The Black Sea Region: a security minefield or a partnership road?

A Plea towards Enhanced Solidarity and
Cooperation in the EU Neighbourhood

The Black Sea Region: a security minefield or a partnership road?

A Plea towards Enhanced Solidarity and Cooperation in the EU Neighbourhood

CARTIER

Publishing House

SUMMARY

Preface

We would like to acknowledge our indebtedness to a significant number of people, thanks to whom this publication was made possible.

First and foremost, we shall thank all our partner organisations and individual authors that attended our conference in Chisinau on 20 – 21 November, 2008.

Many outstanding papers presented at the conference were made possible by the research grant funded by the NATO Security through Science Collaborative Linkage Project „**Bridging Perceptions of Security: Integrating the Black Sea Region"**.

As the title of this cross-regional research already states, the ambition of the networking effort was to gather new data and develop strategic knowledge about the region in flux, considering the outstanding relevance of the Black Sea as a geo-strategic and geo-economic region, to interpret respective regional processes and security challenges and the newly emerging geopolitical realities, to elaborate on development scenarios for the region, and assess their implications for the countries in the Black Sea region.

Authors of different academic/professional background and from different countries aimed to explore various issues of regional relevance, such as: environment, epidemiology, shared natural resources, energy security, cross-border river flows, and mobility of peoples. They have also tried to compare approaches and perceptions developed by the countries in the region, and provide innovative and meaningful input on the elaboration of policy strategies of the main actors for the Black Sea region.

Special thanks go to Dr Burcu Gultekin, Senior Researcher at the Centre for European Studies of METU (Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences), who had great inspiration to plan and conduct a series of in-depth discussions in both Istanbul and Ankara during the year 2008.

The participants in the discussions were able to deliver public presentations touching upon variegated aspects of the EU and NATO impact on the Black Sea, by studying the perceptions in the countries of the region on the opportunities of cooperation, effectiveness of the existing institutions, threats and risks perceived throughout the region, as a result of the antagonizing challenges of the recent years.

In a similar vein, we extend our thanks to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Romanian and Moldovan Offices), which contributed to this project by supporting the organisation of the conference in Chisinau, in November

Introduction and Key-Notes from the Organisers

Dear colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to welcome you all on behalf of my Institute, IDIS Viitorul, to this one-day conference, which is a timely and very much expected event. First of all, I am excited to open it by paying tribute to those who supported it, and primarily to Dr Burku Gultekin from METU, and Ana Mihailov, Programme Coordinator at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Moldova, whom we invited to be with us at the inaugural session. Second, it is a real privilege to open the conference with the ambitious title: The Black Sea Region: A Security Minefield of a Partnership Road?

The original assumption of the title is that the future of the BS region, which is so vital to our countries, can be one of these options: a borderline between two or more global competitors, or a possible framework of partnership where cooperation creates sustainable growth, excellent conditions for domestic and regional stability, prosperity and democracy-based practices. It is by definition that the rational choice will favour the second option, which is of course, more attractive and cost-effective for ordinary people as well as for their elites in practically all countries surrounding the BS.

However, the war in Georgia staggered by people pretending they have followed legitimate actions showed to everyone that irrationality could prevail if security arrangements remain undefined by the post-cold war receipts. What are the consequences of the war in Georgia on the BS region in general, and on our rationalized strategies to build peace, not war in our countries, to integrate the region into a dimension of the EU Policy as the Baltic region with its Northern Dimension?

What does still remain to be redesigned in order to make the EU Synergy more qualified to respond to the alarming trends and protracted problems of the region: conflict resolution, poverty, environmental issues, and democracy? I will stop here, after highlighting only a number of issues that I personally expect to be tackled by our outstanding experts who accepted to join us today.

So, welcome to Chisinau, and good luck to the conference!

Igor Munteanu,

Executive Director,
IDIS Viitorul

Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

On behalf of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, I would like to welcome you at the conference „The Black Sea Region: A Security Minefield or a Partnership Road?"

From the outset I would like to thank our partner IDIS Viitorul for taking the initiative to organise this conference which FES has gladly accepted to support, as the facilitation of the regional and international cooperation is one of the FES main missions alongside promotion of democracy, peace and understanding between nations.

The topic of the Black Sea region cooperation has acquired special importance in recent years. The latest events in Georgia have demonstrated that today, more than ever, there is need for coordinated and sustained efforts by the Black Sea countries in order to secure peace and stability in the region. It is also essential that such important external actors as EU, NATO and UN take a clear stance in the issue and assume a bigger role in defining mechanisms for security provision in the Black Sea area.

The conflict in the Georgia's breakaway South Ossetia region, with its reverberations in Abkhazia and the entire state of Georgia and beyond, should focus the attention of the international community on all the so-called „frozen conflicts" in the area, including the one in Transnistria. The challenge for all stakeholders is to ensure that when such conflicts arise, the commonality interest is strong enough to absorb them.

Despite the heterogeneousness of the region in terms of the countries' relations with the EU, their foreign policy agendas, speed of development, there is a growing case for regional cooperation. Such issues as border conflicts, organized crime, drug and human trafficking, migration and environmental problems are very urgent and can only be solved if the Black Sea countries have a common approach and correlated and cooperative responses.

There are other concrete fields where the regional cooperation can play a leading role and add particularly great value. In the Black Sea context those fields include good governance, transport, energy etc.

The states in the Black Sea Region should continue to endorse their responsibility for maintaining peace, stability, prosperity and good neighbourly relations, as well as for democratic transition and sustained and sustainable development, by making efficient use of the available organisations, mechanisms and instruments like the BSEC, Black Sea Trust Fund, ENP, Black Sea Synergy.

I am confident that the discussions in the conference will lead to more coordinated efforts in addressing the problems above and will contribute to bringing Moldova into a wider regional framework.

Ending here, I wish all of us a successful conference with interesting exchanges and proposals.

Ana Mihailov,

programme co-ordinator,
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Chapter I. Towards a New Model of Constructive Regionalism in the Wider Black Sea Area

An emerging two-tier regionalism around the black sea? Balancing cooperation and conflict dynamics

Panagiota Manoli,
Lecturer at the University of the Aegean;
Director of Studies and Research International
Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS).
Email: pmanoli@icbss.org

The Black Sea Region Between Two Dynamics

Recently, the Black Sea region has come to the forefront of the international relations scene and the Euro-Atlantic agenda for two very different reasons; the enlargement of the European Union and the so-called 'five days' war from August 2008 between Russia and Georgia.

In January 2007, the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union became a systemic force that altered fundamentally the geopolitical dynamics in the wider Black Sea area. Literally, the Black Sea became a European sea and the whole region took a step (or better was moved) closer to the inner rings of a concentric Europe.

For the first time in the post-Cold War era, the Black Sea attracted the EU policy interest and soon after a number of proposals with a regional scope emerged from the EU side: namely, the Black Sea Synergy – BSS launched officially in Kyiv on 14 February 2008; the recently proposed Eastern Partnership – EaP to be launched in April 2009 (a Swedish – Polish proposal) as well as the Union for the Black Sea (a proposal by the Socialist Group of the European Parliament). Prospects for cooperation and overall development in the Black Sea region seemed also booming for the first time in the last two decades on the grounds of significant economic growth being registered in the economies of the region (in the period preceding the global economic crisis which surfaced in Autumn 2008).

In August 2008, the war between Russia and Georgia on the eastern coast of the Black Sea raised once more global concerns over the prospects of peace and stability taking roots in this fragile part of Europe. The 'security dilemma' emerged once more as a disintegrating factor, raising insecurity and putting back the Black Sea region on the map as a zone and source of instability, conflict and threat.

It becomes obvious that the Black Sea still remains chained in a fragile and constantly shifting pendulum of cooperation and conflict.

The Conflict Puzzle

Insecurity is still in the heart of international relations in the wider Black Sea area. All types of 'hard' and 'soft' security threats are to be found in the region: military, armed conflict (Georgia-Russia, August 2008); protracted or 'frozen' conflicts (e.g. Transdniestria, Nagorno-Karabakh); closed borders and absence of diplomatic relations (Armenia-Turkey); organised crime (trafficking in weapons); activities of terrorism (primarily linked to the national level, with however regional networks).

The list may continue to include more aspects of Black Sea's insecurity (e.g. human, environmental) depending on how broadly one defines it. Nevertheless, for any type of security problem that one can think of, the Black Sea area may offer a case study.

It is not, of course, accidental that the region is troubled with such insecurity and conflict and one should not merely blame it on the wrong choices of 'unwise political elites' that seem unable to find a solution to the pertinent problems of their countries. There are fundamental reasons that have nourished conflict.

First, it is the process of state building that dominated both the domestic and international politics throughout the 1990s in the whole area. The birth of several new, mostly weak or 'failed' state entities, a process linked also to nation-building and ethnic identity, brought nationalism and its rhetoric back on the political agenda and practice in this part of the world. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, wars of secession rocked both the eastern and the western coasts of the Black Sea, leading to the emergence of (pro-Moscow) statelets such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdniestria and the Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh in Azerbaijan. These were tagged 'frozen conflicts' as no solution was seen on the horizon. However, the situation of August 2008 led to a return to 'hot' war, this time with an oil-rich, stronger Russia standing behind the separatist territories.

Thus, the international relations agenda has been dominated by issues and disputes over borders, ethnic minorities' rights to self-determination, inter-ethnic conflict and war. Second, geography has not been an asset this time. The Black Sea area not only falls within the immediate Russian reach, but it is a scene where power politics are projected by other major actors such as the United States (US). Despite the rhetoric, the 'spheres of influen-

ce' logic has prevailed especially in Russian politics vis-à-vis the Black Sea area and the NIS, generating local resistance and suspicion and leaving no room for genuine interstate cooperation. Neighbours do matter extremely in constructing a region and, in this part of the world, Russia is the most important neighbour who seems however unwilling to nourish multilateralism or regionalism in its common neighbourhood with the EU.

The August 2008 War between Russia and Georgia altered security perceptions and realities. It signified among others the return of Russia, the relative failure and disillusionment over the breadth of the 'coloured' revolutions in the region. It set a dangerous precedent over the recognition of self-proclaimed independent democracies and primarily indicated the serious limitations of any effective intervention by the international community.

For the foreseeable future, the Black Sea will remain outside any collective security mechanism as NATO's expansion further east has been taken further down on the agenda. On the other hand, EU's potential role in conflict resolution and the reconfiguration of the security paradigm in the region becomes less powerful without the tool of enlargement and membership prospect.

There are concerns that, following the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia, the region might enter a phase of revision of the status quo as the transition period (in terms of borders delineation) seems not to have reached its final destination. The regional security is also highly affected by the Ukrainian-Russian tension especially over Ukraine's possible membership of western alliances such as NATO and the EU, and the (linked?) issue of Crimea, a Russian-populated peninsula that is still the headquarters of the Russian Navy's Black Sea fleet. Thus, though the Turkish-Russian rapprochement could have become the axis of regional stability around the Black Sea, the complexity of the security dilemma reduces the chances of the regional cooperation taking off.

Cooperation Dynamics

There is no regionalism taking place around the Black Sea in terms of regional concentration of flows of trade and economic activities. Having said that, one has to acknowledge that there is a well-structured institutionalised cooperation that emerged primarily in the 1990s. In other words, there exist a number of regional fora, organisations and institutes that promote cooperation (e.g. BSEC, GUAM, the Black Sea Forum, etc.). Despite its shortcomings, the most important regional organisation in the area still remains the Black

Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)[1] primarily due to its wide membership, well-developed structure and comprehensive agenda, relevant not only to all Black Sea countries but increasingly also to the European Union.[2]

Regional cooperation has however been lacking a clear purpose and guidance and it has been used only as a political tool and rhetoric though without real 'flesh'. Political backing to regional initiatives often depends substantially on the domestic political developments while it has still not escaped the 'zero sum game' logic. Thus, the Black Sea Forum has met the reluctance of several Black Sea states since it has been perceived as an American-backed initiative as after its initial high-level launching in June 2006 there has been no other major developments concerning the Forum.

On the same track, GUAM though upgraded to the status of an organisation (rather than being simply a forum) named Organisation for Democracy and Development, has not advanced on its goals and it is broadly considered as an anti-Russian alliance. Furthermore, the periodical initiation of new regional structures such as the last Turkish proposal for a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Pact blurs the picture even more. It would be expected that Turkey instead of building parallel regional formats would prefer reinforcing the BSEC, the latter being its own brainchild.

The establishment of regional institutions such as the BSEC has nevertheless contributed to strengthening the regional dimension and identity of the Black Sea and focusing political attention at the regional level. Political elites and the broader civil society have become more aware of the Black Sea dimension in policy making. The role of the BSEC as a tool used by the local countries to lobby for the emergence of regional policies by the EU should also not be underestimated. Of course, developing a regional dimension in the Black Sea is not a goal in itself. It rather signifies the understanding that what is required for the solution of long standing problems nourished in the area and for the support to developmental policies is to apply region-wide policies, nurture cross-border interaction and avoid new geopolitical divisions.

