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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**World Economy and World Seaborne Trade  
in the 2005-2013 Period**

**Romeo Bosneagu<sup>1</sup>, Carmen Elena Coca<sup>2</sup>, Florin Sorescu<sup>3</sup>**

**Abstract:** In the period 1990-2013 the world economy has evolved increasing and decreasing with good and weak years, with mini crisis, and with a recent strong crisis, which apparently has not yet passed. World seaborne trade, inextricably linked to the global economy followed the upward and the downward trend of the global economy, but with much higher amplitudes. Comparative analysis of the evolution of the global economy and world seaborne trade during the period 2005-2013 shows a decrease in world seaborne trade in tandem with the global economy.

**Keywords:** crisis; developed countries, transition countries

**JEL Classification:** E21; E22; E23

## 1. World Economic Growth in the 1990-2013 Period

Evolution of world seaborne trade in recent years has been directly influenced by the world economy and therefore a synthetic analysis of the latter must be done. For analysis we chose three groups of countries: developed countries, transition countries, developing countries<sup>4</sup>, and China, compared to the world economy.

World seaborne trade is inextricably linked to the world economy, the development of the current production areas and outlets, as well as new ones, with differences from one region to another; world economy growth in 2012 was less than 0.6 % compared to 2011, as confirmed by the estimated value for 2013. In 2012, world economy growth was 2.2 % compared to 2.8% in 2011, and for 2013 the increase (under validation) was 2.1 %<sup>5</sup>. This trend is confirmed by the economic situation of developed economies, transition economies and China<sup>6</sup>, except the developing economies that have experienced an increase of 4.6% in 2012, from 5.9 % in 2011 and a growth estimate of 4.7 % in 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, PhD, Naval Academy "Mircea cel Batrân", Romania, Address: Strada Fulgerului 1, Constanța 900218, Tel.: 40.241 626 200, E-mail: romeobosneagu@yahoo.com.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, PhD Student, Tomis University, Constanta, Romania, Address: 100 Vulcan Petru Str., Constanta, 900628, Romania, Tel.: 40.241 558 700, Corresponding author: zelesneacarmen@yahoo.com.

<sup>3</sup> Senior Lecturer, PhD, Tomis University, Constanta, Romania, Address: 100 Vulcan Petru Str., Constanta, 900628, Romania, Tel.: 40.241 558 700, E-mail: flosorescu@yahoo.com.

<sup>4</sup> Countries belonging to these categories of economic development is according to UNCTAD.

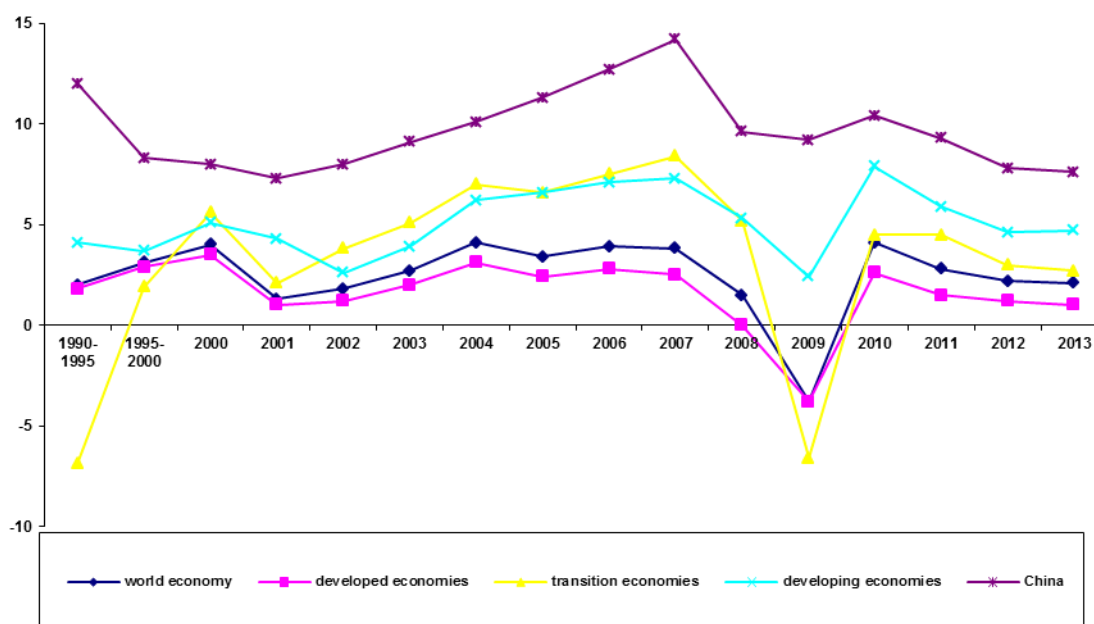
<sup>5</sup> Review of Maritime Transport 2013, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development -UNCTAD, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

