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DOI <https://doi.org/10.32842/2078-3736/2024.4.47>**THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW:
ANALYSIS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF A SMALL STATE**

A characteristic feature of the evolution of international relations and international law at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries is the growing importance of small states in the international dimension. The decline in the ability of big powers to effectively resolve external conflicts, on the one hand, and, on the other, the ability of small states to look for new ideas of international cooperation, create the preconditions for a further increase in the role of small states in international relations. The Republic of Cyprus is a vivid example of a small state, although at the same time it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean. The experience of this small state in the implementation of foreign policy, as well as European integration, is an atypical precedent from the point of view of the norms of international law, as well as an important example of successful construction of foreign policy and active participation in international relations, despite acute internal crises. The Republic of Cyprus, despite the unresolved territorial problems, is actively developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other subjects of international law.

The geostrategic position of the island led to the Cyprus problem. The Republic of Cyprus is divided between two ethnic groups – Greeks and Turks. The Cyprus conflict is a frozen issue for Greece and Turkey. The Republic of Cyprus is the only divided member of the European Union. Despite all internal problems, this small state was actually able to become one of the developed countries that confidently joined the EU. Research and analysis of the experience of the Republic of Cyprus as a small state in building a successful foreign policy is quite relevant and important.

Being a small state in the world means always fighting for your survival on the international stage or being an example of successful domestic and foreign policy for other countries. It cannot be denied that small states very often face various development problems. Due to their small territory, small population and other factors, these states are especially vulnerable to the protection of their territory, economic crises, natural disasters and impacts on international relations. International relations are usually presented in the form of an international dialogue between large states, in which small states are given a rather modest place. Great powers consider other great powers first and foremost and usually ignore the interests of small states.

Key words: *international law, foreign policy, international relations, strategy.*

Каспрук О. С. Республіка Кіпр та міжнародне право: аналіз зовнішньополітичної стратегії малої держави

Характерною рисою еволюції міжнародних відносин і міжнародного права наприкінці ХХ – початку ХХІ століть є зростання значення малих держав у міжнародному вимірі. Зменшення здатності великих держав ефективно вирішувати зовнішні конфлікти, з одного боку, і, з іншого, здатність малих держав шукати нові ідеї міжнародного співробітництва створюють передумови



для подальшого зростання ролі малих держав у міжнародних відносинах. Республіка Кіпр є яскравим прикладом невеликої держави, хоча в той же час це третій за величиною острів у Середземному морі. Досвід цієї невеликої держави у здійсненні зовнішньої політики, а також євроінтеграції є нетиповим прецедентом з точки зору норм міжнародного права, а також вагомим прикладом успішної побудови зовнішньої політики та активної участі у міжнародних відносинах, незважаючи на гострі внутрішні кризи. Республіка Кіпр, незважаючи на невирішеність територіальних проблем, активно розвиває двостороннє і багатостороннє співробітництво з іншими суб'єктами міжнародного права.

Геостратегічне положення острова призвело до кіпрської проблеми. Республіка Кіпр поділена між двома етнічними групами. Кіпрський конфлікт є замороженим питанням для Греції та Туреччини. Республіка Кіпр є єдиним розділеним членом Європейського Союзу. Незважаючи на всі внутрішні проблеми, ця маленька держава фактично змогла стати однією з розвинутих країн, які впевнено приєдналися до ЄС. Дослідження та аналіз досвіду Республіки Кіпр як малої держави щодо побудови успішної зовнішньої політики є досить актуальним і важливим.

Бути маленькою державою у світі означає завжди боротися за своє виживання на міжнародній арені або бути прикладом успішної внутрішньої та зовнішньої політики для інших країн. Не можна заперечувати, що малі держави дуже часто стикаються з різними проблемами розвитку. Через невелику територію, невелику чисельність населення та інші фактори ці держави є особливо вразливими до захисту своєї території, економічних криз, стихійних лих і впливу на міжнародні відносини. Міжнародні відносини зазвичай представляють у вигляді міжнародного діалогу між великими державами, в якому малим державам відводиться досить скромне місце. Великі держави в першу чергу дивляться на інші великі держави і зазвичай ігнорують інтереси малих держав.

Ключові слова: міжнародне право, зовнішня політика, міжнародні відносини, стратегія.

Introduction. Today there are many arguments for the benefits of being a small state and for the negative consequences that small states face. It is very important to consider different scientific views on this issue, as well as to determine which states can be considered small. Famous scientists M. Crandall and M.-L. Sulg in the scientific article "Small states 'thinking big' in a multiplex world: Estonia's foreign policy" note that "One's understanding of small state foreign policy is often influenced by the conceptual assumptions of the world order" [1, p. 398].