Region-wide economic cooperation in the area has however failed to take off for reasons linked to the weak performance of the local economies and

---

[1] Celac, S. Manoli, P. „Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area", *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, London, June 2006.

[2] The BSEC includes Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Serbia, Ukraine. The European Commission became an observer to the BSEC in June 2007.

the high political risk that has kept business and capital away from the Black Sea area during the 1990s and the early 2000s. Actually, economic cooperation is emerging rather on an East-West axis following the 'gravity model' linking thus the local economies to the main economic centre on the European continent; the European Union.

Economic data indicate that there is no regional circulation of goods that justify the existence of an economic region. On top of that, the existing links in terms of infrastructure (e.g. road transport, airport links, port links) agree with economic data as to the absence of intraregional flows and interconnections.[3]

Regional cooperation in the wider Black Sea area as of today and that has been primarily used as a political tool, is weak and if one needed to find where (sectors) regionalism works would have to admit that the regionalization takes place primarily in terms of illegal activities and organised crime which benefit from the current absence of rule of law and the existence of porous borders. In order to generate positive dynamics, regional cooperation needs to serve a purpose no matter how trivial that might be. In this part of the world where the security puzzle is still unresolved, great regional plans might be difficult to take off as 'trust' among regional partners does not exist. However, there is room for cooperation to focus on more functional and 'low' politics issues such as transport networks, environmental protection, facilitation of movement of goods, border management. On a parallel track, regional programmes need to enhance the civil society and its interaction.

Regionalism needs not only a purpose to serve but also a so-called 'benevolent' leader which would be willing to pay the cost of cooperation and undertake initiatives. At the moment, no local state is willing or has the power to act as such in the Black Sea area, possibly except the European Union itself.

The history of the Black Sea indicates that when the Black Sea was not a battlefield of great power competition, it emerged as a region where commercial and cultural interaction among the peoples on its shores was strong. The current fragmentation of the Black Sea region should be viewed as been politically imposed and not as the outcome of undisturbed economic and social forces.

---

[3]   Studies on economic development as well as trade performance of the Black Sea as a region include the study conducted by the UNDP on 'Black Sea Trade and Investment Potential' published in 2007 and the 'Black Sea and Central Asia Economic Outlook 2008 – Promoting Work and Well-Being', published by the OECD Development Centre in 2008.

The high security dilemma in the region does not mean that regional cooperation is doomed to failure. On the contrary, it may push countries to take an effort to work closer with their neighbours in order to relax their security concerns. There are already cooperation dynamics that confirm the above, especially in the western Black Sea which shows a higher level of integration.

Subregional Intergovernmental Groups in the Black Sea Area		
Name/Status	Year of Establishment /Agenda	Membership
Name: Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Status: Regional Organisation	Established: 1992 Agenda: Multidimensional (Economic Development, Trade Facilitation, Banking and Finance, Environmental Protection, Transport and Communications, Good Governance, Energy, Science and Technology, Education, Culture, SMEs, Combating Organised Crime, Cooperation on Emergency Situations)	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine
Name: Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM (ODED – GUAM) Status: Regional Organisation	Established: 1997 Agenda: Democracy, good governance, energy security, fight against organised crime, Free Trade Zone	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
Name: Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) Status: Forum	Established: 2005 Agenda: democracy, human rights, civil society	Georgia and Ukraine (Baltic-Black –Caspian region and several EU states)
Name: Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership Status: Forum	Established: 2006 Agenda: Discussion at the highest political level to generate a regional vision.	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

A Two-Tier Regionalism?

The EU itself has been puzzled with the question of how to advance regional cooperation in the most troublesome areas of Europe where Russia is an integral part of it and how to balance relations with Mediterranean and Eastern neighbours especially within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) framework.

Though Eastern Europe and the Caucasus are increasingly important for the EU, due to energy security, military conflict, migration, etc., the EU has failed to generate deeper cooperation in the region. It has been only recently that the EU took initiatives to dress regionalism with a sounder political basis through the initiatives of the Black Sea Synergy (2007) and the Eastern Partnership (2008).

The two parallel EU initiatives – the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) – indicate that a differentiated, two-tier regional cooperation may be emerging around the Black Sea.

An EU centred, deep regionalism (within the framework of the Eastern Partnership[4]) that links together the ENP East Countries -leaving thus aside the troublesome relations with Russia- in an orbit closer to the EU. The EC Communication on the Eastern Partnership beyond the bilateral track includes also a multilateral one proposing four policy platforms on democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; energy security; and contact between people.

However, the Eastern Partnership indicates a triumph of the bilateral approach as its strongest pillar is the bilateral one dealing with key issues of concern not only related to energy security but more importantly covering facilitation of movement of goods and people, i.e. Deep Free Trade Agreements and visa facilitation while it proposes advanced political agreements between the EU and the East ENP countries. It confirms that the EU will maintain strong links with the 'group of the willing' East ENP countries, offer all benefits of deeper cooperation and leave the window open for future membership.

The second type of regionalism promoted by the EU is a loose peripheral regionalism within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy[5] and BSEC-EU

---

[4] European Commission, *Eastern Partnership*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2008) 823/4, Brussels, 3 December 2008.

[5] European Commission, *Black Sea Synergy-A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2007) 160 final, Brussels, 11 April 2007.

interaction. Not only ENP countries are included here but also Russia and Turkey with which the EU has developed separate policies i.e. a Strategy Partnership with Russia (currently under revision) and pre-accession process of Turkey. Regionalism in this format depends significantly on the evolution of Russia–EU relations (the first one has not adhered to the Synergy) and the finding of a common ground of cooperation between those two.

The Black Sea Synergy tries to tackle a variety of issues on democracy, respect for human rights and good governance; managing movement and improving security; the 'frozen' conflicts; energy; transport; environment; maritime policy; fisheries; trade; research and educational networks; science and technology; employment and social affairs; regional development, lacking however a clear scope regarding its core rationale. The basic model applied, that of 'partnerships' in key sectors, requires actually the involvement of any -even non European- partners. At first sight, the Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership exhibit a degree of overlapping in terms of their actual agendas, however the EaP aims to deal more with the enhancement of the four freedoms (free or easier movement of goods, persons, services and capital) in the eastern European neighbourhood in an effort to balance the Southern dimension of the ENP and to address the current gap left by the absence of an eastern enlargement process.

The Synergy, on the other hand, is more concerned with developing a 'networking' regionalism that fosters intra-Black Sea cooperation and complements EU efforts beyond the ENP agenda and geographical scope. An additional central element of the EU Black Sea policy is the enhancement of cross-border cooperation at the local level, through the initiation of the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme (2007-2013). The Black Sea Cross Border Cooperation programme has been established under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) focusing on supporting the civil society and local level cooperation in the Black Sea coastal areas.

Looking Ahead and Beyond Formal Regions:
From the 'Wider' to the 'Micro' region level

Are we going to witness anything more than a feeble 'networking' regionalism around the Black Sea? As regionalism has so far been used primarily as a foreign policy tool, one should not expect major steps forward in terms of the formal, state driven regional schemes given the complexity and high degree of the security dilemma that prevails in the region.

Despite the fact that any type of regional cooperation (even one around functional and low politics issues) is strongly embedded in geopolitical concerns and is hindered by geopolitical considerations there might be a new stage, a stronger push for 'real' or informal regionalisation taking some roots in this part of the world.

Region-wide, cross-border projects in the fields of transport and environment could generate positive effects on the peoples of the region, while the emergence of a new civil society and a vibrant economic community could become locomotives of cross-border interaction.

Generating vested interests in the regionalisation process, thus benefiting from it, is critical for its success. A minimum of security and stability is nevertheless required for peoples' interaction and for the region to flourish.

■

Fostering Synergies of Cooperation and Integration around the Black Sea: the Local Dimension

Dr Burcu Gultekin Punsmann,
Associate Research Fellow,
Centre for European Studies,
Middle East Technical University;
E-mail: burcu.gultekin@ces.metu.edu.tr

With the end of the bipolar system, the Black Sea stopped being a borderline. The Black Sea hasn't become yet the area of interactions and trade it used to be until the 20th century: paradoxically, following the fall of the Iron Curtain, the region has started looking like a puzzle, divided by conflicts, blockades and trade restrictions. It has been mainly characterized as an area of geopolitical competition and has been depicted by the terms of *'bridge',* *'buffer zone'* and *'pivot'.* The attention of the coastal states was directed more outside the region rather than on the region itself or on integration with their neighbours.

The Georgian-South Ossetian and Georgian-Russian wars of August 2008 have radically changed the status quo prevailing since the ceasefire agreements of 1993. The context of 'frozen conflict', which couldn't stop the loss of lives on the ceasefire line, was far from being satisfactory and was put into question by peace building projects aiming at building confidence. However, the war has always been the worst-case scenario. And it became reality.

The EU has emerged as the principal broker in the region in a context of extreme polarization and harsh rhetoric dating from the Cold War. The Turkish reaction reminded the importance of the geographic proximity: in a context when geopolitical readings were overshadowing events on the ground, Turkey's reaction was simply dictated by geography. Turkey, as a neighbour-country to the conflict, had an immediate stake in overcoming tensions between Russia and Georgia. The Turkish government was taken by surprise by the outbreak of the war which brought instability and unpredictability immediately beyond its North-eastern border.

The war which lasted only five days and ended in the Georgian military defeat will certainly have serious implications for international relations. However, its effects on lives at the local level will be much more extended and long-lasting. The Black Sea region shouldn't be perceived as barely a chessboard for geopolitical games. People living on the spot should have a say and actions should represent the interests of the local communities.

Since the region grew to be more fragmented the need for integration and opening-up has become more pressing than ever. Hopefully, the outbreak of the war with the risk of further destabilization it brought has triggered a sense of regional responsibility. The major task ahead is to try to pull together the pieces of the puzzle that has become the region. Cooperating directly with Sukhumi and Tskhinvali will help overcome their isolation and one-sided dependence on Russia. Political creativity and local pragmatism can be at work especially in a context when the discourses in Georgia are focusing more on the issue of democratization rather than territorial integration. Integration rather than isolation should be the guiding principle.

The Black Sea Euro-Region established one month after the August war carries the potential, by fostering interactions and pragmatism and by empowering local actors, to contribute to efforts aiming at integration. Collaboration at the local level can also boost political creativity. The increase in local interactions and cross-border cooperation, supported by the EU policies, can by fostering economic integration in the fragmented region of the Black Sea, defuse tensions and develop inter-dependencies. The Russian Black Sea coast will be of utmost importance for the wealth and stability in the region.

Cooperation at local level: the Black Sea Euro-Region

The Council of Europe and, in particular, the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has made a significant contribution to the reinforcement of the regional co-operation in Europe by reaffirming the link existing between trans-national regional co-operation and the inter-democratic stability and sustainable development. The European Outline Convention on Cross-border Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities" (Madrid, 1980) and its additional protocols; the draft „Convention on Euroregional Co-operation Groupings" of the Council of Europe and the „Regulations on a „European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation" of the European Union provide legal instruments for interregional cooperation.

A Euro-region is a form of transnational co-operation structure between two (or more) territories located in different European countries. The Euro-regions do not have political power and their work is limited to the competencies of the local and regional authorities which constitute them. They are usually arranged to promote common interests across the border and cooperate to the mutual benefit of the border populations.

The Council of Europe put forward the proposal to create Euro-regions of the European seas. In February 2006, the first such region, the Adriatic Euro-region which brought together national, regional and local authorities of both EU and non-EU member states of the Adriatic, in particular from South-East Europe, was launched. The process of launching the Black Sea Euro-region began in March 2006. The Black Sea Euro-Region (BSER) was created on 26 September 2008 with the signature of the Final Declaration of the Conference on „Launch of the Black Sea Euro-region" held in Varna and registered in Constanta. The BSER is open to local and regional authorities from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. Fourteen municipalities from five countries (Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova and Romania) have become members of the BSER association.

The various phases leading to the creation of the Black Sea Euro-region:

- – the Final Declaration of the Conference on „Inter-regional Co-operation in the Black Sea Area" held in Constanta (Romania) on 30 March 2006;
- – Recommendation 199 (2006) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on „Inter-regional Co-operation in the Black Sea Basin", adopted on 1 June 2006;
- – the Final Declaration of the Conference on „A Black Sea Euro-region" held in Samsun (Turkey) on 3 November 2006;
- – the Final Declaration of the Conference on „Inter-regional Co-operation in the Black Sea Basin„ held in Odessa (Ukraine) on 25 and 26 June 2007;
- – the Final Declaration of the Conference on „Launch of the Black Sea Euro-region„ held in Varna (Bulgaria) on 26 September 2008.

