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THE CUSTOMS POLICY PECULIARITIES IN BELARUS AND BALTIC STATES (1990-2004)

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Abstract

Having restored their independence, the Republic of Belarus and the Baltic states turned to get into the similar conditions, when economy restructuring and drastic transformations are required, including independent customs policy conducting. Nowadays these countries have different foreign trade indicators' values, and they are participants to different European integration structures (Belarus is a member of the Eurasian Economic Community, while the Baltic states have recently become members of the European Union (EU)). Authors of the article analyze customs tariff and non tariff measures, technical and technological customs development, customs control in Belarus and Baltic states as well participation of the above-mentioned countries in the economic integration process. The comparative analysis of the customs policy results, which are based on the similar conditions, will let to define the efficiency degree of one or another customs policy type for a country with transitive economy.

The research objective is to define customs policy specific features in Belarus and the Baltic states, and to compare customs policy effectiveness at the macroeconomic level with the help of the basic statistical indicators on the foreign trade turnover.

The research methods are synthesis and analysis, deduction, induction, comparative analysis, statistical method and several others.

1. Customs Tariff Measures

Export duties. In early 1990, all the four states faced the cruel necessity to introduce export customs duties. It was caused mainly with antidumping measures towards their finished goods in the Western European markets, along with stimulation of the resource outflow. In the middle 1990, the acute necessity for export duties disappeared due to the liberalization of the OECD (Organization of the Economic Co-operation and Development) countries' trade policy.

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have started ever fullest foreign trade liberalization. Estonia has totally eliminated exports duties since 1995, with the exception of the historical and cultural values where a 100% duty is preserved. Latvian and Lithuanian export tariffs look slightly less radical (export duty rate varies from 0% till 100%, the number of export duties is minimal) /15,16,17/.

Belarussian export tariff has been abolished partially. There remain duties on the energy sources, leather materials, valuable wood sorts, as well as textiles when being exported to the EU. Its main trade partners — the EU and the Russian Federation, provoke quite a good deal of export duties. As a result, Belarus does not use completely its manufacturing capacity/12/Table 1.

Table 1. **Raw Materials Share in Exports**

	LATVIA	LITHUANIA	ESTONIA	BELARUS
1996	20,93%	14,64%	22,64%	10,40%
1997	21,42%	14,88%	22,35%	19,27%
1998	18,18%	12,42%	19,86%	11,92%
1999	18,94%	12,84%	19,01%	21,44%
2000	16,68%	14,03%	15,26%	7,88%
2001	14,58%	10,90%	16,58%	6,83%
2002	14,04%	11,19%	16,10%	6,97%

In Byelorussia, due to the application of higher export duties to greater quantity of goods, the part of export raw materials within the entire amount of exports comprise in 2002 6,97 percent in comparison to export raw materials of Lithuania (11,9 percent), Estonia (16,1 percent), and Latvia (14,04 percent).

Import duties. Estonia has fully liberalized all the markets. Latvia and Lithuania use "moderate" import duties: from 0% to 55% (to 25% for manufactured goods). **W**ood, metals, chemical goods and pharmaceuticals import sectors are protected in Latvia, and machinery, transport, chemicals import sector – in Lithuania. Agriculture and textiles are considered to be the most vulnerable sectors — they possess most of maximum customs tariff rates /15,16,17/.

The permanent growth of the negative trade balance cannot be clarified fully in terms of increased investment goods' imports. For example, Lithuanian foreign trade statistics show that spasmodic changes disappeared in the early 1990, and currently the imported investment goods' share is either stable or easy to predict.

High protection degree for the domestic industries (main exporters) is applied in Belarus**.** Import duties for the raw materials vary from 0% to 5%. The highest tariff rate is 30%. The level for finished goods is 15-30%. The simple average is about 13-14%. /1/ Table 2.

Table 2. **Tariff Barriers**

YEAR	%	ALL GOODS			RAW & SEMI-PRODUCTS			MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS		
		tariff simple average	tariff rate standard deviation	tariff weighted avearage	tariff simple average	tariff rate standard deviation	tariff weighted avearage	tariff simple average	tariff rate standard deviation	tariff weighted avearage
BELARUS	1996	12.3	10.4	13.5	10.3	7.9	7.8	13.2	11.2	15.4
	1997	12.6	8.4	13.7	11.0	6.7	8.4	13.3	8.9	15.0
ESTONIA	1995	0.1	1.2	0.4	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.1	1.2	0.5
LATVIA	1996	4.5	7.9	2.5	8.5	11.0	3.0	2.9	5.3	2.3
	1997	5.9	10.7	2.5	11.5	16.2	4.3	3.5	5.7	2.0
LITHUANIA	1995	4.5	9.0	2.5	8.7	13.0	3.6	2.8	5.9	2.1
	1997	4.6	9.3	1.9	9.1	13.3	4.1	2.7	5.8	1.4

Thus, the following policies turned to show best efficiency in the above-mentioned states: the moderate protectionism in the ready-made goods' market along with most full liberalization within the raw materials' market.

