отношения ЕС – Латинская Америка... С. 121-122.

³⁵ Михайленко Е.Б., Михайленко В.И. Европейский интеррегионализм в Латинско-Карибской Америке. *Tempus et Memoria*. 2018. № 2/176. Т. 13. С. 11.

2013-2015 became tangible results of the Summit, developing the format proposed in Madrid in 2010³⁶.

On June 10-11, 2015, the 2nd EU-CELAC Summit was held in Brussels under the theme: 'Shaping our common future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens.' Two declarations were adopted: a shorter political declaration: A Partnership for the Next Generation and a second covering the several strands of the relationship was Brussels Declaration. An updated and expanded Action Plan between the two regions was also adopted. The EU-CELAC Action Plan was expanded with the addition of chapters on higher education and citizen security. The EU also discussed proposed lines of action of the EU strategy on citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean.

Debates during the Summit focused on bi-regional and global issues. It was the occasion to underline the importance of the EU-CELAC cooperation and to re-invigorate the relationship in a complex, rapidly changing world.

The Summit called for the establishment of a more regular high-level political dialogue at the foreign affairs ministerial level and for reinforcement of the cooperation on peace and security issues. Given the upcoming international conferences, leaders agreed to step up cooperation on three major global issues: climate change; the post-2015 development agenda; and the fight against drugs.

The Summit was also an opportunity to deepen political dialogue on citizen-oriented initiatives in terms of innovation for sustainable growth, education, security, and climate change³⁷.

On July 17-18, 2023, the 3rd EU-CELAC Summit was held in Brussels. At the Summit, the EU and CELAC leaders committed to renewing their long-standing partnership, based on shared values, interests, and strong economic, social, and cultural ties. The leaders discussed a broad range of issues to bolster the partnership, including enhanced cooperation in multilateral fora; global peace and security; trade and investment; efforts to combat climate change; and justice and security for citizens. At the end of the Summit, they adopted a declaration, which was endorsed by all countries, with one exception due to its disagreement with one paragraph, and agreed to hold summits every two years. The EU-CELAC roadmap for 2023-2025 was also presented at the meeting, and an EU-Caribbean leaders' meeting was held in the margins of the Summit.

The leaders reaffirmed that the basis of the EU-CELAC partnership is a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, inclusive multilateralism, and international cooperation in line with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and international law. In this context, the leaders committed to fighting discrimination and gender-based violence; promoting fundamental labor rights and standards; promoting gender equality; promoting the rights of indigenous people, children, human rights defenders, persons in situations of vulnerability, and people of African descent; and enhance cooperation in multilateral fora and financial institutions. The leaders expressed their profound regret for the untold suffering inflicted on millions of men, women, and children as a result of the transatlantic slave trade.

³⁶ *Quevedo-Flores J.A.* Las Relaciones Unión Europea-América Latina y el Caribe 1999-2019... P. 62.

³⁷ EU-CELAC summit, Brussels, 10-11 June 2015. *The European Council*. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/06/10-11/>

A solid EU-CELAC partnership should have acted as a positive joint force to advance stability and peace worldwide and to address global and regional security challenges. In that regard, the leaders expressed their deep concern over the ongoing war against Ukraine, as well as their support for a just and sustainable peace and the Black Sea Grain Initiative; called for continued efforts to support the process of dialogue in Haiti given the deteriorating public security and humanitarian situation; recalled their support for the peace process and 2016 peace agreement in Colombia; encouraged a constructive dialogue in Venezuelan-led negotiations in Mexico City; recalled their opposition to laws and regulations with extraterritorial effect given the embargo imposed against Cuba.

The leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to protect our planet and fight climate change, pursue efforts to keep the global 1.5°C goal within reach and lead the shift towards a sustainable economy. The Summit recognized the importance of open and fair trade, productive supply chains and access to markets, and their contribution to sustainable development. Cooperation regarding critical raw materials and rare earth metals was noted to be especially important in that respect. Forum members also recognized the potential contribution of the EU-LAC global gateway investment agenda, which will address investment gaps and mobilize funding for areas such as sustainable development, digital transformation, health infrastructures, and energy production. The leaders agreed to consolidate and strengthen their partnership on justice and security, and to combat organized crime in all its forms, as well as corruption and money laundering³⁸.