The Black Sea Euro-Region: Platform and mechanisms for conflict settlement through local initiatives

The creation of a network of communities with shared interest in addressing common problems would certainly influence their choice between cooperation and conflict. The BSER aims at establishing an in inter-territorial platform for facilitating inter-regional and inter-municipal cooperation in the

region, and thus to build a space for cooperation between communities, cities and regions bordering on or linked to the Black Sea within its vast basin.

Furthermore, the local and regional administrations have started playing a role in diplomacy. City diplomacy elaborated by the local administrations can contribute to the conflict settlement efforts. The strengthening of good local governance and the development of democratic administrations of local communities are of utmost importance in confidence building and confidence building processes. Cross-border cooperation between cities and regions, which we are seeking to build and for which the Black Sea basin offers an enormous potential, can serve as a sound alternative to conflict between states while the regional autonomy with panoply of existing flexible models-as a counterbalance to political fragmentation.

The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities draws its experience from the initiatives launched in South-East Europe after the Balkan wars. First, the Congress set up local democracy agencies (LDAs) to restore trust and build confidence between war-worn communities through concrete projects on the ground, involving local authorities. The network of LDAs expanded into South Caucasus by opening its 12th agency in Kutaisi, Georgia, and by establishing the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, ALDA. The Council helped to negotiate the status for Gagauzia in Moldova.

Furthermore, the joint action of the local Turkish and Greek representatives of Cyprus, which gathered within the Committee of the Regions (CoR) represented by elected leaders of the EU's regions and cities, led to the reopening in April 2008 of the Ledra Street crossing point in the heart of Nicosia after 44 years since its closure.

The Black Sea Region economically speaking
Two distinct trade blocs

The dismantling of the Soviet bloc brought economic chaos and collapse of trade flows that compelled countries in the region to begin the reintegration into the global economy. By the mid-1990s, the transition of an increasing number of countries to the market economic systems began to take hold. The real economic growth observed in the Black Sea Region was more than triple the average annual rate of growth of the Eurozone 12 during the 2000-2006 period and almost double the rate of the world economy. The share in the world trade volume of the Black Sea countries (BSEC) in 2005 reached 4%. The external trade volume of the BSEC countries was estimated in 2006 at USD 997, 21 billion.

Two distinct trade blocks emerged in the Black Sea region: one is Euro-centric, comprising the EU member countries, Turkey and the South-eastern European countries and the other is Russia-centric, comprising the countries of the CIS. By attracting more foreign direct investments (FDI), the countries can engage in network trade, capitalize on their comparative advantage, and proactively break out from their trade block. Interestingly, in 2005, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, with respectively 15, 151 and 7, 808 USD million FDI are on the first and third position ahead of Romania and Bulgaria, Turkey being on the third position accounting for 9,808 USD million. In the Black Sea region, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Albania are WTO members. Others are knocking at the door: Azerbaijan, Serbia, Ukraine and Russia are in various stages of the WTO accession process.

Intra-regional trade

The intra-regional trade in the Black Sea region in 2006 accounted for 17,04% of the total external trade of the Black Sea countries, amounting to 170 billion USD. The rationale behind the BSEC, the most comprehensive regional group is economic by nature. The promotion of trade and economic cooperation is presented as the main aim. However, BSEC is not based on any preferential regional trade agreement. It hasn't achieved preferential trade liberalisation among its members.

The BSEC agreement does not directly provide for any trade preferences for countries within the group. BSEC has not required strong commitments towards the harmonisation of commercial policies *vis-à-vis* third parties, or reductions in tariff or nontariff measures for trade between members. Nevertheless, a 'Declaration of Intent for the Establishment of a BSEC Free Trade Area' was signed in February 1997 as a further step in co-operation. Though the BSEC has been inefficient in liberalizing trade on a regional basis, it has, however, contributed to the development of the intra-regional trade, reducing the trade barriers inherited from the Soviet period.

EU support to trade liberalisation and regional integration in the Black Sea region

The EU is the major economic partner of the Black Sea countries with the potential to boost trade liberalisation and regional integration in the region. In 2005, the EU-25 accounted for 48% of the total exports of BSEC coun-

tries and the EU-15 – for 37% of the manufactured exports. The economic integration with the EU is not in contradiction with the regional economic integration as shown by the Turkish case. Turkey's foreign trade and investments with/in the Black Sea countries have been developing steadily since the conclusion of the Turkey-EC Customs union. On the contrary, economic integration with the EU that implies trade liberalization is a *sine qua non* for regional integration.

Free trade and preferential trade agreements are a major element of the EU foreign policy and are at the forefront of the EU policy towards developing countries and neighbouring states in Europe. A key element of the EU's free trade and preferential trade agreements is the extent to which they *deliver* improved market access and thus contributing to the EUs foreign policy objectives towards developing countries and neighbouring states in Europe. Free trade partners are often economically very small relative to the EU. For the EU, the free trade agreements are a means of increasing economic integration through improved access to the EU market, which is seen as important in achieving other political, foreign policy and security objectives.

Previous preferential trade schemes have been ineffective in delivering improved access to the EU market and had a negative effect on intra-regional integration dynamics. The main reason for this is probably the very restrictive rules of origin that the EU imposes, coupled with the costs of proving consistency with these rules. Consideration will have to be given to the conditions for the subsequent participation of ENP partners of the Black Sea in diagonal cumulation of origin. This is a key instrument aiming at enhance intraregional integration and avoiding the complex system of „hub and spokes" trade agreements.

Economic importance of the Russian Black Sea coast

The efficiency of the engagement strategy towards Russia will determine the prospects for deeper cooperation and integration of the Black Sea region. The Russian Black Sea coast, mainly the Krasnodar region, is one of the richest and most resourceful areas in the Russian Federation and contributes substantially to the economy of the Black Sea region. The Krasnodar region with a population of 5 million, is located approximately 1,000 miles south of Moscow and is bisected by the Kuban river. In addition to the capital Krasnodar, other well-known cities are Sochi and Novorossiysk. Krasnodar is the capital and largest city of Krasnodar Krai (region).

The Krasnodar region has always been the principal „*breadbasket*" of the Russian Federation. It accounts for 3% of all ploughed lands in Russia. The Russia's only specialized agricultural university is also there. The region produces approximately 6% of meat and dairy products, 10% of all-Russian grain, 30% of fruit production, 60% of oilseed production, 90% of rice production and 97% of wine production. On each agricultural indicator, it is always in the top few, often leading the pack. Given the strength of the primary agricultural sector of the Krasnodar regional economy, unsurprisingly over 43% of the food processing industry of the Russian Federation is located in the region, linked to the primary producers. Food processing represents over 50% of the total industrial base of the region and is the largest employment sector of the regional economy. The Krasnodar region contains the only concentrated resort sector in the Russian Federation. The region is home to 25% of all registered hotels and resorts in Russia.

As a frontier and crossroads, Krasnodar Krai ports such as Novorossiysk and Tuapse account for nearly 70 percent of Russia's trade turnover, serving especially Black Sea countries. The Krasnodar region is the prime sea gateway to the Russian Federation. It is known as the „southern gateway" to Russia. On the whole, the Krasnodar region provides circa 40% of all Russian port cargo handling capacity. Krasnodar's regional trade turnover exceeds USD 1.5 billion, with imports amounting to less than two-thirds of exports.

Foreign investment in Krasnodar Region ranks third after Moscow and St. Petersburg. There are several hundred registered joint ventures with foreign capital, most with Turkey (146) and the United States (circa 70). Multinational companies in the region include Cargill, Nestle, Chevron, Petrak, ConAgra, Monsanto, Tetra-Pak, Danone, Pepsi-Cola, Philip Morris, Troy, Bouyges, Radisson, and the Caspian Pipeline Consortium companies. Krasnodar Krai features more than 300 companies with foreign investment. The region is a base for small and medium-size manufacturing industries.

After the construction of the Volga-Don navigation canal, Rostov became a five-sea port accessible from the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Baltic, White and Caspian seas. And the famous Russian river-to-sea-going motor vessels now make regular runs from Rostov to many Mediterranean ports.

■

Towards a New Model of Constructive Regionalism in the Wider Black Sea Area

Jiří Schneider,
Program Director,
Prague Security Studies Institute
E-mail: schneider@pssi.cz

Lessons from Visegrad Cooperation

These remarks reflect lessons learnt from the Central European cooperation in Visegrad format during the 90s and draw parallels and possible inspiration to the regional cooperation in the Black Sea region.

After 1990, the main uniting element fostering Visegrad cooperation was the common interest in withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia and dismantling of the Warsaw Pact in 1991. When this goal was achieved, the Visegrad countries continued to compete in earning the goodwill of the West and integrating with Euro-Atlantic institutions.

After the successful entry into both NATO and EU, Central Europe (including V4) ceased to be a grey zone between Germany and Russia. From 2002 onwards, the content of the Visegrad cooperation grew wider and more concrete in areas of energy policy, interior affairs (JHA agenda), public administration and environment.

Of course, the V4 cooperation was driven by joint finality, common perspective of joining the EU. However, a process of cooperation had its own merits since development of a new type of project oriented towards cooperation among various institutions. The establishment of the International Visegrad Fund contributed to thriving grassroots cooperation among NGOs in various fields not only inside V4 group but also with its Eastern neighbours.

It was not accidental that a recent debate about development of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy was driven mainly by V4 on both diplomatic and non-governmental levels.

Key challenges of the Black Sea Cooperation:

1. **Proliferation of existing cooperation formats** in the region – Eastern Partnership, Black Sea Synergy, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, etc. may hinder any attempt to cooperate. It may be viewed also positively provided these overlapping frameworks reinforce each other and provide additional resources.

2. **Financial resources** – as the case of the International Visegrad Fund has shown, providing funds by local stakeholders may increase chances to reach out to other sources of co-financing. Raising funds is essential to boost development of the region and to support regional cooperation on various levels including local authorities, non-governmental institutions and civil society.

3. **Regional vs bilateral approach** – No doubt that each country promotes primarily its own interests. Nevertheless, in some agendas of high concern to the whole region – e.g. migration, movement of people, health policy, environmental issues, transport, and infrastructure projects – deserve a regional approach which may reinforce bilateral efforts.

4. **Unity of purpose – democratic modernization – and definition of common interests and agendas** may effectively suppress abundant concerns of identity politics, geopolitics and unnecessary competition for regional leadership.

5. Regional format may possibly provide an opportunity to involve local authorities and NGOs from the **non-recognized regions and conflict zones** in dealing with practical agendas and showing the benefits of pragmatic cooperation and thus contributing to confidence building and conflict prevention measures.

6. The upcoming Czech EU Presidency will provide an opportunity to enhance the Eastern dimension of the ENP including its regional policy towards the Black Sea region. It is recommendable that this policy include **Russia and Turkey** as key players in the region.

■

Chapter II. Integrative and Disintegrative Processes in the Wide Black Sea Region

Impact of Unresolved Conflicts on the National and Regional Security in the Black Sea Region

Hanna Shelest,
Senior Expert,
National Institute for Strategic Studies;
E-mail: shelt@soborka.net

The problem of conflict settlement in the Black Sea region is up-to-date and especially important in the context of stable and democratic development of the region. The Black Sea region has unique potential to become an area of prosperity and stability, but many economic, transport, political, energy projects cannot be implemented because of existent conflicts on the territory of its members.

Since the mid 90s, academics and politicians have referred to the conflicts in Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia as to „frozen" ones, because none of these conflicts has been resolved. Thus, cease-fire agreements have been signed and the military actions have been finished. But the accidental fighting on the Armenian-Azerbaijan border as well as the Russian-Georgian crisis of August 2008 has „melted" the situation so as at present, only the Transnistrian conflict can be considered as „frozen".

The instability which emerged as a result of these conflicts is a fertile soil for development of criminal activity, terrorism and illegal migration. The political stability in the region cannot be guaranteed as long as these conflicts are not settled. Moreover, they influence negatively the social-economic development and trade links in the region. These problems are challenges not only to the states where conflicts exist. They present threat also to the European security and security of the neighbouring states, touching as well the interests of such states as the USA.

Nowadays, the national security of the states is not characterized only by the military security issues. For the reason that the conflicts in the GUAM states have been „frozen" for a long time, they did not present direct military threat to the neighbours. But their pendency resulted in a range of problems and threats to the national and regional security, which in case of possible full-fledged military actions or terrorist attacks, could lead to classical se-

curity threats. The main risks are considered to be the issues of economic security and security of the national sovereignty.

The main threats to the national and regional security in the Black Sea region because of the protracted conflicts are as following:

Cross-border organized crime. First of all, let us consider the Ukrainian-Moldovan border. This problem has been a top topic of bilateral and multilateral level negotiations for quite some time. The USA and the European Union have participated in the negotiations as well. Moreover, one of the EUBAM functions is to solve this problem.

