

Anna Taranenko

*PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor of
the Department of International Relations
National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” (Kyiv, Ukraine)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2588-4941>
e-mail: taranenkoann@yahoo.com*

**CURRENT RELATIONS OF CARIBBEAN STATES AND
UKRAINE: NEW POLICY DIMENSIONS**

Abstract

It is noted that relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states are taking new dimension currently. Latin American and Caribbean vector of Ukrainian foreign policy has long been out of the main focus of Ukrainian decision-makers, as compared with the European, transatlantic, Asian and African foreign policy vectors. Yet, as of late the situation has changed and the relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states intensified. Ukraine currently keeps developing its relations with the countries of the region, and new policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine appear. Thereby, an important milestone in the relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states has become the first-ever Communication Strategy Ukraine – Latin America and the Caribbean.

It can be stated that current policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine are varied and multi-faceted. The notion of the Caribbean region is important and challenging to capture, because it encompasses a wide range of geographical, political, linguistic and cultural factors, among others. The state of the current Ukraine-Caribbean states relations has changed dramatically, as compared to the previous period until adoption of the first-ever Communication Strategy Ukraine – Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024. Further characteristics and trends of policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine are continuation of economic and political cooperation, further search for investment and trade opportunities, as well as collaboration in educational, scientific and cultural sectors. It can be concluded that current policy dimensions in relations of Caribbean states and Ukraine are

increased communication, intensified dialogue and new economic and political cooperation spheres.

Keywords: Caribbean region; Ukraine; Latin America; diplomacy; Association of Caribbean States; CARICOM; CELAC

Introduction

Relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states are taking new dimension currently. Latin American and Caribbean vector of Ukrainian foreign policy has long been out of the main focus of Ukrainian decision-makers, as compared with the European, transatlantic, Asian and African foreign policy vectors. Yet, as of late the situation has changed and the relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states intensified.

Ukraine currently keeps developing its relations with the countries of the region. In particular, the Ukrainian Parliament created a new inter-factional association responsible for cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, thus strengthening cooperation with the region, in parallel with the work already underway at the level of the President of Ukraine and the government [1, p.1]. This is a vital move for furthering respective diplomatic relations. Thereby, Member of Ukrainian Parliament Arsenii Pushkarenko noted that, unfortunately, over past thirty years, cooperation with the countries of this region has been sporadic and only in 2023 President Volodymyr Zelensky visited Latin American region, renewing diplomatic relations [1, p.1]. «We are interested in cooperation with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the inter-parliamentary format will allow us to deepen and expand the work already underway at the presidential and governmental level», emphasized A. Pushkarenko [1, p.1]. Thereby, an important milestone in the relations of Ukraine with Caribbean states has become the first-ever Communication Strategy Ukraine – Latin America and the Caribbean. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presented this document in 2024.

Thus, it is crucial to outline new policy dimensions in the relations of Ukraine and the Caribbean states. The goal of the article is to determine current policy dimensions in the relations of Caribbean states and Ukraine. The objectives of the study are to determine the notion of the Caribbean region, specify the state of the current Ukraine-Caribbean states relations and determine further characteristics and trends of policy dimensions' development between the Caribbean states and Ukraine.

Research Methods

For the purpose of determining current policy dimensions in the relations of Caribbean states and Ukraine, the author has utilized the method of case study. Case study is a method widely utilized in social sciences. The case study method is used for researching a person, event, condition, phenomenon, or

other type of subject of analysis to extrapolate key themes and results that help foresee future trends, illuminate previously hidden issues and provide a means for comprehending a significant research aspect with clarity [2, p. 1]. The case study method appears to be a relevant approach to determining current policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine.

Research Results

Ukraine's relations with the Caribbean states have become more dynamic as of late. The above-mentioned Communication Strategy Ukraine – Latin America and the Caribbean is a critically important document for Ukraine-Caribbean region relations. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the importance of creating a communication strategy to strengthen ties with Latin American and Caribbean countries and emphasized that the current foreign policy priorities are to open new horizons for Ukraine and increase our country's presence in key regions of the world [3, p. 1]. Latin America and the Caribbean region were defined as new priority vectors of the Ukrainian foreign policy. Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the crucial new horizons in 2024 and beyond and we will ensure that our cooperation becomes a driving force for mutual development, noted then-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba [3, p. 1].

Thereby it should be noted that there are different approaches to the notion of a region and the Caribbean, in particular. There are such approaches as geographical, cultural, linguistic, among others. According to R.B. Kent, Latin America is a vast region spanning parts of North America, almost all of South America, and much of the West Indies and, arguably, even parts of the southwestern U.S. [4, p. 1]. M. V. Bulyk, O. L. Hilchenko, Yu. V. Konstantynova use a subregional approach and respectively single out Caribbean countries, Central American countries, Andean countries and Southern Cone countries) [5, p. 1]. Latin America can be seen as a culture region, with multiple factors that have contributed to the varied human geography and landscapes of the region [4, p. 1].