However, the Belarusian import duties cannot be recognized effective, as most of the tariff positions were changed badly for Belarus because of the "negotiations" with Russia. The issue of raw materials' import duties remains most urgent. Imports increase will in a way stipulate foreign direct investments to the country; active foreign trade will attract prospective exporters to the country. /13, 18,19,20/

Percentage of import charges in total volume of imports serve as an import liberalization indicator (table 3). This indicator is the lowest in Estonia (0,001), and the highest - in Belarus (4,12).

Table 3. **Percentage of Import Charges in the Total Volume of Imports (10)**

COUNTRY	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
BELARUS	—	—	1.69	2.31	4.12	—	—	—
BULGARIA	6.09	5.81	5.55	3.48	4.58	5.47	2.76	1.73
THE CZECH REPUBLIC	3.53	3.47	2.61	2.63	1.72	1.46	1.24	1.10
ESTONIA	0.94	0.94	0.22	0.001	0.001	0.0001	0.0001	0.05
GEORGIA	—	—	—	—	4.30	3.60	1.25	2.21
HUNGARY	11.49	12.59	12.97	9.68	3.40	2.66	2.48	1.78
LATVIA	—	3.16	1.78	1.48	1.41	1.07	0.94	0.76
LITHUANIA	0.91	3.02	1.37	1.24	1.27	1.12	1.06	0.69
POLAND	—	17.43	14.01	10.04	5.29	3.86	3.11	2.42
ROMANIA	6.63	5.98	6.16	5.69	5.10	6.21	5.52	—
RUSSIA	—	2.44	3.17	—	—	5.13	4.87	5.10
SLOVAKIA	—	—	—	2.85	3.22	2.50	2.64	2.22
SLOVENIA	7.29	6.96	7.09	6.17	3.99	2.88	2.55	1.72
UKRAINE	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.31	1.91
USA	3.22	3.03	2.59	2.34	2.06	2.01	1.79	1.63

Note: import charges include all the charges collected from goods at the point of their entry into a country. They can be fiscal and protectionist, ad valor and specific.

2. Non-Tariff Measures

Non-tariff measures applied in foreign trade regulation by their nature are divided into three groups: economic, non-economic and customs` regulation by public authorities (table 4).

Table 4. **Non-Tariff Measures (1, p. 30)**

ECONOMIC NATURE			**NON-ECONOMIC NATURE**	**Customs` regulation by public authorities**
1. Foreign trade regulation (economic policy measures)	**2. Tax measures**	**3. Monetary measures**		
∝ Export/import prohibitions ∝ Licensing ∝ contract registration ∝ quotes ∝ minimal/maximal prices ∝ special exporters	∝ VAT ∝ excises ∝ rent	∝ currency control ∝ currency rate regulation	∝ Export/import prohibitions ∝ Permissive export/import system ∝ Veterinary control ∝ Sanitary control ∝ certification ∝ ecological control ∝ fitosanitary control ∝ export control	∝ declaration requirements ∝ shipping documents requirements ∝ financial delivery guarantees ∝ vehicles requirements

Belarus applies the highest number of the non-tariff measures, Estonia – the lowest. Belarus applies non-tariff measures of economic nature: export prohibition, export licensing, export contracts` registration, quotas, including tariff quotas, minimal prices for export goods and special exporters. Meanwhile, Estonia applies only export licensing. Practically, such measures require more time and financial costs both for trade operators and for customs authorities themselves.

VAT and excises' regulations are similar in all the four countries with the exception of one paradox. The VAT is collected in the country of origin for exported goods within the Customs union of Belarus and Russia. This causes substantial damage to Belarusian economy. Besides, Belarusian importers, including exporters-manufacturers, have higher tax burden compared to the one in the Baltic states: 20% VAT until 2004 (compare to 18% in the Baltics), high excise rates for the cars etc.

