

International Trade as a Factor of Competitiveness: Comparison of Lithuanian and Bulgarian Cases

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The globalization and integration processes significantly changed the business environment of the nation business entities. Because of the greater possibilities for access to new markets, resources and technologies business is now facing various challenges. One of the greatest challenges is the growing competition, which has already gone beyond the nation boundaries and lost its nation character. Under globalization the response to this challenge depends both on the qualities of the organization and (to a very large extent) on the macro-economic efforts resulting from the state policy. In other words, the prosperity of every country depends on the performance of the domestic business entities and the success of the business entities depends on the regulations, policies and activities of the country. Newspapers, books, TV reports, government information or international organizations prepare comparisons of competitiveness, spread of participating in surveys countries, informs about the competitive struggle between countries for a bigger market of their products. For example, annual World Competitiveness Yearbook writes about most successful, i. e. competitive, 49 world countries, using 286 criteria. Countries can be characterized by different level of competitiveness in the global market: the countries with growing competitiveness (like Japan); leading countries, capable to maintain their high positions in the global market (like USA); countries which have lose their high competitiveness positions (as the United Kingdom); and countries with low level of competitiveness (as less developed countries).

Countries compete in enlarging their international trade and getting bigger incomes, to attract productive investment and to build their nation production and increase their international competitive position and the main thing – to expand payment balance. Nowadays countries compete as direct competitors for international markets. Authorities in all countries continually work with the problems of international trade. They make decisions; create trade policies to achieve eligible results. Some authors understand nation competitiveness as firm's competition, but others think differently.

Keywords: *international trade, competitiveness, revealed comparative advantage.*

Introduction

Nation competitiveness depends on the competitiveness of firms and economic sectors and the latter depend on the nation competitiveness. Firms specialize in producing certain goods. This allows them to gain economies of scale and to exploit their entrepreneurial and management skills. It also allows benefiting from their particular location and from the ownership of particular assets.

Countries specialize, too. Then they produce more than the population of a certain country needs particular goods. Countries have different endowments of factors of production. They differ in population density, labour skills, climate, raw materials, capital equipment, etc. These differences tend to persist because factors are relatively immobile. Land and climate are totally immobile. Labour and capital have more restrictions on their international movement than their movement within countries. Thus the ability to supply goods differs between countries.

The economies of European Union (EU) must boost trade and compete in the international level of markets if they seek economic development. All these countries face the necessity to strengthen the capacity of international trade and integration into the EU economy. Integration in the world economy has three aspects: regional, that involves economic relations between small countries of Baltic region; European, which involves relations with the European Union; global aspect, which involves Baltic region countries trade relations with the rest of the world. Integration to the EU is a major factor of Lithuania's and Bulgaria's economic and international trade development.

The accession of Lithuania to the EU among other nine (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) countries in May 2004 is a very important act for international recognition of Lithuania and its future development, including trade. Trade in micro, macro, regional levels during time perspective cause economic development, and is very important for each country or a group of countries. Bulgaria signed The Treaty of Accession to EU-25 in April 2005 with the objective of welcoming as a Member State in January 2007. Lithuanian international trade changes during the last ten year and shows one of the ways for economic development for other countries, seeking membership in the EU. In this aspect Lithuanian and Bulgar-

ian international trade changes are important to compare and to make conclusions.

The Problem. For the last few years the term competitiveness has become popular nationwide. However there is no common definition of this term. Some researchers support the thesis that the nations, similarly to the companies, compete on the international markets (Reijan, Hinrikus, Ivanov, 2000; Judanov, 1998). According to this theory, any nation that does not keep abreast with the rest of the world with respect to its productivity or technologies would face an economic crisis like a company, which is unable to maintain lower or similar level of expenditure than its competitors or it lags behind them technologically. Others (Camagni, 2002) believe that the term nation competitiveness is being misused because the countries cannot compete the way companies do. However, every country is interested in creating favorable conditions to attract foreign investments, which may improve the welfare of its population and create better business environment in order to make their nation companies and products more competitive both on their domestic markets and internationally.

According to M. Porter, the international trade is a means for improving nation performance. It eliminates the need for the country to produce itself all goods and services it needs and enables it to specialize in industries and segments in which its companies are comparatively more productive. We may say that foreign trade is one of the factors influencing significantly the competitiveness of the economy. At the same time the volume and structure of the foreign trade are indicative for the ability of the economy to sell its commodities. This is why the evaluation of the foreign trade of a country allows us to assess its competitiveness.

Research object: international trade competitiveness in nation level.

Research objective: to analyze international trade as one of the determinants of the possibility of nation competitiveness on the basis of revealed comparative advantage.

Research tasks: on the basis of concept analysis nation competitiveness; Lithuania international trade specialization and revealed comparative advantage as a new member of EU and Bulgaria as the acceding to EU country.

Research methods applied – the comparative analysis of the international trade development is based on the synthesis of official publications of the European Community, scientific literature, the systematic statistical data analyses.

International trade and nation competitiveness

The openness to international trade accelerates economic development and is a result of European countries integration into EU. The more rapid economic growth may be stipulated by transition effect, but it is evident, that such processes take a couple of decades or more time, so it is possible to talk about international trade importance and its structure impact on economic development (Dollar, Kraay, 2001). The experience of global-

ization shows that openness to international trade has contribution to narrowing the gap between rich and poor countries, as the globalizes have grown faster than rich countries as a group.