The Analysis of official bibliographic sources (UNCTAD, World Bank, IMF<sup>1</sup>), although they show slightly different information on the world economy in the period 1990-2013, shows as (table 1 and graph.1):

**Table 1. Evolution of the world economy during 1990 to 2013 [in percent]**

Period	World economy	Developed economies	Transition economies	Developing economies	China
1990-1995	2,0	1,8	-6,9	4,1	12,0
1995-2000	3,1	2,9	1,9	3,7	8,3
2000	4,0	3,5	5,6	5,1	8,0
2001	1,3	1,0	2,1	4,3	7,3
2002	1,8	1,2	3,8	2,6	8,0
2003	2,7	2,0	5,1	3,9	9,1
2004	4,1	3,1	7,0	6,2	10,1
2005	3,4	2,4	6,6	6,6	11,3
2006	3,9	2,8	7,5	7,1	12,7
2007	3,8	2,5	8,4	7,3	14,2
2008	1,5	0,0	5,2	5,3	9,6
2009	-2,2	-3,8	-6,6	2,4	9,2
2010	4,1	2,6	4,5	7,9	10,4
2011	2,8	1,5	4,5	5,9	9,3
2012	2,2	1,2	3,0	4,6	7,8
2013	2,1	1,0	2,7	4,7	7,6
average	2,53	1,48	3,4	5,1	9,68



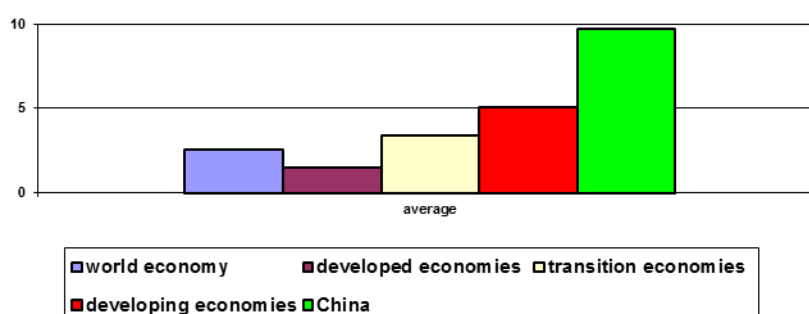
**Graph 1. Annual evolution of the world economy and by UNCTAD economies categories in the period 1990-2013 [in percent]**

- the worst years in terms of economic growth was 2009, (with negative growth for the world economy, developed economies and transition economies), 2008 and 2001 (though with positive growth);

- the best years in terms of economic growth have been 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010;

<sup>1</sup> www.unctad.org; www.worldbank.org; www.imf.org.

- the last decade of the twentieth century registered an increasing trend of economic growth, ended with a peak of 4% in 2000;
- for the period 2000-2004 there was a decrease of more than two percent and a return to growth of 4.1% in 2004;
- in the next four years 2004-2007 the growth of the world economy remains (a slight decrease) around one in 2004, and because of the emergence of the global crisis, in 2008 and 2009 there was a drastic reductions in the world economy growth (from 3.8% in 2007 to -2.2% in 2009);
- it was following a strong recovery of the world economy in 2010, by 6.3 percent, from -2.2% (2009) to 4.1% (2010);
- in the last four years (2010-2013), world economy decreases steadily to a value similar in growth with the '90s (estimated growth of 2.1% for 2013);
- average world economic growth, developed economies, transition economies, developing economies and China in the period 1990-2013 shows as (table 2 and graph.2):
  - an increase of growth of the developed economies with a lower value compared to the growth of world economy ( 1.48 % vs. 2.53 % );
  - a higher rate of growth of developing economies compared to the world economic growth (5.1%), countries which, after 2000, experienced only positive growth, even during the current global economic crisis;
  - a higher rate of growth of transition economies compared to the world economic growth ( 3.4% ), countries, after the crisis they went through during the years 1990 - 1995 (-6.9 % ) experienced positive growth, however, were affected by the global crisis (2009 with negative growth - 6.6% );
  - a high growth rate of the Chinese economy (9.68 %), almost four times higher than the world economy in the same period), with peaks in 2006 and 2007 (14.2% ), but with a slowdown growth, below the average in the last three years (2013, 7.6 % estimated growth).