Special discussions of the Summit participants were caused by the issues of slavery in colonial history and the Russian-Ukrainian war. The participants faced serious difficulties in reaching an agreement to include in the Summit Joint Declaration the issue of the EU-proposed strong condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, while some of the CELAC parties maintained strong relations with Russia and wanted to avoid such a statement. In addition, many CELAC countries wanted to address the issue of paying reparations for slavery, an idea that was resisted by the EU countries. Some representatives argued that not every European country had colonies or participated in the slave trade³⁹.

In the end, the Summit managed to adopt vague wording that did not mention Russia, despite Nicaragua's attempts to block such condemnation. In addition, although the final declaration did not provide for the payment of reparations, it stated that the parties 'deeply regret' the suffering caused by the slave trade⁴⁰. Overall, the Summit was highly praised by politicians and experts from both sides.

Thus, it can be stated that the European Union performs a consistent, needs-oriented programmatic policy in Latin America, and exports European values and institutions to the LAC region. On the other hand, the European policy in LAC is inferior to the confident and aggressive actions of its competitors – China and the USA. Moreover, the European Union needs to move more actively from declarative statements to practical actions, as both EU countries and CELAC are interested in this.

³⁸ EU-CELAC summit, 17-18 July 2023. *The European Council*. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/07/17-18/>

³⁹ EU-Latin America summit gets off to rocky start. *DW*. 2023. June 17. URL: <https://bit.ly/48keDFj>

⁴⁰ *Marczak J., Fleck J.* An eight-year diplomatic lull is over. So what did EU and Latin American and Caribbean leaders achieve? *Atlantic Council*. 2023. July 19. URL: <https://bit.ly/47mjtAw>

CELAC-China. Since the end of the 20th century, China began operating more actively in the LAC region. As a result, in 2010, China increased its economic presence in the region over 10 times, increasing exports with most Latin American countries from 339 to 7.700 million dollars, and imports from 794 to 3.654 million dollars. As of 2015, China was the second largest investor in Latin America, second only to the United States, and had provided loans to Latin America worth about 120 billion dollars, which significantly undermined the US position⁴¹.

In 2014, the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, during the 6th BRICS summit, had a meeting with representatives of 11 countries CELAC members. At that meeting, he announced new prospects for China's relations with Latin America in the context of the fact that the China for Latin America program, which was adopted in 2005 and envisaging 40 billion dollars of investments in the economies of Latin American countries by 2015 had been almost implemented. He announced the intention to invest an additional 35 billion dollars in the economies of the countries of the region, having established three types of funds: the first was 20 billion dollars intended for financing infrastructure projects; the second was 10 billion dollars, and it was a credit line for financing development projects; the third was 5 billion dollars for specific projects in the areas to be determined by China. The only condition for implementing the new program set by the Chinese leader was the establishment of a permanent China-CELAC forum.

The first such forum was held in Beijing on January 8-9, 2015, where numerous bilateral trade and investment agreements were signed. The members of the summit also adopted the Beijing Declaration, which outlined the general principles of cooperation based on mutual trust and peaceful development, a strategy of openness and mutual benefit in economic cooperation ('win-win')⁴². In particular, the Declaration stated that "China and Latin American and Caribbean countries, as developing countries and emerging economies, are important forces for the attainment of world peace and prosperity as well as for the promotion of multilateralism and a multipolar world, and greater democracy in international relations. The sides are ready to intensify dialogue and collaboration on regional and global affairs of mutual interest, enhance their collaboration on major global issues, strengthen the voice of developing countries in decision-making bodies of multilateral institutions, and continue to make positive contributions to peace, stability, development, and prosperity"⁴³.

The 'Plan of Cooperation between China and the Latin American and Caribbean Countries (2015-2019)' was also adopted, and clearly stated China's intentions to increase trade volumes to 500 billion dollars by 2025 and to raise the level of investments in the region to 250 billion dollars for the next ten years, directing them to the development of infrastructure and technological potential⁴⁴. Also, the 'Institutional Arrangements and Operating Rules of the CELAC-China Forum' were adopted in order to build the framework for dialogue and cooperation.