Traditional international trade theory states that countries specialize in producing those items in which they have a comparative advantage. Comparative advantage means a situation where a country has a lower opportunity cost or greatest productivity advantage compared to other nations producing a certain commodity. This means that the structure of international trade depends on the level of country economic development. The reasons for differences in comparative advantage Swedish economists Eli Heckscher and Bertil Ohlin analyzed in so called Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) theory, which predicts that country should specialize in those goods that are intensive in the country's abundant factor. This theory explains that international trade leads to higher demand of the goods abroad and to factor price equalization. The effect of factor price equalization is caused by the demand of export growth, which increases the demand for the cheap factors and stipulates the growth of price of these factors. The supply-oriented H-O theory is more adequate to examine international trade in primary products. Wolfgang Stolper and Pol Samuelson using H-O theory showed, that trade increases the real income of the owners of the abundant factor of production and decreases the real income of the owners of the scarce factor in the separate country. Such approach is named as Stolper-Samuelson Theorem and says that with free trade some groups in the country lose and some gain. Unsuccessful groups of society may lobby their country government for protection policy in international trade sphere to protect from foreign competitors.

Another explanation is used for manufactured goods, which is created by the other Swedish economist – Stefan Linder who proposed to demand oriented theory, which recognized that customer's tastes as strongly determined by income level. Due to this special country, income per capita level shows the amount of goods they will demand and international trade in produced goods will be higher among the countries with similar levels of per capita income. Real gross national product per capita (GNP) is used as the main indicator of economic development of the country. It has some main advantages: it takes into account all goods and services produced in the country, and converts into a single measure; the rules for the measurement of GNP are universally agreed; virtually all countries compile GNP statistics.

Alternative models, called as new trade theory, states that anti-free trade policies can be used to transform comparative advantage. In such case, government policy (import protection, export subsidies or their combinations) can become the country's comparative advantage and impact further industry and the whole economy development. The government actions are the instrument of strategic trade policy, using which it is possible to change the direction of industry development and compete with foreign competitors. Competitiveness – productivity compared to other nations. Competitiveness is a constant battle for the market share (Thurow, 1992; Krugman, 2000). L. Thurow conception put basis for annual report

of the World Economic Forum, which ranked nations by their competitiveness.

Michael Porter argues that nations compete and their competitive advantages are fundamentally created through localized processes. He states, that “The role of the home nation seems to be as strong as or stronger than ever. While globalization of competition might appear to make the nation less important, instead it seems to make it more so. With fewer impediments to trade to shelter uncompetitive domestic firms and industries, the home nation takes on growing significance because it is the source of the skills and technology that underpin competitive advantage” (Porter, 1990). It means, according to M. Porter, that combination of conditions in the nation or country has an influence on the competitive strengths of the firms located there. Due to this theory the conditions of the first importance in the country can be described by four kinds of variables, which have an impact on the possibility of the firm to get a comparative advantage and are named “nation diamonds”:

- demand conditions – in demanding market conditions producer will seek to produce high quality products and will obtain competitive advantage;
- factors conditions – situation and structure of factors of production;
- related and supporting industries – suppliers both materials and services;
- firm strategy, structure and rivalry – good position among domestic competitors can caused more strong positions in international competition level.

In addition second importance determinants are two components: the role of government – as police realizer, and role of chance – possible new inventions or positive changes in entrepreneurship.

Strategic trade policies of the country are called as beggar-thy-neighbor, because increase the welfare of home country and caused expense of others countries. Such aggressive policies can raise an international trade war, which is not positive action for both sides. There are two sophisticated arguments for strategic trade policies:

- government should promote industries that yield technological externalities;
- active government policies can increase profits of nation firms. Such effect was analyzed by the economists James Brander and Barbara Spencer and is called Brander-Spencer analysis (Brander, Spencer, 1985).

Suitable government policy is the way, in which the country can get and maintain its comparative advantage. Some other theories, for example: foreign investment (Krugman, 1986; Krugman, 2000; Porter, 1990), transnational corporations (TNC) development (Dunning, 1992), are related with nation competitiveness theory and analyzed as the measures of nation competitiveness. C. Pitelis (1998) examines nation competitiveness as the improvement of the subjectively defined welfare indicator for a country over time and / or in relation to other countries.

The model of countries competitiveness shows fac-

tors influencing competitiveness of nation. According to it (Esser, Hillebrand, Messner, Meyer-Stmer, 1995), the nation competitiveness can be analyzed in some levels (microeconomics, mezoconomics, macroeconomics, and megaeconomics), spheres (technology, economy, policy, society, and ecology), and time perspective (short, middle and long).

These theories show that comparative advantage of nations has many factors and attracts much attention by economists. From the practical use of nation comparative advantage theory, many governments in their policies sought to improve the competitive position in international market (Dicken, 2004). Both theory and practice show that comparative advantage of the country creates its competitiveness advantage and the country can successfully compete in international level. Despite different positions to nation competitiveness the authority of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) accepts and widely defines nation competitiveness as the degree to which a country can, under free and fair market conditions, produce goods and services which successfully fulfill the requirements of international markets and at the same time maintain and expand the real income of population.