Increase in the number of refugees and temporary displaced people in the conflicting regions. This can destabilize the economic, demographic, social and political situation in the states and neighbouring regions.

Intervention of the Russian Federation in the internal affairs of the GUAM states and the Russian support to the separatist regions and movements.

Possible „transfer" of the conflict scenario to the Ukrainian territory. First of all, this regards the Autonomous Republic of Crimea where alongside the increase in ethnic contradictions, the incitement of the Crimea separation from Ukraine and its shift to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation is possible. Similar actions have already been implemented in Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Impossibility to implement a Black Sea Ring Highway project. The BSEC project has not been able to be implemented for many years as some parts of the highway cross the territory of self-proclaimed regions where the security of roads could not be guaranteed. This is a threat to the national and regional security because the road transit potential cannot be used, which leads to economic losses. The same refers to the realization of TRACECA project.

Impossibility to guarantee the security of the energy resources transit from the Caspian region. Azerbaijan and Georgia connect the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea creating a suitable route for gas and oil transit from Central Asia and Caspian region to Europe. Under conditions of the present energy policy of the Russian Federation it is crucial for the economy and security of Ukraine, as well as of the European Union, to diversify the energy sources.

Furthermore, the economy of the Black Sea and European Union states depends on the security of the energy transportation routes. The implementation of the new pipeline projects as well as the security of the existent ones are impossible without settlement of the Transnistrian, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts (if taking into account the possibility of terrorist attacks; damage of pipelines caused by military actions, as it

happened in Georgia in August 2008; the possibility of blocking the energy transportation, as in the situation of Ukraine in winter 2006, etc).[6]

Increase in the level of the terrorism threat;

Break-off of the trade links and transport connections;

Illegal migration, smuggling, cross-border criminal activity, difficulties in cargo transportation, etc.

Threat to the territorial integrity in the case of the states where conflicts exist

The influence on the regional security can be divided into two parts – Security of the Black Sea region and the European security. Recently, the European Union has started getting interested in the settlement of the conflicts in the Black Sea region which can influence its own stability and security, joining different peace initiatives. In October 2008, the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner stated that the EU had not paid enough attention to the Caucasian states for ten years[7].

The first EU involvement is connected with the Transnistrian conflict, when in 2005, in Chisinau, the GUAM states under the Ukrainian initiative invited the European Union to the management of the Transnistrian conflict. The invitation has been accepted with interest. Realization of the initiative has positive consequences due to the activity of the EUBAM (European Union Border Assistance Mission). Modernization of border management and enhanced cooperation between customs services at the regional level advance the security level and help to overcome the conflict consequences such as organized crime, human traffic, arms and drugs traffic, smuggling, etc.

However, it was only in 2007 that the first official document on the impact of the unsolved conflicts in the Black Sea region appeared – Black Sea Synergy. The latter was just a first sign of the EU understanding that the instability in the Black Sea region can influence the whole European security. The position of the European Union is that enhancing of the regional cooperation is not oriented towards dealing with long-lasting conflicts in the region, aiming mainly at facilitating the generation of more mutual confidence, which would help to remove the existing obstacles.

---

[6] Дацюк А. В. Політика України з урегулювання збройних етнополітичних конфліктів: досвід та перспективи// Стратегічна панорама. – 2006. – № 1.

[7] Глава МИД Франции: ЕС уделял недостаточно внимания кавказскому конфликту http://korrespondent.net/world/629518 [28.10.2008].

The recognition of Kosovo independence in winter-spring 2008 and using of this precedent by Russia to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is another factor affecting the European Security. The European Union needs to define two things for itself and the public opinion: Are these conflicts ethnic ones? Do they express strong and united position towards the future recognition/ non-recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia?

It is important to define if these conflicts are ethnic as stated by the unrecognized formations or are political by character on what Georgia and Moldova insist[8]. If it is recognised that the conflicts are of ethnic origin, it will be difficult to argue in the future the impossibility of using the Kosovo precedent while settling these conflicts.

The recognition of the two former Georgian parts may lead to the situation when other separatist movements within the European Union such as Northern Cyprus, Basks, Belgium communities, etc, etc. will raise their questions not only in the political and diplomatic discussions.

Ukraine is the only one from the GUAM states which has not had any conflicts on its territory. Nevertheless, the existence of conflict potential in some of its regions, as well as the possible intervention of third parties in case of negative developments of the situation, puts Ukraine in an even more difficult security situation. Moreover, it is necessary to mention that in the modern conditions of interdependence, no conflict can be just the business of the conflicting parties since its negative consequences have cross-border character and influence the regional security.

According to the Ukrainian Law on Fundamental Principles of the National Security of Ukraine, the term „national security" is defined as security of vital importance interests of the people and citizens, society and state, which guarantees the stable development of the society, prevention and neutralization of real and potential threats to the national interests".

Proceeding from this, the neutralization of potential threats is very important. Moreover, the above-mentioned law defines very concretely the „military-political instability, regional and local wars (conflicts) in different parts of the world, especially near the Ukrainian border" as one of the threats to the national interests and national security of Ukraine (Article 7).[9]

---

[8]   Zafer SÜSLÜ. Georgia at a Glance; Abkhazian and South Ossetian Conflict. *IBSU International Refereed Multi-disciplinary Scientific Journal* № 1, 2006, p. 105.

[9]   Закон України «Про основи національної безпеки України» // Відомості Верховної ради України. – 2003. – № 39. – стр. 351.

The Foreign Ukrainian policy concerning the settlement of the conflicts on the territory of other states aims at insuring the security of the national interests, as well as enhancing the general security and stability in the region and in the world. Article 8 of the Ukrainian Law on Fundamental Principles of the National Security of Ukraine provides that he main directions of the state policy is the resolution of the conflicts primarily in the regions bordering Ukraine, participation in the peacekeeping operations under the UN, OSCE or other international organizations auspices, fighting with international terrorism and organized crime, as well as counteraction of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

■

Some Regional Consequences of the Russian – Georgian War

George Tarkhan Mouravi,
Institute for Policy Studies, Tbilisi
E-mail: gia@ips.ge

In a fatal move, just before the midnight of 8 August 2008, having been provoked by the heavy exchange of fire by artillery and rockets, the Georgian troops started to advance towards the breakaway capital Tskhinvali, claiming to „restore the constitutional order" in the region.

The next morning, the well prepared Russian army attacked the Georgian positions. Russian military aircraft entered the Georgian airspace, bombing Georgian positions, including military and civilian targets outside South Ossetia. After several days of heavy fights and losses on both sides, the Russian overwhelming power and domination in the air squeezed the Georgian troops out of their positions. Russian army took control not only of South Ossetia, but proceeded much further beyond its borders.

On August 12, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy flew to Moscow. Under pressure, the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed to sign a 6-point ceasefire agreement that provided for the withdrawal of all troops to their positions as of August 7, an end to the military actions, and free access for humanitarian aid. Notwithstanding the agreement, the Russian military actions continued, though at a reduced scale. On August 26, Russia recognised officially the sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, a move which was promptly condemned by most of the international community. Three days later the Georgian government broke off the diplomatic relations with Russia.

The August developments in Georgia came as a shock to most of the world, bringing it to the brink of a new cold war. However, the greatest shock was experienced by the Georgian society itself. In the best case, simply misguided by a wrong assessment of the US and Russia commitments in the Caucasus, and in the worst case, due to the incompetence, political infantilism, or neglection, the Georgian leadership apparently regarded the situation in South Ossetia as a window of opportunity for re-conquering the region by force. In spite of the warnings coming from the West and the evident Russian military preparedness to invade Georgia, the Georgian leadership risked an unequal war and suffered decisive defeat, loss of more territories and massive human loss, having been totally unprepared for such a scenario.[10]

---

[10] Svante E. Cornell, Johanna Popjanevski, Niklas Nilsson. Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World. Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, SAIS. August 2008; After August 2008: Consequences of the Russian-Georgian War. CIPDD, 2008.

At present, the Georgian leadership responsible for the bungle of starting military actions in South Ossetia, could expect demands for its resignation during the fall 2008, while the plans of its integration into NATO remain uncertain as well as its relations with Russia and its secessionist provinces – Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's aggressive actions have caused mobilisation of mass support for Saakashvili, whose rule Russia wanted to bring down.

After weakening of immediate external danger, the society may no rally more round the national leaders and may reflect on the reasons and consequences of what happened. Intensified visits of the leading Georgian politicians to Washington and other Western capitals, increased criticism coming from former Saakashvili allies such as Burjanadze, may also be signs that the future of the Georgia's leadership is uncertain.

Unless the opposition is again outsmarted by Saakashvili, there is little doubt that during the winter of 2008-2009 Georgia can expect political struggle which could lead to changes in the leadership and bringing other politicians afore, a move that would be most probably cautiously supported by the West. We will discuss below some implications of the August war for the Georgia's future and for that of the Black sea region.

August 2008 Events

The August developments in Georgia came as a shock to most of the world, bringing it to the threshold of a new cold war, though the tensions quickly subsided. Like Sarajevo almost a century ago, the events in the miniscule town of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia have shattered the global system of security.

Until recently, the Russian strategy was to keep conflicts frozen maintaining control over Georgia with sporadic escalation needed as a reminder of who the boss still is, and at the same time, strengthening the military capacity of secessionist authorities. But now the situation has radically changed. While many international observers speak about disproportionate response by Russia, there was no justification for its forces to enter the territory of a sovereign state without any internationally approved mandate, even under the pretext of protecting its own citizens (who were given passports a few years ago exactly in order to create such pretexts).

But particularly, no justification existed for such actions as: aerial bombardments of both military infrastructure as well as of civilian targets all over Georgia; advancement of the Russian army units to the cities in Western Georgia; naval blockade of Georgian ports; looting, devastation and vandalism in the cities of Poti, Gori, Senaki, Zugdidi, and in many other Georgian

towns and villages; destruction of the economic infrastructure and setting ablaze the Borjomi National Park; military support to the „Abkhaz" assault in Kodori Gorge, previously under control of Tbilisi.

None of these actions could be justified by the need to protect civilians and peacekeepers in South Ossetia. As a result of the „strange" war of August 2008, Russia experienced serious damage of its international image, while Georgia lost control over significant portions of its territory. Georgia has suffered also damages of its economy and military potential, its leadership losing the image of responsible and competent statesmen. Fears have emerged that the events in Georgia may possibly bring about a new cold war and change dramatically the world.

Why Russia would do this? Of course, this cannot be explained only by Russia's irrationality or Putin's deep hatred for Saakashvili, who allegedly called him Lilli-Putin, and whom Putin had promised in August to hang by his balls[11]. While there is indeed no well-defined concept of Russia's national interests, different interest groups compete for money and power whereas the foreign policy imposed by them often reflects the internal objectives within the setting of Putin/Medvedev's dualism.

Much of the Russia's foreign policy is determined by the internal politics and it is eager to show arrogant indifference to the opinion of other states. Indeed, from the viewpoint of the country's national interests, the Russian part in the war was much more predictable, though not more rational, than that of Georgia. Russia attempted to emulate actions by the western powers (in Iraq, or in the Balkans) to justify its own.

In this case, it seems that Northern Cyprus can be taken as a model. The leadership of the economically and politically strong Russia used this easy opportunity of Georgia falling into its trap in order to demonstrate that Russia regained the power to act as regional patron and arbiter, intimidate all its neighbours, re-establish zones of influence and 'privileged interest', and to deter neighbouring states from joining NATO or EU, thus weakening the US influence both in the Caucasus and globally, just before the change of its administration. Russia has also attempted to create a sanitary cordon along its South-western borders and take under control the energy flows to Europe.

---

[11] This irrational hatred and harsh rhetoric has given rise to numerous publications. See e.g. Luke Harding. Personality clashes: As Putin's alleged desire to hang Georgia's president by the balls shows, sometimes geopolitics comes second to simple hatred. Guardian , November 14, 2008.

In the best case, simply misguided by a wrong assessment of the US and Russia's interests or commitments in the Caucasus, and in the worst case, due to its incompetence, political infantilism, or neglection, the Georgian leadership apparently regarded the situation in South Ossetia as a window of opportunity for re-conquering the region by force, expecting the engagement of the US in direct confrontations. In spite of the fact that the contrary was obvious and despite the warnings coming from the West and the evident Russian military preparedness for invading Georgia, the Georgian leadership risked an unequal war and suffered decisive defeat, loss of more territories and massive human losses, appearing totally unprepared for such a scenario.

The Georgian leadership, responsible for the blunder of starting military actions in South Ossetia, should expect demands for its resignation during the fall 2008, while the plans of its integration into NATO remain uncertain as well as its relations with Russia and its secessionist provinces – Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In the light of the military and political disaster experienced by Georgia, it still remains a mystery why the Georgian leadership being aware of Russia's preparations, ordered the attack of Tskhinvali on Thursaday night of August 7, even against the background of heavy bombardment of Georgian villages by Ossetians and Russians. This was indeed a grave and unforgivable blunder to start indiscriminate shelling of Tskhinvali and advance militarily without having a clear understanding of the implications and even worse, ignoring them.