Belarus is the most active to use **currency regulation mechanisms** in foreign trade: e.g. mandatory sales of the currency income share or substantial official exchange rate deviations from the real exchange rate (late 1990-early 2000). Such mechanisms represented considerable burden of the fiscal nature for exporters. Exchange rate policy and choosing a currency to bind the national one are issues of utmost importance for foreign trade. The fluctuations of the leading currencies' exchange rates have influenced the countries' exports differently, as Estonian crone was bound to German mark, Lithuanian litas up to 1 February 2002 was bound to US dollar, Latvian latas – to world currencies' basket while Belarusian rouble (the latest of all) was bound to US dollar.

Solely the Republic of Belarus applies import/export prohibitions (apart from the ones established by international agreements), which causes considerable increase in customs formalities' expenses. Permissive import/export system is based on the similar principles in the given countries.

Quality standards. The Baltic States have been very active in European and global standards implementation (up to 80% of the national standards are implemented from the international sources; national standardization bodies are members to the biggest European and global organizations). Belarus needs to undertake vital steps in this direction, namely implementation of the newest quality standards. It is necessary both to stimulate development of the exporting industries and to simplify access to the foreign markets.

On the one hand, the requirements to **shipping documentation and vehicles** are much unified in the European states, on the other hand – there are obvious differences in the list of conditions required to place goods under this or that customs procedure, declaration and delivery guarantee requirements. Thus, the Baltic trade operators are allowed to apply a wider variety of the simplified customs procedures and mechanisms of the international documents recognition than Belarusian trade operators. /15,16,17/. Besides, customs clearance in Belarus is more expensive due to frequent changes in legislation as well as to discriminative policy toward private-owned companies favouring biggest public trade operators.

Of the four countries in question, Belarus applies non-tariff customs regulation oftenest. It leads to increased businesses' expenses on customs clearance. The Baltic countries are far forward in the issues of unification and harmonization of the customs legislations, simplification of customs procedures and export trade liberalization. This fact simplifies significantly exporters' access to foreign markets.

3. Customs Control

The quality of customs control influences significantly volume of customs related export-import costs and either accelerates and simplifies access to foreign markets or inhibits it.

Territorial proximity. Belarus allows the best variants of customs office's location in order to make it as close to the trade operator as possible. Besides common frontier and internal customs offices, it is permitted to arrange a customs office on the territory of the company. However, in contrast to Baltic trade operators Belarusian ones have no possibility to declare the goods solely in the electronic format. Overall, customs territorial structure should be recognized rational in all the four states. Due to the increase in customs offices' working capacities, the queues of the countries' frontiers gradually decreased.

As for the possibility to choose and to change freely the office to pass customs clearance, the technical level of the customs bodies usually forms the main obstacle to it. The programs implemented in the EU (Customs'2000, 2002, 2007) make an emphasis on this possibility. Belarus yet cannot allow the same due to technical reasons.

Customs control in terms of time. Estonia has chosen some uncomfortable way — due to the recoupment principle working hours were either abolished or reduced at non-frontier and specialized customs offices on holidays. However, frontier customs offices work day and night in all the four states. The Baltic States have found an efficient way to reduce time-related costs for trade operators: there were arranged joint customs offices on the common frontiers.

Customs technical and technological level. The Baltic States have come much farther in this direction mostly due to considerable support provided by EU (risk analysis system, customs information exchange, electronic customs clearance etc). Active efforts in this field have led to the fact that over 9% of the declarations in Estonia were submitted electronically in 2002.

Customs personnel. Belarus is the only state of four who possesses an established system for the customs officers training and high education in customs field (four universities and several education centers). The Baltic States have centers of professional tuition only. However, international experience exchange is better arranged there. The seminars, including ones with trade operators' representatives invited, are arranged oftener. Thus, in several years 70-80% customs officers participated in seminars and trainings.

In order to improve work of the customs officers, Lithuania conducted a unique experiment: in the middle 1990 a customs officer's salary included some value percentage of the goods' prevented from smuggling. Estonia also modernized salary system in accordance with the payback principle, the premium system based on work results being abolished. There were no considerable changes in wages system in Belarus since the USSR period.

Only Estonia of the four states publishes in medias information on requirements to customs clearance officers. It contributes to increased society control efficiency and provides the exporter with additional guarantees of his rights.

4. Participation in Economic Integration Processes

Economic international integration crowns the set of customs policy measures. Its unique feature is that a state changes external environment for its exported goods. Other two groups of customs measures (tariff and non-tariff ones, customs control) are most often subordinate to the third group, which is most significant of all.