Trade liberalization and a way for competitiveness development

The effects of liberalization as a means increasing economic welfare and international trade flows is widely analyzed by both Lithuanian (Vilkas, 1999; Melnikas, 2001; Urbonas, 2003; Snieška, 2005; Bernatonytė, 2005) and foreign authors (Rivera, 2003; Krugman, Obstfeld, 2000; Dicken, 2004). Empirical studies, on the one hand, confirm that growing share of exports in total output causes higher productivity growth rate. On the other hand, a growing share of imports in total output indicates a bigger degree of specialization and competition. Due to such influence for economic development growing ratios both export and import are potential stimulators of country development (Johansson, 2005). The theory and practice of modern economy show that there is no such advantage, which was one for all times in the country. Each country, it is very important, can develop their advantages through investments, innovations, management, knowledge and others factors. In general, new EU-10 countries, including Lithuania, and acceding and candidate countries, including Bulgaria, are specialized in labour-intensive, resource, including energy production and comparative disadvantage in R&D and human capital intensive production. Most empirical studies show that Baltic States, including Lithuania, and Bulgaria are far from the EU-15 specialization of the activity structure.

European Community (EC) Treaty discusses the importance of separate country competitiveness. Article 2 of the EC Treaty states such its objectives: “The Community shall have as its task ... to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities ... (and) a high degree of competitiveness. Article 4/EC describes that the principles on which the Community’s economic policy shall be “conducted in accordance with

the principle of an open market economy with free competition". The role of a separate country is expressed showing structural link between firms and competition policy "the Community and the Member States shall ensure that the conditions necessary for the competitiveness of the community's industry exists" (European Competitiveness report 2002, 82).

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) tumbles an attention for growing gap between the levels of industrial (firms) development and competitiveness of developed and developing countries (Competing through innovation and learning, 2002, 82). According to this document liberalization and globalization can't soften this problem. For solving this tremendous problem the impact of world society and nation governments it is necessary using so called high road competitiveness – the

way raising competitiveness accelerating world wide new knowledge, R&D, and innovations, as shown in the Table 1. Such way is opposite to commonly exploit of so called low road to competitiveness – the way of access into international market by attracting foreign investors or partners supplying cheap labour and raw materials. The discussed ways of growing competitiveness do not influence greatly firms in microeconomic level, but makes impact on more wide level of country economic development – macroeconomic level. For example, a second way – low road to competitiveness – can be determined by cutting the wages and devaluating native currency. These two ways differently influence economic development at macro level for society welfare and stability for the future (Trade and development report, 2003).

Table 1

The main ways for competitiveness development

The main elements	Way of competitiveness development	
	High road competitiveness	Low road competitiveness
Main tools of competitiveness	New markets; new or radically improved products	Lowering costs in existing markets
The assessment of new technology	Creation and implementation of new technology, technological leading in one or some international market	Reclamation of old technologies; pursuit strategy
The conditions of competitiveness	High protection from price competitiveness due to technologically tricky products	Low protection from price competitiveness due to less developed countries more low wages
Income from exports	High income from innovations in products and services markets	Unstable or low incomes from raw materials or standard products
The direction of human capital flow	"Inflow drain" situation	"Brain drain" situation
The direction of financial capital flow	Inflow capital	"Runaway capital" situation
Outcomes for countries development	Possibility of permanent competitiveness and economic growth, caused by technological innovations	Unstable economic growth and possibility of "immiserising" economic growth

Source: *Competing through innovation and learning, 2002.*

Four freedom policies in EU declare trade inside its market without confines. Lithuania is in this system, as EU new member state, and goods, capital, services and human force can freely move between member states and common external policy towards non-members. The economic development indicators in Lithuania in 2006 do not fulfill the requirements for Euro introduction in 2007 and Lithuania can't joint the Economic Union, which involves the highest form of regional economic integration, and single currency is introduced and broader economic policies are harmonized as the subject to supranational control.

Since 1997 Bulgaria has been on the path to recovery, with GDP growing 4-5 % rate, increasing foreign direct investment and international trade, and expanding macroeconomic stability. The country has continued its positive efforts on transposition of the EC environmental

acqui but implementation and the cost of alignment remain necessary for challenge. These are the reasons which do not promote export development in Lithuania and Bulgaria at its possible amount and retard economic development of the country. In these conditions import expands. This causes, on the one hand, supplying market by different items. On another hand, import is as impulse for competitiveness expanding, which is powerful stimulating factor for technological progress, quality growth, and cost reducing. Displacement home produces from inside market occur not only due to low quality of their products but also due to loose and not created jet market relations during economic system reconstruction between producers, suppliers, boost price of raw materials. Production modernization, market relations creation, and partners finding in many cases can allow for many producers to develop their activities and after that success-

fully penetrate international markets.

World competitiveness report of 2002-2003 presents the competitiveness of 75 world countries. Lithuanian possibility to compete is evaluated as 49 place and Bulgaria 60 place.

Revealed comparative advantage and Nation Competitiveness

One of the indexes used in the assessment of the nation competitiveness is the performance index. It is defined by the value of goods and services produced per human, capital and natural resource unit (Porter, 2002). In order to maintain and improve the performance of its economy, hence its competitiveness, every country should constantly modernize its economy. This means that "nation companies should improve their performance of the existing economic sectors not only by reducing the production costs but also by improving the quality of goods and services, introduction of new production features, perfecting the production technologies or improving the production efficiency" (Porter, 2004).