Analyzing the literature on international relations devoted to the phenomenon of small states, it was discovered that there is a problem in defining a small state. At this stage, there is no universal definition of the concept of "small state". Scientists tend to emphasize the difficulty of defining the concept of "small state". In modern scientific literature, a strict system of criteria has not been developed that makes it possible to clearly separate countries into large or small and medium. When determining the size of a state, some scientists take into account such quantitative indicators of the country's "weight" as the size of its territory, population, foreign trade and other similar criteria [2, p. 44]. B. Thorhallsson emphasizes that «population size is the most common single variable in defining the size of states» [3, p. 18]. Some scientists divide states by population into small, medium and large countries. At the same time, there are other approaches to defining the concept of "small state" [4, 5]. The United Nations, when defining a small state, relies on the size of the state's territory. Many scientists use a qualitative approach when determining the size of the state. The main characteristic of a small country, if we take this approach into account, is the natural need to adapt to the existing security environment and the inability to independently shape this environment [6, p. 8-9].



In the age of globalization and internationalization of international relations, a small state gains in the world system some new properties [7]. The following facts are obvious:

- currently many wealthy states of the world are small states;
- the representation of small states on the world stage is much more a sign of the health of international legal relations as a whole;
- small states have no claims to world hegemony, which means they enjoy greater trust from the world community than large states.

The small size of the territory does not mean that small states do not have their own foreign policies and are historically doomed to always be in the shadow of large states. Despite being a small state, the Republic of Cyprus today is an example of successful international economic integration. The state owes this primarily to its consistency and clear foreign policy. An important date in the history of Cyprus is August 16, 1960, the date when it became an independent Republic. However, subsequent events 14 years later stained the subsequent history of the Republic of Cyprus with blood. As a result of Turkey's invasion in July 1974, in complete violation of the UN Charter and basic principles of international law, parts of the island remain forcibly divided. Today the "Cyprus issue" remains unresolved. As a result, this small state continues to be forcibly divided and occupied. Turkey's actions have been unanimously condemned at the regional and international levels.

In general, the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus has been successful, especially since 2004, the year of its accession to the European Union. However, we should not forget about the unsuccessful steps of the foreign policy of this small state, namely the failed plan, which aimed to solve the ten-year-old Cyprus problem. The Cyprus Reunification Plan was a UN proposal to resolve the Cyprus dispute, and great hopes were placed on it. The proposal was to unify Cyprus and overcome its split into two parts. The plan was revised several times before being presented to the people of Cyprus in a referendum in 2004. However, there were many comments on this plan, as it did not contain specific actions that would satisfy both parties. Subsequent negotiations on the unification of Cyprus, which took place in 2017 and 2021 (informal negotiations), also did not bring a positive result. Among the positive steps of the small country of Cyprus, it is necessary to note the desire to resume dialogue about its unification. Although negotiations under the auspices of the UN are not yet planned, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Christodoulides, has said that he wants to resume dialogue in order to finally end the crisis and reunite the country.

Task. The purpose of the article is an international legal analysis of the foreign policy strategy of Cyprus.

Research results. The Agreements of 1959 are documents to which special attention should be paid when analyzing the history of Cyprus, as they are very important in the history of the Republic of Cyprus [8]. The Basic Law of Cyprus was developed on their basis. It is also very important to pay attention to the historical date of August 16, 1960, when the Republic of Cyprus was declared an independent state in the conditions of a complex confrontation between the internal population, as well as in the conditions of "persecution of the country" by external neighbors who wanted to establish their own order on the island. In 1974, negative events took place in this small country, namely a military coup, which changed the vector of the island's existence and development. At the end of the 20th century, the single island of Cyprus was divided and began to exist like an unrecognized part of Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus. The "Turkish part" of Cyprus is not recognized by the international community [9]. What it means? This entity is recognized only by Turkey, which actually initiated its creation. The unrecognized part of Cyprus, in fact, is located inside the recognized state of Cyprus and exists in the conditions of a frozen conflict.

A clear example of the correct foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus is the military pact with Greece (1994), according to which the latter undertook to defend it in case of external aggression. The European Union is the most successful integration association in the world, that is why the Republic of Cyprus saw its future only in the EU. The accession of Cyprus to the EU did not happen instantly. The procedure for joining the EU is quite a long and exhausting process, both for the candidate country and for the EU as a whole. On May 1, 2004, the Republic of Cyprus became a



full member of the EU. Accession to the EU was the foreign policy of Cyprus, dictated by its internal values. Accession to the EU marked the beginning of an era of new challenges, opportunities and responsibilities for Cyprus. The accession of this small country to the EU became a significant incentive for the growth of trade, the continuation of internal reforms, and reaching a qualitatively different level in international relations, its acceptance into the association of free, economically developed states. The joint article by Kostiantyn Stepanou and Charalambos Tsardanidis "The EU factor in the Greece-Turkey-Cyprus triangle" reveals the impact of Greece's EU membership on the latter's relations with Turkey, as well as the impact of the European Union on Greece [10, 11].

