
The Changing Geopolitical Position of the Central Eastern European Region within the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract

The Belt and Road initiative, launched by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China in 2013, is a grand scale vision to redefine China's network in Asia, Europe and Africa. The initiative's two main components, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk would establish a large economic belt encompassing more than 60 countries. This would connect new and existing networks of roads, railways, oil and gas pipelines as well as optical networks, adding cooperating industrial parks, logistical centres and seaports, rearranging the traditional relationships between the production centres, markets and sources of raw materials of this vast region. On top of infrastructure, the programme is completed by commercial, investment and financial collaborations. In addition to the economic aspect – cooperation in the fields of culture, research and development, and education, providing scholarship and exchange scheme for students, experts, researchers, supporting tourism, etc. Via these hard and soft network China's plans will generate new geographical reality within this huge economic belt, what none of the regions and countries would be able to ignore. The present paper is examining the possible effects of the One Belt, One Road initiative on the Central Eastern European countries, which prospectively seriously changes the future geopolitical position of the region.

Keywords: OBOR, China, Central Eastern Europe, geopolitics, Silk Road, network

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