Trade performance is a good indicator for the economic development of a country. Since the slump of Bulgaria's foreign trade in the early 90s has been a steady trend towards its leveling with the GDP (Nestorov, 2002).¹ The liberalization of the economy may stimulate economic growth if it is paralleled by a process of economic relations stratification. The stratification of the economic relations with certain countries only would result in the country's strong dependency on their economic development. That is why we tried to study Lithuania's and Bulgaria's export orientation and trade specialization.

The research is based on statistical data related to various indexes. For the analysis of the trade performance and specialization of the country the research focused on the following indexes: number of partner countries and foreign trade companies; volume and structure of foreign trade turnover; export and import trends; nation export share in the foreign trade turnover; export-import ratio; revealed comparative advantages².

Gross domestic product (GDP) is an important indicator which shows economic situation in the state or region and enables to evaluate the achieved level of economic development and the living standards. The comparison of the results of economic development of different sizes states with different price level and currency allows GDP per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS), at current market prices, which is shown in the Table 2. The data shows that gross domestic product per capita growth both in Lithuania (242.3 %) and Bulgaria (170.2 %) are higher than in EU-25 (158.6 %) or in EU-15 (154.4 %). The GDP per capita produced in EU-15 in 1995-2006 has increase and in 2006 will reach 26100 PPS per capita; in Lithuania 12600 PPS and in Bulgaria 8000 PPS. Trade forms an increasing part of the world economy and must be measured and used for decision makers. The amount of exports in Lithuania from 1996 to 2004 increased 192 % and imports increased 187 %, in Bulgaria accordingly, 152 % and 226 %. The exports as per cent of GDP in Lithuania during the same period have changed from 54.5 % till 45.5 %. This indicator in Bulgaria has changed from 62.9 % till 54.4 %. The imports as per cent of GDP in Lithuania during 1996-2004 have changed from 65.1 % till 57.1 %. This indicator in Bulgaria has changed from 59.8 % till 57.4 %.

Table 2

Gross domestic product per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS), at current market prices

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU-25	15200	16900	17700	18500	19800	20500	21200	21400	22300*	2310*0	24100*
EU-15	16900	17700	18600	19400	20400	21700	22500	23200	23000*	24300*	26100*
Lithuania	5200	6300	6900	7000	7600	8300	9000	9800	10700*	11600*	12600*
-exports, in mill. EUR	3887	4476	4302	3483	4417	5314	5881	6158	7451	9502	
-imports, in mill. EUR	5281	6544	6717	5605	6326	7366	8279	8526	9875	12446	
Bulgaria	4700	4400	4700	4900	5300	5800	6100	6400	6900*	7500*	8000*
-exports, in mill. EUR	5954	5454	4701	4006	4825	5113	5692	7445	9022	...	
-imports, in mill. EUR	5800	5090	5128	5515	6507	7261	7903	10754	13112	..	

* forecasts.

Source: Europe in figures. Eurostat yearbook 2005, 2005, 142; Eurostat yearbook 2004, 2004, 166.

The volume and structure of the foreign trade turnover of the country are the proof for expansion of the foreign trade relations of the country. This index may be interpreted both in terms of the number of countries-partners of chosen for comparative analyses countries: Lithuania and Bulgaria and of the volume of foreign trade flows. Tables 3 shows that the number of the countries trading with

¹ This means that almost the whole GDP passes through the foreign trade channels and thus makes the economic orientation strongly dependable on the politics.

$$^2 RCA_i^j = \frac{(X_i^j - M_i^j)}{(X_i^j + M_i^j)},$$

where: RCA_i^j – revealed comparative advantage of a country;

X_i^j – the value of the export of item i from country j to a certain country;

M_i^j – the value of the import of item i into country j to a certain country.

The index may have positive or negative values. When it is positive there is a comparative advantage and when it is negative there isn't such a revealed comparative advantage (White book for the Foreign Investments of BIBA, S. 2001).

Lithuania and Bulgaria is growing, which may be considered a positive trend because of the greater geographical diversification and the participation of more companies in

the internationalization process. What is alarming though is the fact that the number of exporters is far greater than the number of importing companies.

Table 3

Lithuania's and Bulgaria's trade partners

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total number of partners of Lithuania/Bulgaria	152/189	161/196	164/205	156/209	159/210	163/223	156/201
– Export	121/172	122/174	127/178	135/178	150/183	150/198	146/185
– Import	141/159	148/167	149/183	142/193	143/192	148/202	144/176

Source: *Foreign trade of the Republic of Lithuania 2004; Foreign trade of the Republic of Bulgaria 2004.*

The total number of trade partners countries in 1997-2003 years period has growth tendency both in Lithuania (102.5 %) both in Bulgaria (106.3 %). The number of export partners in Lithuania in this period raised 120.7 % and in Bulgaria – 107.6 %. The number of import partners rose more quickly in Bulgaria (110.7 %) in compare with Lithuania import partner's growth (102.1 %).

There is a positive trend in the foreign trade turnover of the countries both Lithuania and both Bulgaria (see Table 2). During the transition period Bulgaria's foreign trade has been conditioned by the foreign trade policy of the country as well as by various external, international factors (the war in ex-Yugoslavia and the subsequent trade embargo, global economic and financial crises, etc.), which are plausible explanation of the low values

and negative trends in certain years. At the same time, despite the growing turnover and export volumes, in recent years there has been a negative trend in the import-export ratio both in Lithuania both in Bulgaria, resulting in the huge negative balance of trade value both in Lithuania and Bulgaria.