Has the Georgian assault been provoked by some actions of South Ossetian separatist forces or not, this was a dubious action from the moral viewpoint leading to civilian casualties, as well as unintelligent from purely military and strategic perspective, unless Russia abstained from direct military involvement. Why Tbilisi actually believed in the latter is difficult to understand, but for the professional incompetence of the Georgian strategists who seemed to have been cheated into action by either unreliable intelligence or by the Russian disinformation.

The Russian invasion of Georgia is a relatively small-scale event on the global geo-strategic scene that has hardly changed the actual balance of power. However, its symbolic importance is very significant. It indicated at the existing dynamics in the geo-strategic configuration, and at the limited ability of Western powers, and of the US in particular, to stop Russia from attacking a sovereign state that had announced its intention to join the West, and from abusing the norms of the international law without any direct consequences.

This could mean that also in the future, Moscow will not have to concern itself with the potential response of the United States or Europe, as Russia has made it public by its actions in Georgia. In addition, Russia's actions buried the western hopes that Medvedev's arrival would create conditions for a more liberal, peaceful, and investor-friendly Kremlin after eight years of „sovereign" democracy and aggressive foreign policy under Putin. As Russia repositions itself on the world stage, ignoring the norms of international law and co-existence, the internal politics and the relationship between its military and intelligence communities with the economic sphere remains the determining factors in structuring the political power. The early indications cause much pessimism among observers.

The initial Western reaction was slow and uncoordinated, exactly when joint actions by EU and US were particularly important. The French presidency, though quick to react, in fact, promoted a ceasefire agreement which is vague and open to interpretations. At the same time, the veto-wielding Russian blocked any action through the UN Security Council. Nevertheless, after the initial days of confusion, the US leadership made rather harsh statements addressing Russia's lawless actions. EU and NATO were slower and milder in their statements, whereas the alarmist zeal of the Eastern Europeans was counterbalanced by the more moderate approach of their western neighbours.

It becomes clearer that in the nearest future the Western politicians will hardly be looking with compassion and trust in the eyes of either of Russia's „tandemocratic" leaders, or trying to read their lips. The developments that are now unfolding seem to put Russia in a very awkward and isolated position. The key question which now arises is what the further western responses to Russia's actions will be. Will the Western states continue to follow their individual agendas marked by the energy dependency on Russia and the fears for military confrontation and economic recession? Will there be understanding on the part of both nations and their leaders what real stakes and the inherent dangers are hidden in Russia's actions in a small country than many could hardly find on the world map? Or will the Western powers, acting in unity and accord, use this opportunity for pro-active actions that would be saving them from much more serious problems for decades to come? And if so, what are the possible and effective policy options, both in terms of the carrot and the stick?

NATO expansion which is so much hated by Russia, could be indeed one of the most effective sticks, but now it seems less probable that either Georgia or Ukraine will receive their MAPs in December 2008. However, the Western efforts will definitely help Georgia to reconstruct its heavily brui-

sed economy and military potential. Nevertheless, this would hardly make Russia withdraw from the occupied parts of the Georgian territory or agree to civilised terms of conflict resolution in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Nor will it prevent Russia in the short to medium term from using any artificial pretext to further hurt Georgia.

It seems that what could remove the current deadlock is the permanent deployment of US or/and NATO bases in Georgia and the Black Sea. In addition, yet at the beginning of March 2007, an official representative of the US Department of Defence declared the intention of the US to consider the possibility of deployment of an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) radar in the Caucasus region, in the framework of development of the ABM defence system in Eastern Europe. In the light of current events, a radar and anti-missile capacity based in Georgia as part of a broader system involving Poland and Czech Republic, is an option seemingly considered by the military planners.

Intensified visits by leading Georgian politicians to Washington and other Western capitals could also be a sign that the consultations carried out regard the future of Georgia's leadership. Obviously, Russia's aggressive actions have caused mobilisation of mass support for Saakashvili, whose rule Russia wanted to bring down. However, as the immediate Russian threat subsides, there is no doubt that both the political opposition and the public at large will question the reasons that led Saakashili and his government to making the fatal decisions they had made. If the opposition is again outfoxed by Saakashvili as during the two elections in early 2008, there is little doubt that during next spring Georgia may expect political struggle leading to the change in leadership and bringing more rational and balanced politicians afore, a move which would most probably be supported by the West.

The governments of both Armenia and Azerbaijan have shown quite a restraint in the face of August events. The war prompted Azerbaijan and Armenia to reconsider their mutual problems in the new geopolitical environment, which may lead to the reactivation of the negotiation process between Yerevan and Baku, though not earlier than after the forthcoming elections in Azerbaijan from 15 October 2008.

After Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Armenian Foreign Ministry made a statement saying that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be solved on the basis of „the people's right to self-determination". However, he stressed the need to solve the problems through negotiations being cautious and abstaining from any explicit assessment of Russia's actions or from recognising the secessionist territories, despite the existing strategic partnership between the two countries.

Indeed, it would not make much sense for Armenia with its strong dependence on trade routes passing via Georgia, to spoil relations with its immediate neighbour. The war itself has demonstrated how fragile Armenian economy is and how dependent it is on these transportation routes, by means of blockading the port of Poti and the main highway and by blowing up the railway bridge which had temporarily disrupted the rail transport to Armenia. Further caution was caused by the fact that Armenia would not even recognise Karabakh, unwilling to destroy the status quo that provides the stability of the governance, and would endanger the existing format of the (never-ending) negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

In contrast, a number of parties and public organizations called for Armenia's support of Russia's initiative. In this light, it was particularly surprising that Levon Ter-Petrosian, the leader of the opposition groups allegedly having a much more pro-Western orientation than the government, fully support the Russian position. In an interview given on 21 August, he stated: „Nobody could argue against the fact that Russia, by its intervention, saved the South-Ossetian people from genocide… The harsh anti-Russian rhetoric of the United States is explained just by the pre-electoral struggle…" It seems that Ter-Petrosian, frustrated by his political failures, hoped to gain the Russian support in his power struggle.

Azerbaijan, in its turn, while cautious too not to cause Russian displeasure by any open support of the Georgian case, provided much needed support to alleviate the needs of the displaced from the conflict areas, which included also some settlements with ethnic Azeri population (in the neighbourhood of Gori). At the same time, there was no doubt that Azerbaijan could be less happy by the precedent of recognising the secessionist territories by Russia, keeping in mind its own problem with Karabakh. At the same time, Georgia is important for Azerbaijan as the main oil and gas export routes from the Caspian Sea to the Turkey and Black Sea terminals pass on its territory.

Nevertheless, the Azeri leadership were very cautious not to alienate Russia, in particular in advance of the forthcoming presidential elections from October 2008, even if there is little chance that any opposition candidate will be able to challenge his grip on power. Baku promised to increase the load of the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline. At the same time, the cool reception of the US Vice-president Dick Cheney, who visited Baku before travelling to Tbilisi and Kiev in order to demonstrate the US support, was a clear indication that Baku was avoiding any additional commitments that might have irritated Russia. In fact, Cheney failed to obtain an unequivocal commitment of getting fully engaged with construction of the Transcaspian Nabucco gas

pipeline meant to bypass Russia and thus boost Europe's independence from Russian gas supplies.

However, Turkey was the one to appear in the most awkward situation as a result of the war, because of its complex attitude towards its main rival in the Caucasus and at the same time, the biggest trade partner which satisfies most of its energy needs – Russia. On one hand, Turkey was unhappy to strain even more the relations with Russia, previously aggravated by the fact that after some negotiations Turkey allowed NATO warships into the Black Sea (and got punished with significant economic losses as a result of Russia's tightening of the customs regime with Turkey). On the other hand, being itself a NATO member and an EU membership aspirant, it had to support the Western position. Alarmed with this dilemma and the escalation of the situation, and contemplating the risks of the recognition of Karabagh by Moscow and the emerging risks related to the oil and gas transportation routes via Georgia, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan dashed to Moscow in mid-August, where in rather vague terms expressed his understanding of Russia's actions. On August 13, Erdoğan presented in Moscow and the next day in Tbilisi an initiative for the formation of a „Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform" according to the Balkan model and based on the condition that the Russian Federation should be part of the scheme.

At the same time, the President Abdullah Gül accepted the invitation from his Armenian counterpart Serj Sarkysian, to attend on September 6 a football match in Yerevan between the two national teams, testing the ground for further reconciliation. In still another probing move, Turkey reactivated its relations with the old rival – Iran, which in its turn appeared less enthusiastic to recognise either Abkhazia or South Ossetia, notwithstanding its pragmatic partnership with Russia. Once again, the Turkish President Gül told the UN General Assembly on September 23 that he believed the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform proposed by Ankara „could be an instrumental framework for building a climate of confidence in the region." Nevertheless, the subsequent developments did not demonstrate any significant interest in Turkey's proposals, whereas the issue of Karabakh has again moved to the domain of Russia's initiative, which was preparing the meeting of the Armenian and Azeri presidents to discuss reconciliation.

Lessons Learned and Regional Implications

Political developments in the South Caucasus have once again demonstrated the difficulties of the post-Communist transition in the complex

geopolitical environment, further illustrated by the developments in all other post-Soviet states apart from the special case of the Baltics, which have as well many problems related to their legacy and geopolitics. The formally existing democratic institutions may lead to formal or virtual democracy even in the absence of any communist ideology, which even if hailed for various reasons by the international democracy watchdogs of the democratic states, tend to bring to power elites that are not necessarily democratic or effective, and that tend to slip to authoritarianism or remain authoritarian.

In such states that develop along the 'dominant power paradigm' (Thomas Carothers), the ruling party which is not based on ideology, values or vision but on the leader's personality and on the power greed or career pragmatism, is not separated either from the state or business. There is basically no any functional judicial power, while the executive branch has overwhelming strong prerogatives and the parliament is most of the time just a rubber-stamping institution. The high-level corruption is unavoidably strong, while most of the economy is serving either the specific visions of the leader (fountains and merry-go-rounds in case of Georgia) or the state-controlled pseudo-liberal system serving certain group interests based on loyalty rather than effectiveness.

At the same time, based on the experience of South Caucasus, it is possible to say that the authoritarianism in post-Soviet space does not depend much on such issues as affluence of resources (oil wealth course of Azerbaijan), confession, or ethnicity. Much more important are such factors as explicit pro-Western orientation, existence of educated urbanised middle class, and the existing tradition of political struggle. Nevertheless, regardless of the fact that there are certain differences between the states, all the three South Caucasus societies revealed a tendency to develop soft or medium level authoritarianism. In general, while the South Caucasus states seemed to move in different directions, their fates are intertwined, being destined to proceed towards the West, towards democratisation and peace, even though at different pace.

However, in all the cases, the extreme populism, manipulation through controlled mass media, conspirology, nationalist rhetoric and enemy images, serve well the internal domination, while the liberal and democratic Volapuc, speaking of national interests and of external enemies or even of human rights may be just a trick to pursue some internal or specific goals that are easily cheating some of the willing believers of democratic mythology in the world („Georgia – the beacon of democracy", according to G.W. Bush). The mass movements and the 'botanical revolutions' that took place in Georgia, Ukraine or Kyrghyzstan tend to re-invigorate the same authoritarianism against which they had been directed, leading to public frustration and di-

sappointment in democracy and Western values, and political passivity that may again explode leading to a new revolution.

And again, the authoritarian regimes are much more unpredictable and dangerous than the democratic ones. Their stability is frequently illusionary, as are their democratic credentials. The authoritarian leaders tend to lose the sense of reality and can hardly realistically assess the possible risks linked to their actions. The actions by Saakashvili and his Putin/ Medvedev duo counterparts are clear illustrations of such situations when the leaders make errors through incompetence and political myopia or by deliberately neglecting the basic interests of their respective states in order to either follow their voluntary and often irrational decisions, or serve some group interests of their close entourage or some other powerful group.

It remains valid that the nation states are still the most effective structures in emergency situations, whereas the international organisations tend to be indecisive, slow and ineffective. Despite the frequent declarations that the glorious days of the nation-states are numbered, the national politics often influenced by the internal power struggles within the nation-states remains still a driving force in many political developments. However, the authoritarian regimes may take the most controversial political and therefore military decisions very fast, as there are no functional mechanisms of parliamentary or judiciary control, or constraints of party coalitions, while the public opinion being manipulated through controlled mass media.

Often authoritarian leaders, particularly strong ones as in case of Russia (an economic dwarf but a military giant with huge oil and gas resources), would neglect the necessity of consulting partners or allies, or international organisations, and tend to neglect their own international commitments or international law. In addition, in the contemporary world such actions as ethnic cleansing may be rewarding to the perpetrator, at least in the short run. It is the readiness to act decisively that often brings victory in the short run, though in the longer run such victories may appear Pyrrhic. On the other hand, losing a war may bring in to a society reflection on mistakes made, and more flexibility and democracy.