⁴¹ Иванова А.В. Политика КНР в Латинской Америке. *Актуальные проблемы современных международных отношений*. 2016. № 8. С. 42.

⁴² Борзова А.Ю., Торкунова Ю.А., Агаев Ю.И. Китай – CELAC... С. 33-34.

⁴³ Beijing Declaration. 2015-01-23. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China. China-CELAC Forum*. URL: http://www.chinacelacforum.org/eng/zywj_3/201501/t20150123_6475938.htm

⁴⁴ Гаврилова Н.В., Константинова Ю.В. Латиноамериканський вектор зовнішньої політики Китаю: цілі, завдання, механізми реалізації. *Вісник Маріупольського державного університету. Сер.: Історія. Політологія*. 2017. Вип. 19. С. 98; Иванова А.В. Политика КНР в Латинской Америке... С. 43.

Even though the main focus of China's relations with the states of Latin America and the Caribbean is on the economy, active cooperation in the field of armaments is also developing. Beijing is a direct participant in the defense program of Latin American countries, which is also viewed with caution by various experts and politicians.

The success of Beijing's policy in LAC is evidenced by such a global Chinese project as the construction of the Nicaragua Canal, which was scheduled to open at the end of 2016. The Canal was designed to be an alternative to the American world transport system with the Panama Canal. Washington was seriously concerned about those plans and, in the fight against the influence of the PRC, had launched an information war in the region, turning the Latin American public against Chinese projects⁴⁵.

After the First China-CELAC Forum (2015), the exchange between political parties, local governments, and youth organizations of China and LAC intensified. At the Forum, China announced the provision of 6.000 scholarships for students and 6.000 trainee positions for Latin America over the next five years⁴⁶.

On January 22, 2018, the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum was held in Santiago (Chile). At the Meeting, the 'China-CELAC Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Key Areas for 2019-2021' was adopted. In the document, the strengthening of cooperation in the international arena and within the framework of international organizations, the strengthening of political ties, and ties in the field of security were classified as priority areas. However, the largest block in the document was devoted to economic ties, including cooperation in infrastructure construction, trade and investment, agriculture, industry, extraction of natural resources, as well as education and tourism⁴⁷.

The Meeting made a special announcement on the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). CELAC members unanimously said the vision to enhance infrastructure, trade, and people-to-people ties worldwide has provided their countries with ample development opportunities and hoped to join it to achieve common development with China. Both sides agreed that the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative will inject new energy into the China-CELAC comprehensive cooperative partnership and open up new prospects⁴⁸. Thus, the BRI was a topical question at the 2018 China-CELAC Forum, as a result of which the Plan for 2019-2021 was adopted.

During his speech at the Forum, Foreign Minister Wang Yi generally highlighted five points of cooperation between the parties within the framework of the BRI: the construction of infrastructure connecting 'land and oceans'; the launch of an open market, which makes it possible to export Latin American products; the development of competitive sectors of the economy of LCA countries through the transfer of Chinese technologies; the development of innovations through the spread of the Digital Silk Road to the states of the region; and exchange of experience in various fields⁴⁹.

According to E. Katkova and A. Eremin, it is noteworthy that the 'Belt and Road Initiative' was practically not mentioned in the Cooperation Plans for the PRC and CELAC (in the first Plan of 2015, it was not mentioned at all, and in the second was

⁴⁵ Иванова А.В. Политика КНР в Латинской Америке... С. 45.

⁴⁶ Борзова А.Ю., Торкунова Ю.А., Агаев Ю.И. Китай – CELAC... С. 43.

⁴⁷ Каткова Е.Ю., Еремин А.А. Отношения КНР с регионом Латинской Америки... С. 169.

⁴⁸ Xiang Bo. 2nd ministerial meeting of China-CELAC Forum opens up new cooperation areas. *Xinhuanet*. 2018, January 23. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/23/c_136918217.htm

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

mentioned once in the preamble in the context that the parties “take into account the opportunities offered by the BRI initiative”), although already at the time of the adoption of the second Plan, more and more Latin American and Caribbean countries expressed interest in the Chinese project⁵⁰.