The change of the foreign politics both Lithuania both Bulgaria has had a strong influence on the structure of their foreign trade. The Figure 1 shows that 1999 were very important for Lithuanian international trade because the export amount to EU-15 and others countries was equal. In Bulgaria such situation of export amount was reached in 1998, as shows Figure 2. After the accession of Bulgaria to the EU the foreign trade flows from and to the other member countries will grow significantly.

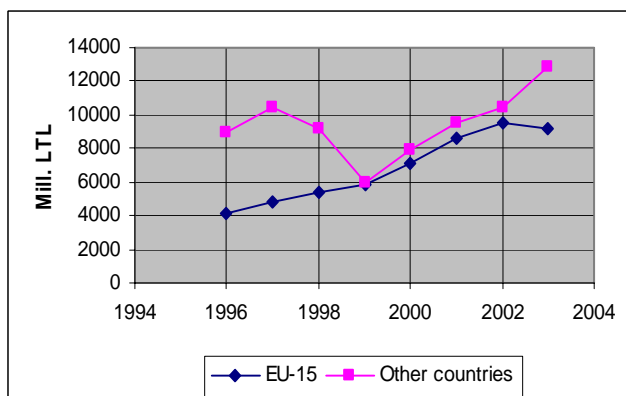


Figure 1. The changes of Lithuania's export by partners

The competitiveness of the country depends on its ability to capitalize on its competitive advantages on the international markets and to specialize in those industries in which its companies are most efficient. The analysis of the calculated RCA indexes using standard international trade classification (SITC) of Lithuania and Bulgaria (see Tables 4) and their trade with the countries groups shows that: 1) Lithuania has advantages in the trade with goods included in such SITC groups as 2 (Crude materials, inedible, except fuels), 3 (Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials) and 8 (Miscellaneous manufactured articles); and 2) Bulgaria has advantages in the trade with goods included in groups 1 (Liquors and tobacco), 2 (Raw materials, unprocessed goods except fuels) and 8 (Miscellaneous manufactured articles). Therefore Lithuania and Bulgaria has comparative advantages in the trade with low added-value commodities. During the same

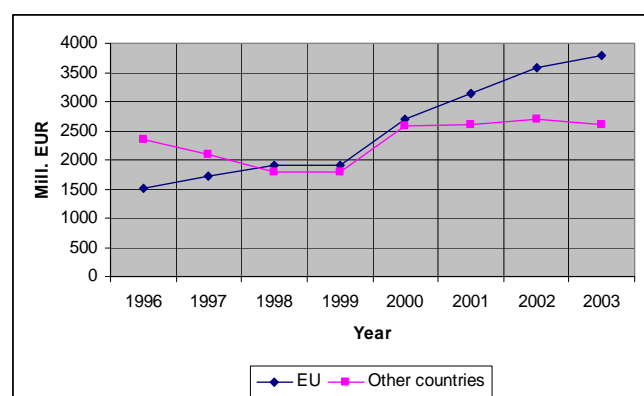


Figure 2. The changes of Bulgaria's export by partners

period Lithuania lost its RCA in CEFTA (Central Europe Free Trade association) and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) markets, but gets some new markets in 10 new EU members. Bulgaria lost to a great extent its revealed comparative advantages on the markets of the 10 new EU member states, but retained its advantages for the goods included in group 1 (Beverages and tobacco) although its RCA index for this group also declined. Bulgaria's best positions are in its trade with the countries in South-Eastern Europe (SEE). Except for the goods in group 2 (Raw materials, unprocessed goods except fuels) its RCA indexes for all other groups are positive, which is a proof that the country has some revealed comparative advantages of its trade with the countries from the region (see Table 5 and Table 6³).

³ Author's calculations.

Revealed competitive advantage indexes of Lithuania and Bulgaria according to SITC *

Lithuania	EU – 15						10 new EU members					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SITC 0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
SITC 1	---	---	---	---	---	---	-	-	-	+	+	+
SITC 2	++	++	++	+	+	++	+	++	++	++	++	++
SITC 3	+	-	+	+++	+++	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
SITC 4	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	-
SITC 5	-	-	-	--	--	--	--	--	--	-	-	-
SITC 6	-	--	--	--	--	--	-	-	-	-	-	--
SITC 7	--	--	--	--	--	--	-	-	+	-	-	-
SITC 8	+	++	++	++	+	++	--	--	-	-	-	-
	CEFTA						CIS					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SITC 0	--	--	--	--	--	+	+++	++	+	++	++	++
SITC 1	---	---	---	---	---	++	-	---	--	---	---	---
SITC 2	++	++	++	+	+	--	---	---	---	---	---	---
SITC 3	+++	+++	+++	+++	--	--	--	--	---	---	---	+
SITC 4	---	---	---	---	---	---	+	++	-	++	++	-
SITC 5	---	---	---	--	--	--	-	-	--	-	-	--
SITC 6	--	--	--	--	--	--	-	--	--	--	--	--
SITC 7	--	--	--	--	--	--	+	-	+	++	++	++
SITC 8	---	--	--	---	--	--	++	++	++	++	++	++
Bulgaria	EU – 15						10 new EU members					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SITC 0	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	--	-	---	--	-
SITC 1	+++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++
SITC 2	+	+	+	++	++	++	+	+	+	-	+	-
SITC 3	-	+	+	++	++	+	++	++	+	+	++	-
SITC 4	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	---	---	---
SITC 5	-	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
SITC 6	+	-	+	-	-	-	--	--	--	--	--	--
SITC 7	--	--	--	--	--	--	+	--	--	--	--	--
SITC 8	+	++	++	++	++	++	-	--	--	--	-	-
	CEFTA						SEE					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SITC 0	-	-	-	--	-	+	++	++	++	++	++	++
SITC 1	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+	++	+++	++	++
SITC 2	-	-	--	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	+	-
SITC 3	+	+	--	--	--	--	+	++	++	+	+	+
SITC 4	---	---	---	---	---	---	++	++	++	++	++	+
SITC 5	-	--	--	--	--	--	++	++	++	++	+	+
SITC 6	--	--	--	--	--	--	++	++	++	++	++	++
SITC 7	+	--	--	--	--	--	++	++	++	++	++	++
SITC 8	--	--	--	--	-	-	+++	+++	++	++	++	++