**Graph 2. Mean world economic growth and by types of economies in the 1990-2013 period**

## 2. World Seaborne Trade Evolution during 2005-2012 Period

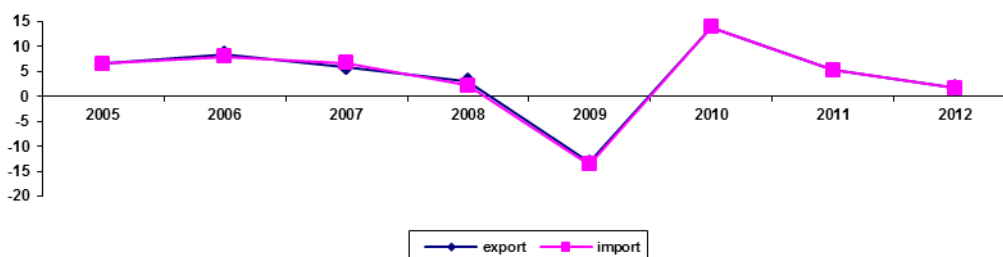
The analysis of the world seaborne trade was based on the annual reports published by UNCTAD, World Bank, IMF, etc.. These official information relates to changes (in percent) of exports and imports of goods by sea, the world economy, developed economies, transition economies, developing economies and China in the period 2005-2012 (table 2):

**Table 2. Annual evolution of world seaborne trade in the 2005-2012 period [in percent]**

Period	Annual percentage	World economy	Developed economies	Transition economies	Developing economies	China
2005	export	6,5				25,0
	import	6,5				11,5
2006	export	8,5				22,0
	import	8,0				16,5
2007	export	5,8	3,9	8,6	8,7	21,8
	import	6,6	3,7	26,1	10,6	14,1
2008	export	3,0	2,8	0,8	4,2	10,5
	import	2,2	0,0	16,0	5,3	2,4
2009	export	-13,3	-15,5	-14,4	-7,4	-14,1
	import	-13,6	-14,6	-28,2	-17,9	-1,1
2010	export	13,9	13,0	11,3	8,3	29,1
	import	13,8	10,8	15,9	22,5	25,4
2011	export	5,2	4,9	4,2	4,6	13,0
	import	5,3	3,4	15,7	10,8	10,3
2012	export	1,8	0,4	1,0	2,2	7,2
	import	1,6	-0,5	3,9	2,5	5,9
Average 2007-2012	export	3,0	1,59	8,2	3,41	12,2
	import	2,6	0,47	1,9	6,61	9,5
Average 2007-2012		2,8	1,08	5,0	5,02	10,85

This analysis looks like this:

- the worst years of the world seaborne trade were: 2008, 2009 (-13.3% export, -13.6% import) and 2012;
- the best year for the world seaborne trade was 2010 (13.9% export, 13.8% import);
- the global crisis has affected the world seaborne trade particularly strong, in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012;
- percentage values of the evolution of exports and imports in the world seaborne trade are very close (graph.3);
- the last two years (2011, 2012) the world seaborne trade was decreasing at a smallest value before the current global crisis (graph.3):



**Graph 3. Annual evolution of world seaborne trade in the 2005-2012 period [in percent]**

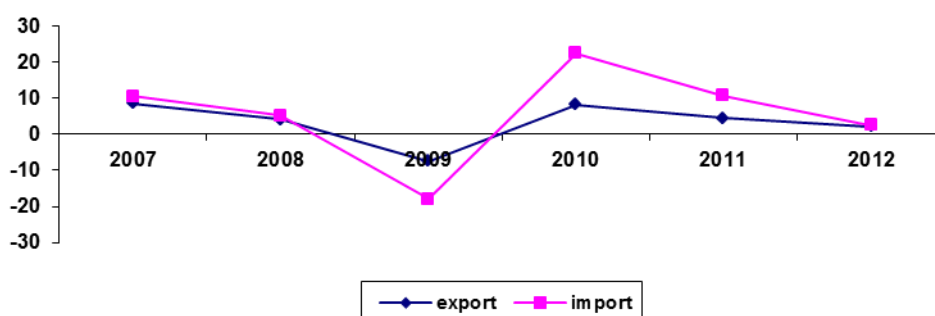
- the development of the world seaborne trade of developed economies was similar to world seaborne trade (graph.4), but with smaller amplitudes:

**Graph 4. Annual evolution of world seaborne trade of the developed economies in the 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