Global level. It consists mostly of the world trade system organizations – World Trade Organization and World Customs Organization. All the countries in question are members to WCO. However, it is not the case for WTO: Latvia and Estonia joined it in 1999, Lithuania – in 2001, while Belarus has still been negotiating its accession. It is partially due to the protectionist trade policy, partially – to active integration in the East.

According to the influence made on the global trade system, several international conventions are close to the above-mentioned organizations (including the agreements signed within the framework of WTO or WCO). The most important is Convention Kyoto. All the Baltic States have joined it during late 1990, while Belarus is still "working in this direction".

Belarus is a member to four international customs conventions (Nairobi, 1977; Brussels, 1961; Istanbul, 1990; Brussels, 1983). The Baltic States have also joined them and, besides, the Agreement on Import of the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (UNO, 1950).

There are a number of conventions closely related to international trade, mostly in the transport and ecology fields. Besides the universal conventions, the Baltic States signed mostly ones used in Western Europe, while Belarus — the ones common for CIS. By the quantity of the agreements signed in these domains, the Baltic States are some 20-30% forward compared to Belarus, mostly because of the numerous European transport conventions. In such a way, import/export and transit conditions for Baltic shipments are more comfortable in Western Europe than for Belarusian ones. Besides, the country's active participation in international legal space increases its attractiveness for prospective foreign investors.

Regional level. All the given states are situated in Europe where one could define two main integration centres – EU and CIS. They are very slightly integrated with each other and participation in one of the main integrations practically excludes the possibility to be fully active in another one.

It would be reasonable to count EU neither as a 15-union not as a 25-union. In the view of international customs and trade relations, it is a much wider space – European Economic Area that includes (now or in the nearest future) the North African and Mediterranean states, the Balkans, EFTA countries and EU candidates. Trade operators are provided with homogeneous internal and external trade conditions for all of this territory. Consequently, EU as an integration centre is a much more capacious market (500M consumers) than CIS. The positive effect of trade creation will reach maximum there while the negative trade deviation effect will minimize.

The CIS market counts for some more than 200M consumers who are poorer than those in EU are. There are no unified legal trade regulations for the trade operators. Trade deviation effect will get even more negative because of the less competitive goods manufactured in CIS – exporters, having simplified access to raw materials and semi-products of lower quality and worse access to better European analogues, strengthen their goods' competitiveness slower and less effectively.

During the period prior to the Baltic States' accession to EU, the former ones did not have any influence mechanisms on the customs policy of the Union. They had to accept the European legislation as it was. As a result, the average simple of their tariffs was raising by 1-2% compared to the one before accession.

Compare it with Belarus. During the period of the customs unions arrangement and development within CIS, it had the mechanisms to influence their future customs policy. However, it was forced to change its simple average rate by 4% (down) having introduced or left import duties on raw materials that are not produced in Belarus. In that way Belarusian economy suffered from more considerable integrations costs than the Baltics did.

As regards participation in other regional unions, the Baltic States have currently passed from the previously created set of European agreements (ones with countries of Central and Eastern Europe, EFTA, Baltic Transit Union, participation in other regional dialogues and forums) to the set of EU international agreements. Belarus participates in regional unions within CIS only. While the General System of Preferences regime was unilaterally granted to Belarus by EU, the former is the only former USSR country whose Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with EU is pending and has still not entered into force.

Thus, choosing a main integration partner – both political and economic — can influence significantly changes in foreign trade conditions.

Bilateral agreements. The Baltic States use bilateral agreements mainly as additional means and an instrument to develop regional integration processes.

Having no opportunity to develop wide economic contacts, Belarus is compelled to use actively bilateral relations with CIS states, China, and several third world countries (Asia-Pacific region, Africa and Latin America). Most important bilateral agreements are signed with Russia. There is a de-jute existing customs union between Belarus and Russia, and the single state is created. However, we suppose free trade zone to be sufficient form of economic integration with Russia, since Belarusian goods will have the same access to Russian market while there will be no need to barrier imports of deficit raw materials as Russian protectionist policy demands. /

It is clear that active international cooperation leads to creation of favorable conditions for exporters. The only market where Belarusian goods do not form subject to customs duties is Russia. The majority of other markets are accessible neither for small nor for medium businesses.

The share of "free of charge" exports is 20% higher for the Baltic States, and the situation when the goods are not subject to (at least) MFN regime is practically eliminated (compare to 10% of the Belarusian exports). One needs to take notice of the fact that the Baltic States have no such clear dependence on any single national market. Consequently, their trade conditions are more stable, which is also one of the positive results of the active efforts in international economic integration.

