

Der Kleinstaat in der europäischen Geschichte. Aussenpolitische Aspekte

Summary

Small states were a common phenomenon in European history until the 19th century. Their rulers had three options, how to participate in international politics: 1. to join other small states to be strong enough for defending common interests and fight for common goals, 2. to manoeuvre using the tensions between great powers, 3. to accept the satelliterole of a great power.

The possibilities to influence international relations were limited, but not irrelevant. Their role could develop to various forms: strategic position during an international conflict, a useful satellite of a great power or a coalition, a pretext for conflicts and crises in international relations, an object for compensations during peace talks, a moral alibi for a great state protecting the small one, factor of an independent "public opinion" in foreign affairs.

The transition from a Europe of States to a Europe of Nations during the 19th century was decisive for the disappearance of almost all small states. Instead of them, a limited number of small nations strengthened their position and achieved the status of a national state, whose behaviour is characterized by some analogies to the role of the former small state.