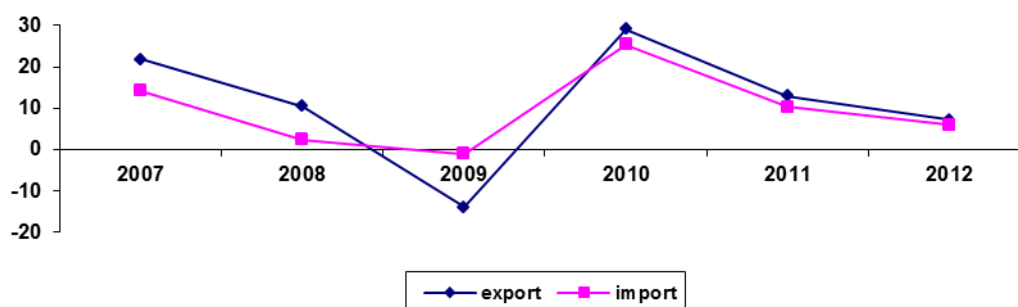
- the development of the world seaborne trade of the transition economies, for the same period (2007-2012), was similar to the evolution of world seaborne trade of the developed economies, with its specificity given by the lower value of exports and higher imports and lower decrease of the exports/imports in the most difficult year of the global crisis-2009 (graph5):

**Graph 5. Annual evolution of the world seaborne trade of the transition economies in 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

- and the development of the world seaborne trade of developing economies experienced the same trend with the world seaborne trade of developed economies, with its specificity gave by the lower values of exports and imports, and the value of imports generally higher than exports except year 2009, when the import was significantly lower than export (graph.6):

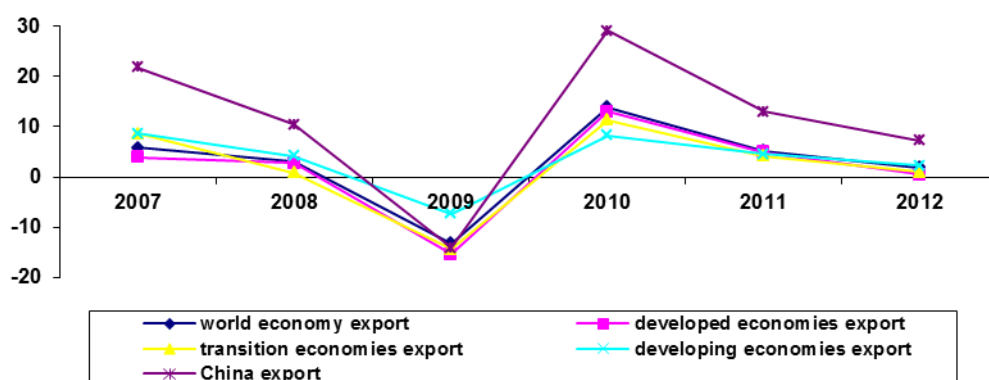
**Graph 6. Annual evolution of the world seaborne trade of the developing economies in the 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

- and the evolution of China's seaborne trade followed the trend of world seaborne trade, the difference made by a percentage of export and import values much higher (graph.7) export maritime trade was higher than import, except during the global crisis (2009); and for China last two years (2011 and 2012) have meant sharp decline in exports and imports, less than half the value recorded in 2010 (graph.7):



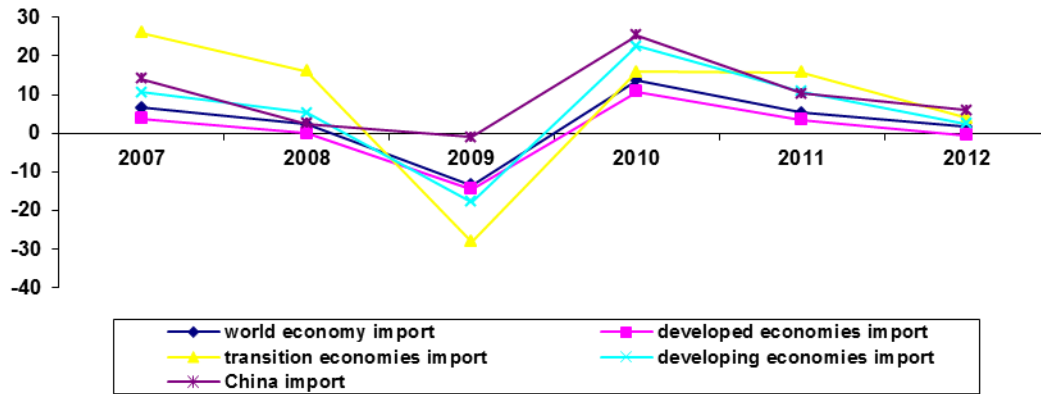
**Graph 7. Evolution of China's annual seaborne trade in the 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