Linguistic factor can also be applied for defining a region. Dominant language use might be mapped as a surrogate for defining broad cultural regions, thus, the dominant use of English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish in the Western Hemisphere might be mapped to define distinct regional cultures associated with each area [4, p.3]. These features are particularly salient in case of the Caribbean area. In view of this factor, sometimes the Caribbean is included in the broader, predominantly Spanish-speaking region of Latin America and sometimes it is excluded on the basis of historical, linguistic and political differences. In other cases, geographers use a more extensive set of criteria, or multiple factors, to more accurately reflect the cultural or physical homogeneity of distinct geographic regions [4, p. 3].

As noted above, the Caribbean subregion is included in the broader Latin American region, and at times it is excluded. The modern-day countries of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic (the Greater Antilles) constitute the Hispanic Caribbean, as a result of Spanish colonization of the area starting from the late 15th c. [4, p. 55]. Other European colonial powers managed to wrest the island of Jamaica and part of Hispaniola from the Spanish and occupy the Lesser Antilles [4, p. 55]. Currently this island is shared by predominantly Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic and predominantly French- and Creole-speaking Haiti.

The Caribbean region was a crucial element of England's overseas colonies. The region was also known as the «West Indies» because when the explorer Christopher Columbus first arrived there in 1492, he believed that he had arrived in the «Indies», as Asia was then known [6, p. 1]. The English forces took over St. Kitts, Antigua, Barbuda and Nevis between 1624 and 1628, while approximately at the same time, the French colonized Guadeloupe and Martinique [6, p. 1].

These processes of colonization resulted in a range of Spanish, British, French, Dutch and other influences, as well as a variety of political and administrative systems in the Caribbean region. Some of the examples include British Overseas Territory (e.g. Turks and Caicos, Cayman Islands, Bermuda Islands, Anguilla); overseas collectivity of France (e.g. St. Martin, Saint Barthelemy), Constituent country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Sint Maarten); independent states, former British colonies (e.g. Dominica), French Overseas Department (e.g. Guadeloupe, Martinique), British Commonwealth countries (e.g. St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines), independent British Commonwealth nation (e.g. Barbados), autonomous, self-governing constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (e.g. Aruba, Curaçao), a special municipality of the Netherlands (Bonaire). Thus, approaches to defining the Caribbean region can vary greatly and a wide range of variables needs to be taken into account.

Regional integration processes in the Caribbean currently are not very dynamic. Yet, there are several important regional organizations in the Caribbean and the broader Latin American region. Among these organizations, one can note CARICOM, CELAC, Association of Caribbean States, among others.

One of the important regional organizations is CARICOM (Caribbean Community). CARICOM was established in 1973, and this structure consists of fifteen full members and five associate members, with headquarters situated in Georgetown, Guyana [7, p. 1]. It is an influential regional organization covering 20 countries in Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean [7, p. 1]. Shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, CARICOM condemned the act, stating that «the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity,

non-interference in the internal affairs of another sovereign state, and the peaceful resolution of all disputes must be adhered to by all nations» [8, p. 1]. There was an online meeting of Deputy Secretary General of CARICOM for Foreign Affairs D. Forde with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine A. Melnyk in 2023 [7, p. 1]. The interlocutors discussed the prospects for the development of cooperation between Ukraine and the Caribbean Community [7, p. 1]. A. Melnyk and D. Forde agreed to continue close cooperation in order to expand contacts between Ukraine and the CARICOM member states in areas of mutual interest, primarily in the trade, economy and investment sectors [7, p. 1].

CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) is another important organization in the region. CELAC is an intergovernmental platform, which includes 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to promote dialogue and political agreement among them [9, p. 1]. Since its launch in 2011, CELAC has helped to deepen respectful dialogue among all countries in the region in the areas of social development, finance, education, nuclear disarmament, culture, energy, environment and family farming [9, p. 1]. Also, CELAC acts as a spokesman for the Community with other countries and regional blocs: the EU, China, the Republic of Korea, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Turkiye and Japan [9, p. 1]. A large delegation of journalists from the CELAC region visited Ukraine in 2024 [1, p. 1]. It is important for us to reach out to politicians and society in the region through all possible platforms so that they take part in the settlement of the russian-Ukrainian war, and the realization of Ukraine's Peace Formula, respectively noted Ukrainian MP Arsenii Pushkarenko [1, p. 1].