Closing

On the whole, customs policy of the Baltic States has reached more developed technical and technological level, is more liberal and is characterized by active participation in economic integration processes compared with Belarus. However, the efficiency of the Belarusian customs policy is higher. On the basis of our analysis, there can be drawn a conclusion that the most effective customs policy measures for the countries in question were: gradual abolishment of the export and import duties combined with moderate protectionism in strong export sectors, reduction or unification of the non-tariff customs regulations, technical and technological modernization, active participation in economic integration processes at the global, regional and bilateral levels.

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Baltarusijos ir Baltijos valstybių muitų politikos ypatybės 1990–2004 metais

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***Pagrindinės sąvokos**: muitų tarifai, eksporto tarifai, netarifinės priemonės, prekės, importas, eksportas, kokybės standartai.*

SANTRAUKA

Atkūrusios nepriklausomybę Baltijos valstybės ir Baltarusijos Respublika panašiomis planinės ekonomikos į rinkos ekonomiką transformacijos sąlygomis sprendė ūkio restruktūrizacijos ir nepriklausomos muitų politikos kūrimo uždavinius. Šiuo metu šios valstybės skiriasi užsienio prekybos rezultatais, yra susiformavusi skirtinga prekių importo ir eksporto struktūra, šios valstybės priklauso skirtingoms integracinėms struktūroms: Baltarusija yra Eurazijos ekonominės bendrijos narė, o Estija, Latvija ir Lietuva yra Europos Sąjungos narės.

Remdamiesi šiose valstybėse taikomų muitų politikos instrumentų ir užsienio prekybos palyginamosios analizės duomenimis, autoriai nagrinėja šiose šalyse taikomas tarifines ir netarifines užsienio prekybos reguliavimo priemones, muitinių organizavimo ir kontrolės klausimus, jų dalyvavimą ekonominio integravimo procesuose. Estija, Latvija ir Lietuva vertinamos kaip liberalios užsienio prekybos politikos šalys. Estijoje eksporto muitai, išskyrus istorines ir kultūros vertybių prekes, ir importo muitai buvo panaikinti visoms prekėms. Latvijoje ir Lietuvoje eksporto muitai taikyti minimaliam prekių rūšių skaičiui. Siekiant apsaugoti vietos gamybos sektorius, Latvijoje tokioms prekėms kaip mediena, metalai, cheminės ir farmacinės prekės, o Lietuvoje – žemės ūkio ir maisto prekės, tekstilės gaminiai, transporto priemonės taikyti importo muitai, kurių tarifai neviršijo 55 procentų. Baltarusijoje, siekiant visapusiškiau panaudoti vietos gamybinius pajėgumus, eksporto muitai nustatyti žaliavoms ir energijos šaltiniams, o importo muitai taikomi vietos gamintojams apsaugoti. Žaliavoms nustatyti importo muitai neviršija 5 proc., o pramoninėms prekėms – 30 proc. Baltarusijoje dėl didesnių eksporto muitų ir didesniam prekių pavadinimų skaičiui taikymo, jos žaliavų eksporto dalis iš bendro eksporto 2002 m. sudarė 6,97 proc., t. y. mažiausia dalis, palyginti su Lietuvos žaliavų eksportu – 11,9 proc., Estijos – 16,1 proc. ir Latvijos 14,04 proc. Importo liberalizavimo lygį rodo importo muitų ir importo masto santykis. Šis santykis Estijoje 1997 m. sudarė 0,001 proc., Latvijoje – 1,41, Lietuvoje – 1,27, o Baltarusijoje 4,12 proc.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas ekonominio ir neekonominio pobūdžio netarifinio reguliavimo priemonių tai-

kymas Baltarusijos ir Baltijos valstybėse. Daugiausia netarifinio reguliavimo priemonių skaičių, iš jų eksporto draudimą ir licencijavimą, eksporto sutarčių registravimą, kvotas, minimalias eksportuojamų prekių kainas, taiko Baltarusija. Estija tarptautinėje prekyboje taiko tik eksporto licencijavimą. PVM ir akcizų mokesčiai panašūs visose nagrinėjamose šalyse, išskyrus tai, kad pagal Baltarusijos Respublikos ir Rusijos Federacijos muitų sąjungos nuostatas PVM už eksportuojamas prekes renkamas prekių kilmės šalyje.