Legend*:

RCA value between 0.7 and 1 (+++)

RCA value between 0.35 and 0.7 (++)

RCA value between 0 and 0.35 (+)

RCA value 0 (0)

RCA value between 0 and -0.35 (-)

RCA value between -0.35 and -0.7 (- -)

RCA value between -0.7 and -1 (- - -)

SITC 0 – Foods and live animals

SITC 1 – Beverages and tobacco

SITC 2 – Crude materials, inedible, except fuels

SITC 3 – Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials

SITC 4 – Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes

SITC 5 – Chemical and related products

SITC 6 – Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material

SITC 7 – Machinery and transportation equipment

SITC 8 – Miscellaneous manufactured articles

Conclusions

Trade liberalization is as a means of increasing economic welfare and international trade and expanding competitiveness. There are determined two ways of different influences of economic development at macro level for society welfare and stability: 1) high road to competitiveness – the way raising competitiveness accelerating world wide new knowledge's, R&D, and innovations and 2) low road to competitiveness – cutting the wages and devaluating local currency.

The analysis of the trade performance and specialization on the basis of country research focused on the fol-

lowing indexes: the number of partner countries and foreign trade companies; volume and structure of foreign trade turnover; export and import trends; nation export share; export-import ratio and revealed comparative advantages.

On the basis of standard international trade classification (SITC) we determined concentration of a significant share of foreign trade flows to the groups of countries.

The paper examines the revealed comparative advantage (RCA) indexes of Lithuania and Bulgaria and their trade with different groups of countries. It is found that the bigger trade flows to the EU-15 are in such SITC groups: 2 (Crude materials, inedible, except fuels), 3

(Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials), 8 (Miscellaneous manufactured articles) countries and thus our economy becomes dependable on their economic development.

The main trade flows to the CIS are in such SITC groups: 0, 4, 7 and 8. The main flows of foreign trade of Bulgaria are to SEE, EU-15 and into 10 new EU members.

There is also a trend towards specialization of Lithuania and Bulgaria in the trade with low value-added goods, which means that countries have to compete in the field of factor conditions (e.g. cheap labor.).

These calculation results show the main directions according to SITC system of the trends of potential trade development for the future of Lithuania and Bulgaria.

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Tarptautinė prekyba kaip konkurencingumo veiksnys: Lietuvos ir Bulgarijos situacijos palyginimas

Santrauka

Globalizacijos ir internacionalizacijos procesai keičia verslo aplinką kiekvienoje šalyje, iškeldami daugybę naujų problemų ir klausimų. Vienas jų klausimų yra tarptautinės prekybos kaip konkurencingumo veiksnio valstybės lygiu problema, jo teorinis ir praktinis pagrindimas. Didėjant galimybėms įeiti į naujas prekių, išteklių, technologijų rinkas, verslas visose veiklos srityse susiduria su vis didėjančia konkurencija, peržengiančia nacionalines ribas ir tampa tarptautine. Globaliniu lygiu gamintojų sugebėjimas konkuruoti priklauso ne tik nuo atskiros įmonės veiklos kokybinių rezultatų, bet ir nuo valstybės vykdomos ekonominės politikos. Kai kurie ekonomistai teigia, kad valstybės, panašiai kaip firmos, konkuruoja tarptautinėje rinkoje (Reijan, Hinrikus, Ivanov, 2000, 15; Judanov, 1998, 281). Pagal šią teoriją, valstybės, neatsižvelgiančios į išorinio pasaulio poveikį jos produktyvumui ar technologijoms, galiausiai susidurs su ekonomine krize, panašiai kaip kad firmos, kurios negali gerokai sumažinti savo gamybos kaštų, palyginant su konkurentais, arba atsilieka nuo jų technologijų požiūriu, patiria bankrotą. Kitų autorių (Camagni, 2002, 7) nuomone, valstybės negali konkuruoti tarpusavy, kad konkurencingumo terminas netaikytinas.

Reikia pripažinti, kad praktiškai kiekviena valstybė suinteresuota sukurti palankias sąlygas siekiant pritraukti užsienio investicijas, o užsienio prekyba yra vienas iš veiksnių, didinančių šalies konkurencingumą.