The geopolitics, which in this context is the decisive role of great powers, should not be underestimated, though on the regional scale, the commitment and geography may still appear more important than the overall power. Nevertheless, the long-term effectiveness of the geopolitical moves and choices made by great powers depend on the ability to create alliances and partnerships through both soft and hard power, which basically means offering an attractive model, vision or leadership.

Inability of Russia to amass support in its recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was circumscribed by its capacity to exert sufficient leverage, and take into consideration the interests and fears of even its international clientele. While a regional superpower such as Russia may act with certain impunity in the short run, the harm done to its international reputation will eventually bring more damage than was the gain to the national interests of the state, though it is not obvious that the leadership would always care for this fact, unless the damage is coming fast and strong. Under current situation of globalised economy, such punishment will frequently follow in the form of economic damage and loss of allies.

However, in the situation of weakened international law, the de-globalization of regional conflicts, preventive diplomacy may only work when there do exist explicit and clear red lines and commitments that are universally accepted by other parties concerned if they are sufficiently strong – as is the case of attack against the NATO member state. Otherwise, much will depend on whether all other players are united around the case, which is not common. For the West, the failure to keep the peace in South Caucasus and not to reward border changes through the use of force will be a worrying sign of appearance of an irrelevant player in the South Caucasus with very little prospect of improvement.

If the recognized international community fails to administer justice in the near future, it will inevitably lose authority and relevance. But justice would mean to realistically assess all the responsibilities and mistakes of all parties involved, and to look at the reality not through tinted glasses of mythical democratic credentials of the authoritarian regimes or 'sovereign' democracies, but understanding the political reality of post-Communist state-building and the respective risks to the peace and development they bring about. Currently, it appears that the West, including France and the Western Europe in particular, have to great extent, accepted the new disposition of forces in the Caucasus[12].

---

[12]   See e.g. the report on 14 November EU-Russia summit in Nice: „Georgia was relegated to the status of a largely ritual sideshow at the summit. Sarkozy reiterated the EU's condemnation of Russia's decision to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and its support for Georgia's territorial integrity. Medvedev, for his part, said Moscow would not reverse its decision, and that it recognizes Georgia's territorial integrity without Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are now «subjects of international law.» Ahto Lobjakas, RFE/RL, Nov 14.

This would certainly mean a new reality in the Black Sea region from the military-strategic viewpoint, as Russia has already made the decision to build military bases in South Ossetia and Gudauta, Abkhazia, and also to move part of is Black Sea Fleet to the port of Ochamchire[13]. On one hand, Russia's grip on the Black Sea region seems to have strengthened and it is not just the presence of Russian warships that are the most important factors of the regional security. It is rather the possibility that after the duck is broken, the threshold for Russia's direct involvement in military actions against Georgia, or against any of its other neighbours, is much lower. On the other hand, due to its actions, Georgia is finally lost for Russia as a possible partner or ally, and it is further pushed to the West in search of support and protection.

However, it is not Europe, as it becomes more and more obvious, that it is eager to strongly defend Georgia's interests against the background of its dependence on Russia's energy and its traditional fears of Russia's unpredictability, even if many of the Eastern European states are genuine supporters of Georgia against Russia's dominance. That would also mean that there is little probability that NATO will get strongly involved here.

There are though, two new factors that are playing an increasing role. One is, of course, the deep economic crisis that Russia is gradually submerged into, with its huge foreign currency reserves getting thinned due to the rather incompetent management of economy, and its excessive dependence on falling oil and gas prices. This by no means would imply that Russia will be easier to deal with, as in the crisis situation the Russian leadership would rather increase the anti-western rhetoric and action, and blame the external enemies for recession (as it was once again evident in Medvedev's speech one day after Obama was elected US president.

Another factor is of course the USA. Although a few months will pass before the world will learn more about the foreign policy priorities of the new administration, it is logical to suppose that it would not be in the US interests to lose such an important card in its pack as Georgia's pro-Western standing, which may become even more important if new policies towards Iran are to be planned. The range of actions could be however broad – from

---

[13]   Even though previously the de facto president Bagapsh has voiced his objection to the latter plans, the leadership of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are currently not in the position to defend their interests or their vision of how the territories should develop. In the light of possible withdrawal of the Russian navy from Sevastopol in 2017, Ochamchire and Abkhazia acquire too important a role for the Russia's military plans.

simple support for Georgia's economic and military revival to direct military presence[14] – stationing PRO radar (as has been previously discussed) or a military/navy base in Georgia.

On one hand, this may increase the risk of a direct confrontation, but as the experience from Kyrgyzstan shows, the bases of these two states can peacefully coexist in close neighbourhood. However, notwithstanding the risks, this may appear the only effective way to guarantee safety to Georgia against further Russian provocations, at the same time securing more wisdom in Georgia's actions.

However, Russia's move to the south – Abkhazia, and the USA possible military presence, may totally change the security situation in the Black Sea region. Much would depend, of course, on the actions of the regional players such as Turkey and Iran, not to mention the unpredictable Russia. The situation may become more explosive in the short run but also more secure in the medium to long term. To end up, not only the future of Georgia, but to a certain extent, the future of the Black Sea region depends strongly on what decisions are made and what actions are undertaken with regards to this small country.

At the same time, Georgia is not just a toy in the hands of powerful regional players. If democracy is strengthening and economy is developing here, while the government is reasonable, far-sighted and balanced, there is a good chance that earlier or later not only the issues of South Ossetia and Abkhazia could be reconsidered, but also Georgia may contribute to the peace and prosperity of the whole region.

■

---

[14] Though president Sarcozy has mocked at the US approach of sending warships to Georgian ports ("On November 14 the French President said that the EU strategy was "more effective" than the one of "some of Georgia's friends". He also added that he could not understand what was achieved by sending warships in "nearby waters" – an obvious reference to the U.S. navy ships, which were sent to Georgia after the August war". Civil Georgia, Tbilisi /15 Nov. 08), in the longer run it may appear a more effective approach than simply appeasing Kremlin.

The Black Sea Forum Initiatives and the Integrative Process in the Wider Black Sea Region

Dr. Iulian Chifu,
Professor of Conflict Analysis and Decision-making in
Crisis at the National School for Political and
Administrative Studies of Bucharest;
Director of the Conflict Prevention and
Early Warning Centre Bucharest.
E-mail: keafuyul@yahoo.com

The Wider Black Sea Region can be associated nowadays with a few words: uncertainty, turbulence, even techtonicity, revisionism, and crisis. This situation and the ongoing events are showing us more and more an uncomfortable position and a feeling of „in-between" of a big part of the states and citizens in the region, especially of those situated between the NATO/EU and Russia's border, stable ones.

Global Crisis with Impact

The first range of crises that are affecting the region are global ones. We are more and more facing a democracy crisis, especially in the new EU/NATO member states. This is also valid for consecrated democracies that sweep towards populism, extreme bureaucratic governance without political guidance, low-level leadership, and mediocrity, governance with the eyes on the media or on the polls.

The second international crisis is linked to the economy and finance. It is not linked directly to the market economy but to the credits and derivative financial products, lack of transparency and regulations of such products that arrived to be bought everywhere in the world. I think we are at the end of the period when we could live better on the work that we will be doing in the future or on the work that our sons are going to do (see the system of the 50-year credit in the States).

The third international or global crisis that we are facing now is the crisis of the international relations and international law, as we know it. We are witnessing more and more revisionism in this matter as suggest the proposals to hold a new European Security Conference or even a global one, moving from the existing system of check and balances to sovereignty and right of self-determination of the nations.

The Russian Foreign Minister Serghei Lavrov, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, as well as the former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE Adrian Severin, now a Euro-parliamentarian, are all supporters of a new deal. I think that at the end of the day, this is inevitable, but we have to be careful with choosing the moment of such discussions and go back to square one only after settling the existing problems according to the existing rules, not according to the new ones, as in the cases of Kosovo and Georgia.

Problems of the Main Actors

The second range of issues is related to the problems, if not crises, of the main players in the region. In this respect, we have Russia's crisis of self-defining and discontent with its present status on the international level. This is also about schizophrenia of being both a status quo actor, as a „policeman" of the post soviet space, and a revisionist actor. At the same time, Russia faces an increasing financial and economic crisis linked to the oil price which fell after the financial crisis broke up in the region in September, as well as to the credits and outflow of the investors after the August Russian war in Georgia.

This harms especially the investment projects, as well as the budgetary provisions and expenses. Combined with the need for replacing the military capabilities ending their life until 2020 and the political will to invest more in the military, this leads to a substantial deficit of resources versus political will and revisionism expectations.

The USA has its own problems: the financial and economic crisis hit first the US; the election period caught the US during the Russian/Georgian war with limited capacity for intervening, with a lame duck president, but also with a newly elected president that has to prepare his administration and deal primarily with the domestic issues.

NATO is now in a capability gap that we can easily see in Afghanistan. It is also in a period where it rethinks its territorial defence in relations with the expeditionary forces. The EU and NATO member states are now in a position of deciding to finance credible defence and security for Europe, including a bigger and stable share of the budget for the military capabilities, for reshaping of the military personnel and for preparing their army for all necessary range of military operations, that would enable them to lift the caviots in some of the missions.

The EU is still in an organisational crisis: after the old „enlargement fatigue", a new integration crisis appeared, with the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty and of the Lisbon Treaty by Ireland. The Czech Republic and Swe-

den which did not ratify the Treaty are waiting to do so and by taking over the EU's presidency next year are planning to convince Ireland to do the same.

After all, during the Russian-Georgian war, the French Presidency succeeded in taking the lead on the side of the EU with the reserves that one may have about the way in which the Presidency relies on the capabilities, expertise and advices of the Council and Commission, as well as the ones related to the form and content of the 6-point agreement and its implementation capacity. The EU had then a window of opportunity to enter the conflict resolution process and raise its importance in the Caucasus. And the EU took that opportunity taking advantage of the limited space of manoeuvre that the US has at this particular moment.

The Russian-Georgian War

It is not even worth searching for an answer to the question „Who shot first? South Ossetia was under the Russian responsibility for peacekeeping, and apart from the volunteers from Northern Caucasus, the separatist militia, the so-called peacekeepers and the Russian special forces, even the regular troops of Russia entered the Georgian territory. All Russian citizens were carrying weapons of all kinds, killing Georgian ethnic and Georgian citizens.

The latest information about the Sarkozy- Putin meeting in Moscow reconfirms that the target was the elected president of Georgia whom Vladimir Putin wanted to be executed in a public place, „hanged by the balls". And we are talking about the legitimate President of the sovereign nation of Georgia! There is no chief of state in the world that, knowing that he has to choose between leaving his country in time of war and being killed by the Russian special forces, would not react by defending himself.

Russia's invasion of Georgia was, by no means, a victory, not even a military one: the number of forces used, the lack of interoperability between different types of forces in spite of the previous coordination exercises in Northern Caucasus, the lack of air coverage of the troops, the chaotic search for the Georgian forces in South Ossetia, as well as the military losses, the airplanes shot down by the Georgian artillery, the casualties supported by a tiny army of 2000 of its best troops in Irak- all proved that Russia is far from being able to claim a victory.

If is to analyse the results of the crisis, this was a disaster for Russia:
- no business as usual, with G7, NATO and even the EU under the French presidency for almost three months;

- no recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by the partners in the CIS and SCTO; on the contrary, the Chinese presented a draft that was critical of the recognition;
- the financial and economic costs are dramatic, affected also by the global financial crisis: the stock market is less by 15% comparing to the situation as of August 7; the spending from the National Bank for maintaining the currency is huge; the Stabilising Fund is under threat to be spent in less than a few months, and the last but not least, the oil price fell under 50 dollars per barrel.

The most dramatic change was when the EU, USA and the International Community realized that Russia does not want to be a democratic state and that no other types of relations should be developed with Russia than professional, economical and commercial. Russia got to the level of the USSR before Perestroika. Moreover, there are huge concerns about the form in which the revised version of the EU Security Strategy will include and reflect Russia in terms of the threat perception of the EU member states.

After the last developments of the attacks on the EU monitors searching for proofs in a killing case of a Georgian, the ESDP mission should be strengthened and equipped with weapons and with a suitable mandate that would enable them to defend themselves and to take some security responsibilities in the region.

What is also very important is the decision of the NATO Foreign Ministerial from early December not to grant any MAP to a destroyed country with a dismantled army, but to ensure a much stronger commitment as regard to the security of both Georgia and Ukraine. What should be stated here is that Russia should not expect less EU, USA and NATO direct involvement when it threatens a sovereign state and its legally elected president.