Svarbus užsienio prekybos veiksnys yra nacionalinių valiutų susiejimo su užsienio valiutomis pasirinkimo ir reguliavimo mechanizmas. Svarbiausių užsienio valiutų kursų svyravimai turėjo skirtingą įtaką nagrinėjamų šalių eksportui, nes jų nacionalinės valiutos buvo skirtingai susietos su pagrindinių šalių valiutomis, pavyzdžiui, Estijos krona buvo susieta su Vokietijos marke, Lietuvos litas iki 2002 metų buvo susietas su JAV doleriu, o Latvijos latas – su valiutų krepšeliu. Užsienio prekyboje Baltarusija 1990–2000 metais taikė privalomos užsienio valiutos pajamų dalies pardavimą pagal nustatytą oficialų keitimo kursą, taip sukurdama papildomą fiskalinę naštą šios šalies prekių eksportuotojams.

Dėl dažno muitų teisės aktų keitimo bei privačių kompanijų diskriminacinio pobūdžio veiksmų įforminimas Baltarusijos muitinėje reikalauja didesnių laiko sąnaudų ir finansinių išteklių. Baltijos valstybių muitinėse įforminimas yra paprastesnis, jose galioja vienodi muitinės teisės aktai ir muitinės bei transporto dokumentai, taikomos supaprastintos muitinės procedūros. Šalių muitinių teritorinė struktūra visose keturiose nagrinėjamose šalyse yra racionali, išsidėsčiusi pasienyje ir teritorijų viduje, tačiau Baltijos šalys pagal Europos Sąjungos programas Customs 2000, 2002 ir 2007 turi plačias muitinių infrastruktūros ir technologijų tobulinimo galimybes, kokių neturi Baltarusijos muitinė. Baltijos šalių muitinės, padedamos Europos Sąjungos muitinių, įgyvendino rizikos analizės ir valdymo, elektroninio deklaravimo sistemas. Muitinės pareigūnų rengimo ir kvalifikacijos kėlimo srityje Baltarusijoje veikia keturi universitetai ir keletas mokymo centrų, o Baltijos valstybių muitinės šioje srityje dar turi ir keitimosi ES valstybių narių muitinių praktika galimybių.

Tarptautinės ekonomikos integracijos ir prekybos liberalizavimo procesus globaliniu lygmeniu reguliuoja Pasaulio prekybos organizacija (PPO) ir Pasaulio muitinių organizacija (PMO), kurios nariai yra visos keturios valstybės. PPO narės yra visos Baltijos valstybės, o Baltarusija dėl protekcionistinės prekybos politikos, jos integracijos į Rytų ekonominę erdvę vis dar išgyvena derybų dėl narystės stadiją. Baltijos valstybės jau 1990 metais prisijungė prie muitinėms labai svarbios Kijoto konvencijos, o Baltarusija dar tik ruošiasi šioms procedūroms. Be to, Baltijos valstybės yra prisijungusios prie daugelio Vakarų transporto konvencijų, dėl to importo/eksporto ir tranzito sąlygos šiose valstybėse yra kur kas geresnės.

Nors nagrinėjamos šalys išsidėsčiusios Europoje, regioniniu lygmeniu jos priklauso skirtingiems integraciniams centrams – ES ir NVS. Europos Sąjunga, kaip integracijos centras, turi didesnę ir imlesnę rinką su daugiau kaip 400 mln. vartotojų, vientisą tarptautinės prekybos ir muitų teisinę bazę. NVS rinka, apimanti 200 mln. skurdesnių vartotojų, neturi suderintos vientisos prekybos teisinės bazės, o joje pagaminti produktai yra mažiau konkurentiški.

Neturėdama galimybių plėtoti plačius ekonominius ryšius Europos ekonominėje erdvėje, Baltarusija aktyviai plėtoja dvišalius susitarimus su NVS valstybėmis, Kinija ir trečiojo pasaulio – Azijos ir Ramiojo vandenyno, Afrikos ir Lotynų Amerikos – šalimis.

Straipsnyje pateiktos šios išvados:

1. *Baltijos šalių muitų politika, palyginti su Baltarusija, yra liberalesnė, jai būdingas aktyvus dalyvavimas ekonominės integracijos procesuose ir aukštesnis technologinio išsivystymo lygis.*
2. *Baltarusijos laipsniškas importo ir eksporto muitų mažinimas, derintas su ribotu stipraus eksporto sektoriaus protekcionizmu, netarifinių muitų reguliavimo priemonių mažinimu, muitų politika, rėmėsi aktyvesniu dalyvavimu ekonominio integravimo procesuose dvišalių susitarimų lygmeniu.*