Tyrimo objektas: tarptautinės prekyba kaip šalies konkurencingumo veiksnys.

Tyrimo tikslas: remiantis Lietuvos ir užsienio šalių mokslininkų tyrimų rezultatais, parodyti tarptautinę prekybą kaip vieną iš veiksnių, lemiančių šalies konkurencingumą, pagrįstą įgytuoju lyginamuoju pranašumu.

Tyrimo uždaviniai: apibūdinti šalies konkurencingumo sampratą; apibūdinti Europos Sąjungos (ES) regionų (valstybių) konkurencingumo esmę; nustatyti Lietuvos kaip ES narės tarptautinės prekybos

bos specializaciją ir įgytą lyginamąjį pranašumą naudojant standartinę tarptautinės prekybos klasifikaciją (SITC) bei palyginti su Bulgarijos, siekiančios narystės ES, tarptautinės prekybos specializacija, įgytu lyginamuoju pranašumu, pateikiant pasiūlymų tarptautinės prekybos plėtrai.

Šalys specializuojasi atskirose veiklose priklausomai nuo gyvenotojų skaičiaus, darbuotojų kvalifikacijos lygio, gamtinių sąlygų, žaliavų, kapitalo ir pan. Sudaryta tinkama valstybės politika gali reikiamai nukreipti turimų šalyje gamybos veiksmus ir aplinkos veiksmus tiek atskiro ūkio šakos, tiek bendro šalies ūkio konkurencingumo lygiui augti. Valstybės vaidmuo ypač svarbus, kai atskiri ūkio subjektai, o kartu ir visa šalies ekonomika, yra išsivysčiusi menčiau, palyginti su kitomis pasaulio valstybėmis.

Visos šalys siekia padidinti savo konkurencines galimybes tarptautinėje rinkoje. Lietuva ir Bulgarija siekia padidinti savo konkurencines galimybes tiek ES-15, tiek pasaulinėje rinkoje. Lietuvai tapus ES nare, pasauliniu mastu padidėjo jos pripažinimas, tarptautinė prekyba ir konkurencingumas. Lietuvos paskutiniojo dešimtmečio tarptautinės prekybos pasikeitimai rodo ekonominio vystymosi kelia kitoms šalims. Bulgarija pagal pasirašytą stojimo Sutartį prie ES prisijungus 2007 m. sausio 1d., todėl naudinga apibūdinti ir palyginti Lietuvos, kaip vienos iš dešimties naujų ES narių, ir Bulgarijos, tapsiančios ES nare 2007 m., tarptautinę prekybą kaip konkurencingumo veiksnį, pasitelkus standartinę tarptautinės prekybos klasifikatorių (SITC) ir apskaičiuojant įgytą lyginamąjį pranašumą.

Pagal tradicinę tarptautinės prekybos E. Hekšerio ir B. Olino (H-O) teorijos, šalys specializuojasi gaminti tokias prekes, kurioms turi lyginamąjį pranašumą, yra orientuoti į pasiūlą ir apima pirminių produktų rinką. Naudojami H-O modelį, V. Stolperis ir P. Samuelsonas žengė toliau ir įrodė, kad prekyba didina šalies realiasias pajamas. Eksportuojančių veiklų darbuotojai laimi, palyginti su tokios veiklos nevykdančiais, todėl šalių vyriausybės gali vykdyti įvairią politiką tarptautinės prekybos srityje, siekiant šalies rinką apsaugoti nuo užsienio konkurentų. Pasak S. Linder, vartotojų skonis priklauso nuo bendrųjų pajamų lygio, todėl bendrojo vidaus produkto dalis, tenkanti vienam gyventojui (BVPG), rodo jų reikalaujamų prekių kiekį. Naujoji prekybos teorija parodo, kad tarptautinės prekybos reguliavimas naudojamas siekiant transformuoti šalies lyginamąjį pranašumą. Šalies vyriausybės veikla yra tarptautinės prekybos politikos strategijos priemonė, kuria galima keisti pramonės vystymą ir konkuruoti su užsienio konkurentais. Pasak M. Porterio teorijos, valstybių konkurencingumas siejamas su kvalifikacijos ir technologijos lygiu, kurie formuojasi kiekvienoje šalyje ir lemia jos lyginamąjį pranašumą, formuoja atskiros firmos stiprybes, įvertinant organizacijos vidinę būklę (atliekant SWOT analizę). Jo sukurtas šalies "deimanto" modelis rodo veiksmus, lemiančius šalies galimybę įgyti lyginamąjį pranašumą t.t. veiklos srityje, apimančius pirmosios svarbos (paklausos sąlygos, gamybos veiksmų sąlygos, susijusios ir palaikančios šakos, firmų strategija, struktūra ir konkurencija) ir antrosios svarbos (vyriausybės politika, palankios galimybės) veiksmus.

Valstybių konkurenciją analizuoja ir tokios teorijos kaip užsienio investicijų (Krugman, 1986; 2000; Porter, 1990), tarptautinių firmų teorija (Dunning, 1992), gerovės rodiklių teorija (Pitelis, 1998), šalies sisteminio konkurencingumo teorija (Esser, Hillebrand, Messner, Meyer-Stmer, 1995) ir kt. teorijos.

