

## PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Broadly understood East Asia (including Northeast and Southeast Asia) is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, bringing opportunities and threats for the global system, being a crucial element of the Asia-Pacific system. What is important, both the Asia-Pacific, and broadly understand East Asia institutionalize regional cooperation (in forms of regimes or organizations *in statu nascendi*). In this context Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN (and ASEAN Community) should be mentioned, being a crucial integration scheme for South-East Asia, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation - APEC, playing a crucial role for the Pacific-wide integration or U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership are worth mentioning. In case of East Asia, one should focus on ASEAN+3 (APT – ASEAN Plus Three) scheme, created after the Asian Economic Crisis and following East Asian Summit (initiated in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur).

**In the aforementioned context, lack of cooperation structure in North-East Asia seems to be surprising, having in mind different theoretical approaches, used for regional analysis** (especially basing on initial quantitative findings). South Korea's 2008 initiative of Trilateral Summit of China, Japan and Korea, build on APT side meetings, institutionalized by the creation of an Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat in Seoul in 2011, as well as tripartite FTA negotiations, seems to be a chance for the change of the situation.

**This projects aims at analyzing set of building and stumbling blocks of Northeast Asian regional integration, based on regional integration theories, system approach and regional security complex theory.** The basic assumption of the project suggests the transnational factors support Northeast Asian regional integration, *in statu nascendi* supranational factors (including especially newly created secretariat) reinforce transnational level, whereas international (understood as inter-state) level should be perceived as a stumbling block for regional integration and possible forming of Northeast Asian Community.

Further studies on Northeast Asia, being crucial region in both, the regional system, and global one, will help us understanding the complexity of regional relations, hard to explain by focusing on quantitative data (suggesting level of integration should grow) or qualitative one (bringing us closer to understand separate identities). Having in mind the aforementioned, methodological part and creation of unique research approach in the discipline, including Polish IR seems the crucial value added of the submitted proposal. Mixed methods approach may definitely improve the level of IR research conducted in Poland and the world, bring new analytical schemes and integrate existing ones, as well as increase explanatory and predictive potential of our IR studies. Mixed with proper theories, such methodological approach may be also a key for competing in the global IR environment.

As mentioned earlier, Northeast Asia is without doubts one of the crucial regions in the global system. Therefore deeper understanding of regional competition and cooperation is crucial for proper policy approach towards both NE Asia per se and Asia in general. It's especially crucial, as China, Japan and Korea are important Polish trade partners, and Poland signed a strategic partnership statement with China in 2011. Our country is so far mostly importing goods from all NE Asian countries, but there are attempts for further expansion of Polish companies in regional markets (visible especially in case of China, importing more and more food from Poland, to certain degree electro machinery – Kopex). All countries have investments in Poland. Our further engagement in the region is also important due to institutional links, as Poland became a member of the Asia-Europe Meeting and (indirectly) of the ASEAN Regional Forum (being a member of the EU). One should consider also our membership in Asian Development Bank, as we could gain unique experiences how to provide official development aid wisely (it's important, as volume of Polish ODA's increases).

Proposed research will help in further understanding of our Asian partners, IR in Northeast Asia and possible future developments in the region. Such knowledge may be useful for both Polish government (including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency), and business interested in cooperation with Northeast Asian countries. Such knowledge should also be used for shaping (or influencing) EU policy toward the region.