On December 3, 2021, the Third Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum was held under the theme ‘Together Overcoming Current Difficulties and Creating Opportunities to continue building a China-Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Community.’ The participants adopted the Declaration of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the CELAC-China Forum and the CELAC-China Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Key Areas (2022-2024), based on the principles of solidarity, friendship, and shared development. The Declaration and Joint Action Plan focused on key areas for CELAC and China, such as cooperation in agriculture, trade and investment, culture, health, and education, among others⁵¹.

According to A. Borzova, Yu. Torkunova, and Yu. Agaev, China is actively implementing the concept of increasing cooperation with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, developed at the first CELAC-China Forum, which has a great impact on strengthening cooperation along the ‘South-South’ line. The decrease in the involvement of the United States, which has focused on global issues and the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership project, in the affairs of Latin American states, as well as the US-China trade war, allow to suggest that China’s political, economic, and financial influence on LAC will increase. By providing loans, increasing investments, and strengthening trade ties, China provides support to its companies, which allows it to solve the problem of excessive capacity in the country and facilitates the implementation of structural changes to LAC. Chinese investments in key sectors of the economy, especially within the framework of the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’, are stimulating the development of Latin American countries, which need to develop infrastructure and acquire access to advanced technologies⁵².

CELAC-Russia. On September 27, 2013, at the 3rd CELAC Foreign Ministers Meeting, the Russian Federation’s proposal to establish a CELAC-Russia Mechanism (Permanent Mechanism of Political Dialogue and Cooperation) was approved. On September 29, 2015, within the framework of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CELAC and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation met in New York and initiated the establishment of a Permanent Mechanism for Political Dialogue and Cooperation between Russia and CELAC. The purpose of such a dialogue was “to strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest and to boost political dialogue and mutually beneficial relations, including the establishment of a permanent mechanism in the interests of the consistent development of the Sides”⁵³. A permanent mechanism of political dialogue and cooperation, called the ‘Russia-CELAC Mechanism’, was put into effect.

‘Russia-CELAC Mechanism’ was supposed to promote political dialogue, trade

⁵⁰ Каткова Е.Ю., Еремин А.А. Отношения КНР с регионом Латинской Америки... С. 173.

⁵¹ Mexico chairs the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Celac-China Forum Press Release 563. December 03, 2021. *Gobierno de México. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.* URL: <https://bit.ly/47gKx49>; Declaration of the Third Ministers’ Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum. 2021-12-09. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People’s Republic of China. China-CELAC Forum.* URL: <https://bit.ly/47lkbxS>

⁵² Борзова А.Ю., Торкунова Ю.А., Агаев Ю.И. Китай – CELAC... С. 43.

⁵³ Joint Declaration of the CELAC-Russian Federation. 2015, September 29. *Gobierno de la República del Ecuador.* URL: <https://bit.ly/47fInS9>

growth and diversification, creation of cooperation programs, and exchange of successful experiences in fields of mutual interest, such as science, technology, and education, which contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequality, as well as the sustainable development of both regions, expansion of multilateral cooperation to support the efforts of the most vulnerable countries of the region, etc⁵⁴.

Despite the attempt to intensify economic cooperation with CELAC countries, the Russian Federation has not managed to improve its position in the region. In 2001, the position of the RF in total exports and imports of Latin America was 0.6% and 1.6%, and in 2019 – 0.5% and 0.7% despite the significant growth of foreign trade of these countries. During that period, the PRC increased its trade volume by 20 times. Russian investments are also insignificant. The main problem is the lack of incentives to expand the contractual base, to create new negotiating platforms for the development of economic cooperation⁵⁵.

At the same time, it is necessary to note a rather successful educational dialogue within the framework of which the Russia-CELAC Youth Forum is held. To date, five meetings have already been held (the last one took place on December 6, 2022, in Moscow). The Forum unites students from the Russian Federation and the Caribbean states, who discuss the problems of political, social, and economic development of the Russian Federation and the Caribbean states and determine the prospects for economic cooperation and partnership⁵⁶.