Praktiniai tyrimai rodo, kad importo dalis BVP sandaroje rodo specializacijos ir konkurencijos didėjimą, todėl tiek eksportas, tiek importas yra potencialūs šalies ekonominio vystymosi stimulatoriai (Johanson, 2005). Kadangi šalies lyginamasis pranašumas nėra pastovus, todėl šalys turi kurti ir palaikyti savo lyginamuosius pranašumus investicijų, inovaci-

jų, vadybos, žinių ekonomikos plėtros ir kt. veiksmiais.

Europos Bendrijos (EB) Sutartis taip pat didelę svarbą teikia regionų ir šalių konkurencingumui, užsibrėždama tikslą: „Bendruomenės tikslas yra... remti harmoningą, subalansuotą ir darnų ekonomikos veiksmų vystymą... (ir) aukštą konkurencingumo lygį“ (European Competitiveness Report 2002, 2002, 82). JT Pramonės vystymo organizacija (JTIDO) atkreikia dėmesį į didėjantį skirtumą tarp pramonės išsivystymo lygio ir konkurencingumo išsivysčiusių ir menčiau išsivysčiusių šalių požiūriu. Nei liberalizacija, nei globalizacija negali sušvelninti šių procesų, būtinas pasaulio visuomenės ir atskiros šalies vyriausybės įsikišimas, ekonomikos vystymą nukreipiant konkurencingumo didinimo linkme, kaip parodyta 1 lentelėje.

Šalies tarptautinės prekybos vaidmuo ir šalies specializacijos lygis grindžiamas šiais rodikliais: šalių partnerių ir firmų partnerių skaičiumi; užsienio prekybos apyvartos apimtimi ir struktūra; eksporto ir importo kitimo tendencija; eksporto dalimi užsienio prekybos apyvartoje; eksporto ir importo santykiu; įgytu lyginamuoju pranašumu.

Atlikta šalių užsienio prekybos analizė rodo, kad Lietuvos tiek eksporto, tiek importo šalių partnerių skaičius analizuojamuoju 1996–2003 m. laikotarpiu didėjo sparčiau negu Bulgarijoje. Lietuvoje eksporto augimo tempai didesni negu importo (atitinkamai 191,7 % ir 187,0 %), o Bulgarijoje – atvirkščiai: eksporto augimo tempai mažesni negu importo (atitinkamai 151,5 % ir 226,1 %). Analizuojant užsienio prekybą pagal partnerius, pastebėta, kad Lietuvoje (žr. 2 pav.) eksporto srutai į ES-15 su eksporto apimtimi į kitas valstybes susilygino 1999 m. Rusijos finansinės krizės metu, o vėliau vėl atsigavo ir nežymiai viršijo eksporto apimtį į ES-15. Bulgarijoje šis susilyginimas įvyko 1998 m., vienerius metus buvo stabilus, o pastaruju metu eksporto apimtys į ES-15 yra didesnės negu į kitas šalis. Tai patvirtina ankstesnio tyrimo teiginį, kad Bulgarijos užsienio prekybos partnerių skaičius didėjo ne taip sparčiai kaip Lietuvos.

Lietuvos eksporto dalis užsienio prekybos apyvartoje iki 2001 m. buvo mažesnė negu Bulgarijos, tai reikškė, kad eksporto dalis yra mažesnė negu importas. Po 2001 m. Lietuvos eksporto dalis užsienio prekybos apyvartoje didėja. 1996–2004 m. laikotarpiu Lietuvoje eksporto dalis užsienio prekybos apyvartoje turi didėjimo tendenciją (atitinkamai 0,736 ir 0,754). Bulgarijos eksporto dalis analizuojamu laikotarpiu pasižymėjo mažėjimo tendencija: nuo 1,026 iki 0,688 (žr. 2 lentelę). Šalių įgytasis lyginamasis pranašumas (RCA) apskaičiuotas naudojant standartinę tarptautinės prekybos klasifikatorių (SITC) pagal svarbiausias šalių partnerių grupes. Svarbiausios Lietuvai išskirtos šalių partnerių grupės yra ES-15, 10 naujų ES narių, Centrinės Europos Laisvosios prekybos asociacija (CEFTA) ir Nepriklausomų Valstybių Sandrauga (CIS). Svarbiausios Bulgarijai išskirtos šalių partnerių grupės yra ES-15, 10 naujų ES narių, Centrinės Europos Laisvosios prekybos asociacija (CEFTA) ir Pietryčių Europos šalys (SEE). Apskaičiavimų rezultatai pagal nurodytą metodiką pateikti 4 lentelėje. Jie rodo, kad Lietuva turi įgytą lyginamąjį pranašumą SITC 2, 3 ir 8 prekių grupėse ES-15, 10 naujų ES narių ir CEFTA rinkose; ir 0, 4, 7 ir 8 CIS rinkoje. Bulgarija įgytą lyginamąjį pranašumą turi SITC 0, 1, 2, 3 ir 8 ES-15, 10 naujų ES narių ir CEFTA rinkose ir visose SITC grupėse, išskyrus SITC 2, SEE šalių grupėje. Abiejų šalių esamos specializacijos kryptys rodo, kad šalys užsienio rinkose konkuruoja mažos pridėamosios vertės šakose. Ši tendencija turėtų keistis plečiant investicijas, inovacijas, naudojant vadybos galimybes ir žinių visuomenės privalumus.

Raktažodžiai: *tarptautinė prekyba, konkurencingumas, įgytasis lyginamasis pranašumas.*

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