Problems and Issues of the States in the Region

We cannot end this assessment without analysing the states in the region and their problems. First of all, mention should be made that all these states are transit countries and in that capacity have an important role for the EU.

In the case of Georgia, the war has put it in a difficult position. It has to deal with the stabilisation and reconstruction gap, but most specifically, with maintaining its right of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence on its entire recognised territory. This should be the most important task during the foreseeable rounds of negotiations and of the future conferences on the Southern Caucasus and on the reshaping of the European Security.

Moreover, Georgia should prepare itself for a social and political crisis as a result of the debate on the Russian- Georgian war.

Ukraine faces a situation of chaotic policies, as someone may refer to it, even if this is a proof of democracy. The lack of stability harms the NATO and EU perspectives of Ukraine and designs it as an unpredictable state in the region which refers also to its future strategic orientation. The democratic mechanisms used at their limits, the institutional instability and the political confrontation are the main issues to be solved in the near future in order to have a consistent policy and become a credible partner of the EU and NATO.

The Republic of Moldova has still two problems: the Transnistrian issue and the wishful thinking for a quick solution in the region which lead to political costs for the partners left aside the process, but also costs related to the change of the present 5+2 negotiation format to the 1+2 format under the Russian unique leadership. The deadlock is there already with the Russian request for accepting an indefinite presence of the Russian troops in the Eastern districts and a reshaped Kozak 2 Plan of „reintegration", which is more a limited sovereignty versus a territorial integrity deal. The latter secures the right of the separatist pro-Russian Tiraspol authorities to veto any decision on security and foreign policy, as well as provides them with the possibility to access legally the independence at any moment.

Moreover, focusing on this issue, which is of interest to less than 3% of the population and abandoning the democratic reform process (with important setbacks), the institution building and the functional state norms and rules that would lead to the EU rapprochement (supported by circa 70-80% of the population) as well as blaming the reintegration process for this, let the Chisinau authorities without any leverage and important achievements in the pre-election period.

Last but not least, there will be a continuous blockage in reaching a security solution for the Republic of Moldova as long as there is propaganda and counterproductive fetishism linked to the neutrality that is by no means a security guaranty or solution for the country.

In the case of Azerbaijan, there are two important issues to deal with. First, there is need for democratic reforms, improved human rights record, credible opposition and balanced policies. Second, it is necessary to enter the WTO as a pre-condition for joining the group on the way to stronger relations with the EU.

EU projects for the Wider Black Sea Region

At this moment, the EU has several policies for the Wider Black Sea Region that should be rationalized:

The Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy plus and *the Action Plans*. This policy is realized on bilateral level between the EU and each country from the region – the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

The Black Sea Synergy, which is a regional approach, involving the countries in the region in a cooperative effort, including Russia and Turkey

The Eastern European Partnership, the new proposal by Sweden and Poland to be presented in March next year, which is a regional approach aimed at giving to the region the sense of a community, together with the EU countries. This proposal is expected to have an important component of security matters, including ESDP, JHA and energy security.

The Black Sea Euro-region, which is an approach involving not states, but regions and local authorities from the Wider Black Sea Region. Russia and Azerbaijan did not sign the agreement because they „didn't have the consent of their central authorities for that".

The Black Sea Forum, which is an initiative linking states, local authorities and NGO's in the region on 3 dimensions: ecology and environment, civil emergency cooperation and conflict prevention. The most visible program is the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation of the German Marshall Found which is functioning for granting projects of cooperation in the region involving governmental and non-governmental actors.

As we could see, all these projects are important, since they refer to different forms of cooperation and complementary ways of addressing the regional cooperation issues. The task is not to eliminate or replace one of them but find suitable ways of harmonising them so as to avoid duplication and give coherence to these projects. Consistency between various projects is also important.

The new Generation of Action Plans

The most consistent policy up to now that has been lasting for 5 years is the European Neighbourhood Policy. It aims at harmonizing the status, norms and institutions to those of the EU, granting the neighbouring states gradual access to the internal market of the EU. The basic principle is that where there are huge discrepancies there is a place for conflicts and, on the

contrary, where the level of discrepancies and differences is reduced there is a space for cooperation.

Now we are witnessing the birth of the second generation of Action Plans-the Association Agreements. The one negotiated with Ukraine is giving us a hint on the content:

Deep Free Trade Agreement, opening the way to the customs union and common market, as soon as the respective states can adapt to the rules, norms and institutions needed and take the needed commitments. The proposal entails also institutional and normative coherence.

The visa liberalisation agreement and the visa-free regime as soon as the states assume the responsibilities for every stage taking over the costs and building up functional institutions to deal with the side effects of this perspective.

The energy community with a Energy Chart plus the agreement between the EU and the transit states, including observing the rules of the EU competition when accessing the infrastructure of transport of energy, but also parts of the Energy Security revised papers as much as every state can afford to take in terms of costs.

EU/ESDP involvement in the frozen conflicts – as in the cases of the EU-BAM between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and the ESDP mission- the EU Monitoring Mission – in Georgia and others. This type of involvement could be extended to all the frozen conflicts as long as the states require this type of involvement.

We think that in the near future the EU should move towards a Thesaloniki type of commitment in relation to the transit countries – the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan – granting them the perspective to join EU. A first step has been made by Ukraine when the EU recognized its status of a European state which is the first step to get access, when ready, to the opening of the negotiations for accession, once the Copenhagen Criteria are observed.

Reshaping the Relation with Russia

The EU states have a different approach in their relations with Russia. There are basically two ways of addressing it from the angle of a different solution to the security, including the energy security:

- engaging Russia, interdependence as a solution
- punishing and isolating Russia, blocking the relations except for the economic ones.

The purely cooperative or purely confrontational approach is too simple, too schematic, and does not give us enough tools to address Russia. That's why we are proposing a multifaceted approach:

- cooperation in a big rang of areas with Russia, not only in trade and economy, but also in the security matters like terrorism, non-proliferation, etc.;
- competition in some economic matters, in the Eastern ENP, in the democratisation and respect of human rights, and in the value related matters;
- confrontation in at least two matters- the alternative routes and sources of energy that are contouring Russia and the EU direct involvement in the frozen conflicts.

On the other hand, addressing Russia and the Eastern Neighbourhood is not possible as long as the transatlantic cooperation is not at its highest stages, which is very feasible after the new elections in the US. The second condition is the complementarity and non-duplication of the EU and NATO policies in the region.

Last but not least, let me give you a quote: „ Europe's initiatives are proportionate with the danger it faces", says Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner. We are going to see at what extent the threat perception of the EU countries about Russia, after the August Russian-Georgian war is reflected in the future revised Security strategy to be launched in December.

■

The Black Sea Area – an Area of Cooperation or Divergence?

Vlad Lupan,
Independent expert,
Republic of Moldova;
E-mail: vlad.lupan@gmail.com

The discussion about the Black Sea as a region, in current terms, started for the Republic of Moldova in 2004, with more attention paid to this zone by the European states and particularly by the US. The Black Sea area had the potential to become, after the war in Iraq, a zone of transit for energy supplies to Europe. This area, therefore, was also tagged as an area of extended Middle East.

It is already known that an overview of the issues and lines in this area would show the Black Sea as an area of conflicts – of Transnistrian conflict in Moldova, of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, of Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, of the Crimean issue, and of an overall eastern and southern flank area inside Ukraine, up to Moldova, where its interests clashed with those of Russia, and where Moscow dominates.

The Black Sea area is also a line of contact between Russia and NATO, be it through older member states, such as Turkey, or indirectly through newer ones, such as Romania and Bulgaria. It is also a zone in which Georgia and Ukraine have tried to strengthen their ties with the North Atlantic Alliance.

A part of the transit role was fulfilled by the Black Sea area, when transiting Azeri energy through Georgia and Turkey further into Europe. Other transit lines may follow and one actor in this area- Russia- is again uninterested in such developments.

Due to multiple implications, this area could be a zone of diverging interests – between Russia, EU, US and NATO – or possibilities. To narrow the search of options, one may look at current circumstances and ask the question: what are the evidences that this area can become a zone of possibilities and how realistic such a presumption could be?

The answer to this question may rest within the concepts of interests, national or supra-national, and their perceptions. Perceptions, as we believe, may play an important role in the international evolutions. The Russian political analyst and the Head of the Ethnic Relations Department at the Political and Military Analysis Institute Sergei Markedonov, has stated on several occasions during the debates in a number of conferences and seminars held in autumn 2008, that Russia has interests which will promote exactly as others promote theirs. The Russian perception is that other actors promote their interest

exactly as Russia does, and that Moscow is within the same limits of „promotion". We will try to explain our view on Russian perceptions further.

Russian behaviour is, indeed, built on the promotion of its interests. However, Sergei Markedonov suggests us to avoid including human rights and rule of law as components of such interests, while in our opinion these values, shared within the EU, are part of our national interests, ensuring a stable, predictable and democratic state- a guarantee of fewer security risks for other countries. This divergence of views remains valid.

In summer 2004, the author of this presentation mentioned in the framework of a seminar on South-Eastern Europe, that the behaviour of the Russian Federation clearly reflected the fact that it perceives the existing international relations through the prism of 'realpolitik'. Such an assumption remains correct, although some of the European decision makers were reluctant, up to 2008 including, to admit the extent to which Russian foreign policy is built on realpolitik.

The Russian perception of its interests can be explained. In turn, it could rationalise, although not back, Kremlin's behaviour. Moscow had international and also internal motivators for its behaviour over the years. Taking into account the years after the dissolution of the USSR, we can recognise that, first of all, there existed an internal motivator – the disappearance of the other bipolar super-power that was controlled or dominated by Russians, was a major blow to their self-confidence, as in the cases of other falling empires.

The reconstruction of their influence over their primary zone of control – former USSR Republics – remains one of their principal goals. Georgia and especially Ukraine are Kremlin's key targets for „restitution". Since Georgia was mentioned, we should appreciate that in terms of the Russian reaction we take the five-day war in that country as an example. It served both as an example to Ukraine's European aspirations, not only NATO aspirations though, as well as a pre-emptor to future plans for energy transit routes.

Russia is against the European integration of the former USSR republics, as much as it is against the integration into NATO and further developments in 2009 and after will have the opportunity to substantiate that point. Hence, we will argue that the Georgian events were rather a matter of time, and not a choice of organisation.

A relatively recent motivator for the Russian reaction in Georgia and worse relations with the West was the recognition of Kosovo, which stimulated Kremlin to act quicker in cases where it prepared sufficient ground for any future developments in the conflict zones generated by Kremlin in the former USSR, with further development potential.

As mentioned above, on matters of EU vs. NATO integration of Georgia, the Kosovo conflict was rather a pretext, in our opinion. Even without it Moscow would have intervened in these areas dramatically, depending on needs and timing, still retaining the goals of „restitution". Kosovo managed to speed up things, not avoid them. However, the timing had already been set, while Kosovo was a helpful, although not primary justification- this was done at the NATO Summit in Bucharest. Russia considered that such a lack of decision gave Moscow a deadline to prevent what it perceived as „negative" developments – NATO granting Georgia and Ukraine the Membership Action Plans. Kremlin would have reacted in Georgia by the end of 2008.

This perception of events is best reflected by the countries that had direct contacts with the Russian realpolitik over the years- during the Georgian events, the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland regretted that „non- granting of the NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia was seen as a green light for aggression in the region."

Another element of the Russian motivation was the US electoral cycle and the fact that in summer the US President was already a „lame duck" who would be in a weaker position to respond to the Russian invasion of Georgia. Although in real terms the US managed to provide a certain level of political support- its navy presence in the Black Sea area, and up to the aerial support to transport the Georgian military from Iraq and Afghanistan to Tbilisi. The last action, as rumoured, could have been a motivator for Russia to reconsider certain military activities within Georgia and provoked a concern in the Russian media as to the US further intentions, presumably serving to a certain extent as a de-motivator.

The Russian further behaviour also provides an insight into how Moscow was adapting to the post-Georgia realities and new relations with the West. The area of former USSR remains an area which they believe to be a zone of Kremlin's exclusive influence. Russia also tries to prove the military solution in Georgia was unavoidable, while Kremlin still has diplomatic potential for conflict resolution. Such a move would partially absolve Russia of its culpability for the (prepared) war and divert the argument from the use of military and other non-diplomatic means of conflict resolution in order to retain dominance by all means in the CIS area.

To prove that point, two conflicts of which one in Moldova and another in Karabakh, have been tested for possible evolutions. In Russian terms, evolution does not mean resolution, though. President Medvedev called his Moldovan counterpart to Sochi, in August, one the day after the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia- a symbolic gesture, meant to strain the

Moldovan officials and also to prove Kremlin's supervision of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, during their intimidation Kremlin went further attempting to bring back to the table the draft Kozak Memorandum on the Transnistrian Conflict Resolution that provided for their control over Moldova, and that was previously rejected by Moldova, as well as by the West.