Another important organization in the region is the Association of Caribbean States. The Association of Caribbean States is a platform uniting thirty-five contracting states, countries and territories of the Caribbean to enhance cooperation within the area, an initiative aimed at building upon obvious geographic proximity and well-documented historical linkages [10, p. 1]. It provides a forum for political dialogue in order to identify areas of common interest, which may be addressed at the regional level, and the solutions which can be found through cooperation [10, p. 1].

The ACS Membership identified five areas of concern for the attention of the Association:

- preservation and conservation of the Caribbean Sea. The preservation and conservation of this natural resource is a mandate of primordial importance for the organization;
- sustainable tourism. The importance of this aspect for the member states transcends questions of language or territory;

- trade and economic external relations. The respective focus is placed on economic integration, investment and intra-regional trade in order to raise competitiveness of the Greater Caribbean region;

- natural disasters. The continued vulnerability of all countries and territories of the Greater Caribbean to the physical ravages and economical challenges of natural disasters is a theme of utmost importance on the regional agenda;

- transport. Proper functioning of efficient and viable intraregional air and maritime routes not only facilitates closer intraregional relations, but represents a fundamental base for cooperation [10, p. 1].

Ukraine's interest is in further developing relations with the states of the Caribbean region. There are numerous economic, diplomatic and political opportunities for cooperation. Ukraine is interested in investment opportunities, trade and economic cooperation development. Another dimension is education, technology, culture and science. The first parliamentary conference «Ukraine – Latin American and Caribbean States: Cooperation for the Future» was conducted at the Ukrainian Parliament [11, p. 1]. The Conference was attended by the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk, people's deputies of Ukraine and representatives of parliaments of thirteen Latin American and Caribbean countries, embassies of these countries, as well as representatives of the Central American Parliament [11, p. 1]. In turn, representatives of the parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people, support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and condemnation of russian aggression [11, p. 1]. Further cooperation of Ukraine with the Caribbean states is to be continued and intensified.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research

Thus, current policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine are varied and multi-faceted. The notion of the Caribbean region is important and challenging to capture, because it encompasses a wide range of geographical, political, linguistic and cultural factors, among others. The state of the current Ukraine-Caribbean states relations has changed dramatically, as compared to the previous period until adoption of the first-ever Communication Strategy Ukraine – Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024. Further characteristics and trends of policy dimensions in the relations of the Caribbean states and Ukraine are continuation of economic and political cooperation, further search for investment and trade opportunities, as well as collaboration in educational, scientific and cultural sectors. It can be concluded that current policy dimensions in relations of Caribbean states and Ukraine are

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Тараненко Ганна Геннадіївна

*Кандидат політичних наук, доцент кафедри міжнародних відносин
Національний університет «Кієво-Могилянська академія» (м. Київ, Україна)*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2588-4941>

e-mail: taranenkoann@yahoo.com

**СУЧАСНІ ВІДНОСИНИ ДЕРЖАВ КАРИБЬСЬКОГО БАСЕЙНУ
ТА УКРАЇНИ: НОВІ ПОЛІТИЧНІ ВИМІРИ**

Резюме

У статті відзначено, що відносини України з країнами Карибського басейну нині набувають нового виміру. Латиноамериканський та карибський вектор зовнішньої політики України довгий час був поза головним фокусом українських політиків, порівняно з європейським, трансатлантичним, азійським та африканським векторами зовнішньої політики. Однак останнім часом ситуація змінилася, і відносини України з країнами Карибського басейну стали більш активними. Україна продовжує розвивати відносини з державами Карибського басейну, і з'являються нові політичні виміри у відносинах держав Карибського басейну та України. При цьому, важливою віхою у відносинах України з державами Карибського басейну стала перша в історії Комунікаційна стратегія Україна — Латинська Америка та Карибський басейн.

Можна стверджувати, що сучасні політичні виміри у відносинах держав Карибського басейну та України є різноманітними та багатогранними. При цьому варто зауважити, що поняття Карибського регіону є важливим та складним для визначення, оскільки воно охоплює широкий спектр географічних, політичних, лінгвістичних та культурних факторів, серед інших. Стан сучасних відносин між Україною та державами Карибського басейну кардинально змінився порівняно з попереднім періодом до прийняття першої в історії Комунікаційної стратегії Україна — Латинська Америка та Карибський басейн у 2024 році. Подальшими характеристиками та тенденціями політичних вимірів у відносинах держав Карибського басейну та України є продовження економічної та політичної співпраці, подальший

пошук інвестиційних та торговельних можливостей, а також співпраця в освітній, науковій та культурній сферах. Можна зробити висновок, що сучасними політичними вимірами у відносинах держав Карибського басейну та України є посилення комунікації, інтенсифікація діалогу та нові сфери економічного та політичного співробітництва.

Ключові слова: Карибський регіон; Україна; Латинська Америка; дипломатія; Асоціація держав Карибського басейну; КАРІКОМ; СЕЛАК.

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