During 2022-2023, the Russian Federation was trying to establish a dialogue in the Russia-CELAC format. On January 30, 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation stated that “Russia is interested in activating the mechanism of the Russia-CELAC political dialogue and developing mutually beneficial forms of cooperation” and confirmed its interest in “cooperation in all areas, including trade and economic, scientific and technological, educational, humanitarian”⁵⁷. However, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are in no hurry to return to intensifying cooperation with the Russian Federation, both for political and economic reasons, probably not wanting to deteriorate relations with key partners – the USA and the EU.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, we can state that CELAC continues to be an important factor in international relations, especially in the context of Latin American and Caribbean countries' desire to strengthen their cooperation and coordination.

CELAC is not a replacement for the cooperation and integration groups that have been set up around three distinct visions: the desire to actively open up to the world (Mexico, the South American countries of the Pacific Basin, and, to some extent, the Central American countries); the desire for a limited opening, subject to negotiations that seek first of all to bring about a very significant transformation in the international trading system (Mercosur); and the search for the special situation of small states to be

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Borzova A.Yu., Eremin A.A., Ivkina N.V., Petrovich-Belkin O.K. Russia — Latin America Economic Cooperation: Insights from EU — CELAC Sustainable Development Concept. *Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения*. 2021. Т. 21. № 4. С. 786.

⁵⁶ V Молодежный форум Россия — СЕЛАК. 6 декабря 2022 г. МГИМО-университет. URL: <https://mgimo.ru/about/news/social/v-forum-rossiya-selak/>

⁵⁷ МИД: Россия заинтересована в диалоге со странами объединения СЕЛАК. 30.01.2023. РИА НОВОСТИ. URL: <https://ria.ru/20230130/selak-1848517256.html>

recognized (CARICOM). The desire for CELAC to be an alternative body – especially to the OAS – does not enjoy regional consensus and it would be difficult to achieve with the resources this body currently has at its disposal.

The establishment of CELAC was one of the vivid manifestations of the ‘left turn’ with its state-nationalist bias and emphasized interest in solving pressing social problems in domestic politics by the state from the top-down and ensuring its independence from global actors, primarily the United States. Those were also attempting some kind of ‘protection’ from the globalization processes and the neoliberal leveling of the state’s role in public life. However, the economic progress of Latin American countries was largely driven by the rapid economic growth of a new global player, China, which on an increasing scale was buying raw materials and selling inexpensive goods in the region. China has gradually become a major trading partner for numerous countries, and eventually an investor⁵⁸.

Although in general, CELAC’s activities were ineffective (most of the region’s problems had not been solved, including poverty, corruption, crime, etc.), there were examples of successful implementation of its decisions in 2013-2018. It is necessary to mention CELAC’s mediation mission in resolving the diplomatic and humanitarian crisis between Colombia and Venezuela, active efforts to resolve the economic blockade of Cuba, peacekeeping activities in Colombia, and the development of external relations with the European Union, etc.

The low degree of effectiveness of this structure is due to the heterogeneity of the strategic interests of its members, different visions of models and principles of implementation of integration processes, as well as a high degree of differences in the social, economic, and cultural plan of development of member states, and the mentality of their population. The weakness of CELAC is its extremely loose institutionalization, whereby the taken decisions are simply not implemented at the national level⁵⁹.

Thus, CELAC was unable to solve the key problems of Latin American integration and overcome the fragmentation of Latin American regionalism. At the same time, although the organization went through a crisis during the studied period, it has not completely lost its potential. Attempts to develop a multilateral approach for solving acute regional problems based on CELAC may be evidence of another step towards Latin American integration and the readiness of the countries of the region to intensify their influence on international processes.

In recent years, we have observed the intensification of CELAC’s international activities, which is aimed, first of all, at establishing mutually beneficial and partnership relations with the key actors of world politics and economy – the EU, the USA, and China. But Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine, its desire for self-isolation, the sanctions of the Western world, and the condemnation of aggression by the UN – all this pushes the Caribbean countries away from Russia, although it does not completely negate their cooperation.

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⁵⁸ *Космина В.* Латинська Америка після «лівого повороту»... С. 55-56.

⁵⁹ *Гаврилова Н.В.* (ред.). Зовнішня політика країн Латинської Америки: навчальний посібник. Маріуполь: МДУ, 2020. С. 38.

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