- the export of the world seaborne trade had the same trend for the world economy and for groups of countries chosen for the study, except China, which had a higher export value about four times and developing economies, which had a much smaller decrease in seaborne trade export in 2009 (graph.8):



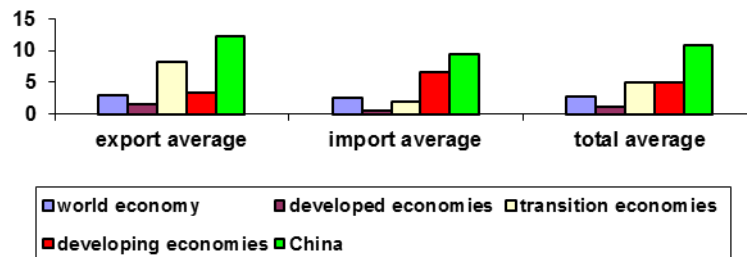
**Graph 8. Annual evolution of exports in the world seaborne trade in the 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

- the import of the world seaborne trade had the same trend for the world economy and for groups of countries chosen for the study, except China, which had a higher import value about twice in 2009-2010 and transition economies, which had a higher value in 2007-2008 and 2011, and the largest decrease in 2009 (graph.9):



**Graph 9. Annual evolution of imports in the world seaborne trade in 2007-2012 period [in percent]**

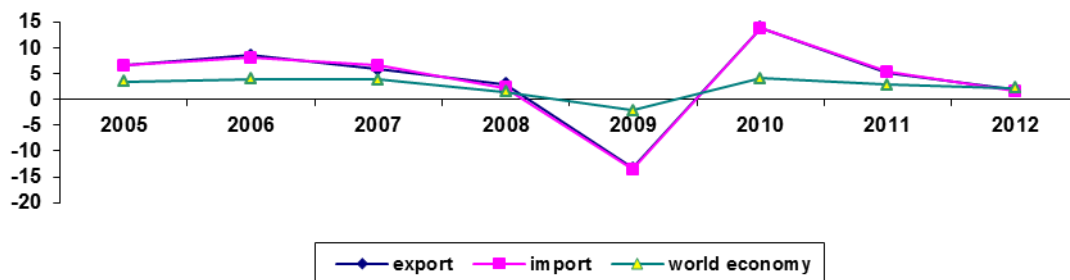
- concerning the average development of the world seaborne trade and the seaborne trade of the groups of countries chosen for the study, there can be noticed China’s high rate of seaborne trade export and the same for the transition economies, with a higher value exports; developed economies had a smaller development of the import than the export, instead the developing economies have increased their import more than the export (graph10):



**Graph10. World seaborne trade average (export, import and export and import average) and by type of economies in the 2007-2012 period**

### 3. Conclusions:

- in the last 23 years the world economy has fared cyclical rise and fall, rise in periods 1990-2000, 2003-2007, 2010, decrease in 2000-2002, sharp drop during the global crisis 2007-2009 and 2011-2013;
- during 1990-2008 years the world economy evolved within relatively close limits (1.3% to 4.1%), exceptions being registered in the worst years: 2001 (1.3%), 2008 (1.5%) 2009 (-2.2%);
- global crisis has led to a negative evolution of the world economy, which currently has not found his previous trend, that before the crisis; this is true for the world economy, but less for developing economies and China (which had a significant decrease growth, but with significant positive values);
- world seaborne trade is closely linked to the world economy (graph11):



**Graph 11. Comparative annual evolution of the world economy and the world seaborne global trade during the years 2005 to 2012 [in percent]**

- it can be seen very well on graphics that the world seaborne trade growth with increasing global economy (with a yearly growth rate about three times higher in 2005-2006 and in 2010, a rate nearly five times higher); in terms of decelerating the world economy growth it can be seen as the maximum period of crisis (2009), the world's seaborne trade dropped more seriously, nearly four times the world economy; after the peak growth in 2010, the world seaborne trade has dropped dramatically, following the trend of declining world economy, because in 2012 the growth rate is lower than the world economy;
- although the amount of goods transported by sea was higher in 2013 than in 2012 (9.568 billion tons to 9.165 billion tons loaded), the annual percentage increase is very small, directly related to the demand of the world market;
- if the declining current trend of the world economy will continue in the coming years, following the evolution of comparative global seaborne trade and the world economy in recent years, it is assumed that the trend of the world seaborne trade developments is in sharp decline.

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