Thus, it can be concluded that Turkey's active blocking of the European integration course of the Republic of Cyprus did not achieve its goal. Although the small Republic of Cyprus was split in two parts when it joined the EU in May 2004, its clear foreign policy helped it become a full member of the EU. Having received great benefits from joining the EU, Cyprus, as a member of this association of states, in turn, has a lot to offer. Water, land and air international transport corridors pass through the island, so its importance as a regional business center, as well as an international communication and transport center is growing significantly. Thanks to its modern infrastructure and efficient legal system, Cyprus is an extremely convenient regional operating base for European companies.

The processes of globalization and rapprochement of peoples and states, which unfolded most intensively since the 20th century, are affected by the rapid growth of the relations of the Republic of Cyprus with other countries and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, having an inevitable impact on the state and dynamics of shifts in its internal life. It is very important to analyze the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus and find out whether it, being a small state, is using a successful strategy of seeking the status of a small state, as well as what are the shortcomings in the foreign strategy of this small state. First of all, it is necessary to focus on the fact that Cyprus participates in international organizations at the international (United Nations) and regional levels (European Union, Council of Europe) [12, p. 287]. The Republic of Cyprus is a member of many international intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

At the same time, there are a number of unsolved problems that this small state faces. The Republic of Cyprus is currently the only European Union state that does not have NATO membership and does not participate in many security initiatives. This is a real problem for such a small state as Cyprus. This country was not accepted into NATO, since part of its territory is occupied, and no one in the bloc wants to start new wars. Joining NATO would help unite the country and guarantee protection. An example for Cyprus should be the European integration success of Finland, although the situations in these small states were initially different. The Finns have always been able to find "historical windows. *The ability to find historical windows of opportunity is an art that small countries must master to be successful in the foreign policy arena.*

A constituent and integral part of the state's political activity is foreign policy, designed to regulate relations between states and peoples in the international arena. The foreign policy course of any state is a continuation of its internal policy and reflects the nature of the state and social system. The main goal and main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus are to ensure favorable conditions for internal development, the achievement of general security, the development of strong friendly, good-neighborly relations and multilateral cooperation, participation in the solution of global problems of today, and promotion of the strengthening and progress of the world community.

The Republic of Cyprus is undertaking a number of international initiatives to improve its status, despite its limited capabilities and political influence – compared to other states. The Republic of Cyprus acts in the international arena as a small state that strives to adhere to the principles and norms of international law. In its international activities, Cyprus relies on contractual and institutional cooperation mechanisms. The contractual cooperation mechanism of this state includes a system of international treaties (multilateral and bilateral) that regulate the relations of Cyprus with other states on various issues. The institutional mechanism includes international organizations. As a subject of international law, it actively cooperates with other states and international



organizations. The participation of the Republic of Cyprus in international organizations is a component of the state's foreign policy. Participation in the activities of these organizations provides opportunities for interaction with almost all states of the world within the framework of multilateral diplomacy. The Republic of Cyprus has become a party to most international and regional treaties.

An important strategy to help the small state of Cyprus overcome the illusory challenges it faces due to its size:

– An important strategy for overcoming the difficulties faced by the small state of Cyprus can be the expansion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other states and international organizations. It is important to expand cooperation in two directions: regional at the level of small states and global at the level of large states and international organizations.

– In the context of globalization of the world today, migration processes are an integral part of the life of any highly developed state. At the same time, small states began to feel the negative consequences of migration. The Republic of Cyprus today is faced with the negative consequences of uncontrolled migration. Cyprus migration policy should include itself a set of rules and measures that are aimed at regulating public and civil relations in the field of movement of persons.

– The Republic of Cyprus needs to find ways to become a member of NATO. Against the backdrop of a large-scale erosion of the foundations of strategic stability, interaction between small countries in order to maintain peace and prevent conflicts is of particular importance for regional and international security.

– International trade is of great importance to the Cyprus economy. Cyprus must develop international trade. The lack of raw materials, energy resources and heavy industrial capacity for the production of capital goods necessitates the import of such products.

– Cyprus needs to pay attention to the development of such an area as cultural diplomacy. Cyprus should also seek external support for the conservation of cultural and religious monuments of Cyprus, especially in the uncontrolled part of Cyprus.

– The Government of the Republic of Cyprus must continue to seek a solution to the Cyprus problem.

– The ability to find historical windows of opportunity is an art that the Republic of Cyprus must master to be successful in the foreign policy arena.

Conclusions. The Republic of Cyprus, although it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, is a small state. It also occupies an important place in the history of the eastern Mediterranean despite the fact that it is a small state. The Republic of Cyprus attaches the utmost importance to foreign policy and international law. Cyprus is a member of the EU but not NATO, although Greece is a member of both alliances. The Republic of Cyprus must continue to search for ways to resolve the Cyprus problem. The settlement must enable Cyprus to function effectively within the EU and must ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots, as well as peace, prosperity and a secure future for all legitimate citizens of Cyprus.

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