As the success of such an attempt was limited, Kremlin moved on to another hot-spot – Karabakh. On November 2nd, 2008 both Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan were called, in the same manner as Moldovan president (demand to be present), to Kremlin to discuss and sign an intermediary agreement on conflict settlement. Despite the pressure from the Russian side, the parties failed to agree even on an intermediary agreement which resulted in Kremlin's insistence to at least sign a joint statement on non-use of military force.

However, it confirmed Moscow's attempts to force settlements that would be only in its favour. In both cases of Moldova and Karabakh, the existent international negotiations formats were neglected in favour of unilateral actions by Russia, supporting the belief that it was looking to consolidate its position internationally, with the West, as a „peacekeeper" and within the CIS space, to avoid other western involvement, as in the case of Georgia. Kremlin showed the lines of its sphere of interests.

Another sign of their desire to secure their „ownership" of the former USSR, was the new swing in the CIS policies. The Russian fluctuations in recent years from CIS more to bilateral ties, were switched after the Georgian events back to the CIS integration. Moreover, Moldova was to play a symbolic role in this context – it was „convinced" by Russia to take over CIS chairmanship in 2009, further strengthening Kremlin's authority over one of the countries with an unsettled conflict in the Black Sea area and in an area neighbouring other pro-Russian regions of Ukraine.

EU's reaction to the Russian attack in Georgia, may lead us to the idea that Moscow's planning was focused not only on short-term goals. It has been possibly planned for a long-term effect as well. The lack of a more unanimous EU reaction to the Georgian events may mean more future rifts within EU. However, the future Russian behaviour, eventually its more aggressive stance on various matters, may be the criteria that will enable a more coherent approach within EU towards the real situation in Russia.

Another actor that had a historic role in the Black Sea area is Turkey. In October 2008, one of the Turkish experts stated during a conference held in Prague, ahead of the Czech presidency, related to the situation in South Caucasus that Turkey is now pursuing a policy of „Zero problems" with its

neighbourhood. This, in short term, may have an impact on Turkey, although it is not clear when it will be positive and when negative – in relations with Armenia, and also in the Turkish-Azeri relations, in connections with Russia and Turkey's position on Ukraine and Moldova, all that providing for a mixed, clear/unclear signs.

The EU has been already mentioned as an important player that is already present in the Black Sea area. However, EU's energy policies prove that it doesn't have a unified position on that and its foreign policy is not „common". EU shows signs of dual approach within joint discussions contradicted by individual member-states actions that make this matter unclear and open to Russian promotion of its interests. The bombing, by Russian warplanes, next to the oil pipelines in Georgia was another Russian policy that worked along these lines.

The EU's position on the Black Sea area is still undetermined. There are three instruments that do not provide sufficient clarity and geographically overlap in this zone – the first one is the ENP+, the second is the Black Sea Synergy and finally there is still to be adopted Easter Partnership.

Due to these factors the presumption from the beginning of this paper that this was mainly an area of US extended Middle East is closer to reality. However, the energy issue in this area is only partially an US interest and rather pertains to the EU interests. In the lack of a concerted EU energy policy for the Black Sea, some of the ideas that are unofficially aired in the US, before the elections, are wondering, in an overstated and ironic manner – why US should care about the EU energy security if the EU cannot take care of itself in this regard.

It would be then reasonable to ask ourselves what security we should see in such circumstances:

First of all, the so-called Russian global or superpower is a myth. Russian Federation may be a regional power, however by no means it is a superpower. Even militarily Kremlin cannot afford itself deploying something like 3000 tanks along the borders with three Baltic States in the context of absence of these states from the CFE Treaty and even without CFE, in the context of an alleged threat from these countries NATO membership. There are continuous problems with new military weaponry, which is unable to function properly, such as the cases of difficulties with Akula II class submarine (or earlier infamous case of „Kursk"), or failed missile tests.

One of the pillars of Russian power is military. However, such power depends on hi-tech, which is absent, as we can see from the examples above. The current situation of Russia is similar to that of USSR, which exported

oil and purchased hi-tech to maintain its military power that allowed it to influence discussions on the global or European security issues. The Russian dependency on these two factors is still insufficiently used by the West, be it in terms of Western implication in conflict resolution in the CIS, or in terms of directing Russia less towards realpolitik.

Secondly, there are both diverging and common interests in the Black Sea area – common is the interest towards the EU, although in different ways. The European integration of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the individual approach of Turkey towards this process are goals that most probably will not be shared by the Russian realpolitik, which would mean that we should expect even more divergences in the Black Sea area. These divergences will not diminish unless either Russia rejects realpolitik or these countries refuse their European integration strategies.

Thirdly, a no „positive" (non-military) conflict resolution will be possible soon, unless Russia ensures that such a resolution responds to its interests exclusively, or has no other choice.

Fourth, Russia will try to avoid its alienation as a European energy supplier, and will continue its attempts to disrupt regional energy transit routes. It will also continue dominating the energy issues in the area (through energy wars), generating more conflicts and divisions.

Fifth, the area of Black Sea will remain an extension of the Middle East until Iraq matter continues to decrease in its importance, however remaining present in the US concerns. If after Georgia, the energy alternative routes become a higher priority on EU and US agenda, we should expect more divisions in the area to be provoked by Russia.

Sixth, the following actors will play a leading role in the security of the Black Sea region – US, EU and NATO, as well as Russia.

When speaking about a Black Sea region, such a region cannot be considered, therefore, a „comprising" or „shared" region – the concept of a Black Sea region does not exists yet as a politically accepted entity and is not yet shared by the states in the area. The region started to be built around certain interests and set of ideas. However, there might be a need in the future to continue such a construction – the divergence of interests and Russia's opposition to a consolidated region might indicate the need for the seashore countries to move forward their cooperation with EU and US, though initially it might seem difficult for all the involved actors.

Despite a theoretical possibility, we cannot see how Russia can change its perception of realpolitik, although it might change the approach – the two

should not be mistaken as softer approaches would not mean other goals, but the same goals by other means. The discussions about involving Russia, therefore, might not prove fruitful, while can be quite deceiving in the West.

The Black Sea area for the West can be no longer a discussion about a future „Russian lake". Otherwise both the West and Moldova will feel the „heat", particularly in winter.

■

Chapter III. Tackling the Major Neighbourhood Issues:
Border Management, Energy Security,
and Conflict Resolution

The Georgian crisis: new realities and rules of game

Sergey Markedonov,
Head of the Interethnic Relations
Department of the Institute for Political
and Military Analysis /Moscow.
E-mail: smark-72@mail.ru

In August 2008, the years-long Georgian-Ossetian conflict reached a new climax in the „five-day war." This outbreak of fighting was the third armed conflict between Georgia and the unrecognized republic of South Ossetia (de jure a part of the Georgian state) during the last 17 years. The sides fought for the first time in 1991-2 and again in August 2004. However, the military battle of August 2008 was qualitatively different from the previous two because the Russian military participated directly in it.

In contrast to the actions of separate Russian soldiers and units during the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-3, the Kremlin not only supported what was happening on the ground, but named the exercise „Forcing Georgia to Peace," in an effort to save the Ossetian people from a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe. In contrast to the previous Georgian-Ossetian battles, this time the West got actively involved in the conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali (and also between Moscow and Tbilisi).

The states of the Commonwealth of Independent States were also more active than they were in the 90s. This activity focused in particular around Ukraine and the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which is based in Crimea and participated in the conflict. For the first time in 17 years, Tbilisi fought with the separatist regions- Abkhazia and South Ossetia- on two fronts. In August 2008, the events in and around South Ossetia were the main questions on the international agenda. Most prominently, during the first days of the conflict, the UN Security Council met to discuss the situation in the Caucasus three times.

Several Stages of Conflict

The Georgian-Ossetian conflict evolved through several stages from a local conflict in a remote and poorly known part of the world into an event of

international significance. The first stage (1988-89) was ideological. In this period, the battling sides defined their main claims against each other and formed the underlying ethno-political mythologies of the future conflict. The second stage (1989-91) focused on politics and the law.

Over the course of two years, the Georgian and Ossetian antagonists have conducted a legislative (status) war. The third stage (January 1991-June 1992) was an armed conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia. In the course of the military activities, the Georgian units have stormed Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, three times (February 1991, March 1991, and June 1992). North Ossetia, a region in the Russian Federation's North Caucasus, was drawn into the conflict since it received approximately 43,000 refugees from South Ossetia and other parts of Georgia.

Russia had no choice but to participate in the conflict since the latter flowed onto its territory. In the beginning of the 90s refugees from South Ossetia and Georgia proper made up 16 percent of the population of North Ossetia. Upon arriving in North Ossetia, these refugees were drawn into a different conflict, one between the Ossetians and the Ingush. The first violence in this conflict occurred over the disputed Prigorodnyi Raion in 1992 and the dispute remains unresolved up to this day. No other foreign policy problem has such a direct impact on Russia's internal security.

Freezing the Conflict

On June 24, 1992, the Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze signed the Dagomyssk (Sochi) agreement on the principles for regulating the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. Shortly thereafter, on July 14, peacekeeping operations began in South Ossetia, with the introduction of Russian, Georgian, and Ossetian peace-keeping battalions. Military operations ended and a Joint Control Commission (Russia-Georgia, South Ossetia-North Ossetia) was created to monitor the ceasefire.

This way, in 1992, the armed conflict was „frozen" and the fourth stage of the conflict began. It lasted until May 2004. In contrast to the situation in Abkhazia, there have never been large-scale ethnic cleansings of the Georgian population in South Ossetia. Until August 2008, Georgians and Ossetians lived side by side. Even the constitution of the unrecognized South Ossetia republic recognized Georgian as a minority state language. Shootings, blockades, and provocations came to an end.

During the „frozen" stage of the conflict, the sides managed to keep relative peace. There was direct bus service between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali until

2004 and markets (such as Ergneti) functioned where Georgian and Ossetian traded together. Tbilisi and Tskhinvali mutually recognized automobile registrations. Nevertheless, mention should be made that the economy in the separatist region was based on the contraband trade conducted by the members of both ethnic groups. However, this black market strengthened the ties between South Ossetia and Georgia.

In an informal way, it established mutual trust between the two conflicting societies. Moreover, during 12 years they have developed significant positive potential in the conflict resolution process. First, he Georgian and Russian battalions carried out the peace-keeping mission. Second, the parties signed important documents providing for the rehabilitation of conflict zones.

Among these, especially important were the Memorandum on Measures for Providing Security and Strengthening of Mutual Trust between the sides in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict of May 16, 1996, and the Russian-Georgian inter-governmental Agreement on Cooperation in Restoring the Economy in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and on the Return of Refugees from December 3, 2000.

Unfreezing the Conflict

The fifth stage can be characterized as the „unfreezing" of the conflict. It began with an attempt by official Tbilisi to revise the existing balance of power in South Ossetia and the political-legal format for the peace-keeping operations there. On July 20, 2004, the president of Georgia publicly announced that he did not exclude the possibility of renouncing the Dagomyssk agreement. „If it is impossible to raise a Georgian flag in Tskhinvali Raion within the framework of the treaty, I am ready to withdraw from this agreement," he declared. With this statement, Saakashvili demonstrated a desire to achieve three goals:

- Internationalizing the Georgian-Ossetian conflict by involving the US and European countries in its resolution;
- Reformatting of the conflict from Georgian-Ossetian to Georgian-Russian and presenting it as an example of Russian neo-imperialism;
- Rejecting the exclusive role of Russia as a guarantor of peace in the region.

The realization of these three goals became the essence of the fifth stage of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, which ran from 2004 to 2008. The second war took place on August 8-19, 2004, in South Ossetia. This armed standoff involved the use of infantry and artillery. Although the two sides managed

to separate themselves by the end of August, that month began a new wave of shootings, attacks, provocations, and blockades along important routes of communication.

Old Rules of the Game Do Not Longer Work

By August 7, 2008, the status quo of Southern Ossetia and to a lesser degree of Abkhazia was broken. The new stage of conflict in South Ossetia changed the political-legal and military configuration not only in the two „hot spots" of the CIS, but exerted a serious influence on the entire ethno-political situation in Europe.

From this date, the old rules of the game that took shape after the collapse of the Soviet Union no longer work in the Caucasus, and possibly in the Black Sea region and even in the CIS as a whole. In August 2008, Eurasia witnessed a decisive overload of conflicts. An extremely important new precedent has been set in which the legal and political agreements, guaranteeing the status quo and the freezing of conflicts, no longer work. Neither Georgia, nor Russia observes them now. Georgia refuses to follow the Dagomyssk and Moscow agreements regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's leadership now widely interprets the understanding of peacekeeping operations. Russia has clearly exceeded the limit for 3,000 peacekeepers. One cannot help but notice the use of special purpose units in the conflict zones as they are clearly not involved in peacekeeping.

Additionally, the Russian troops went beyond the geographical limits of the security zone defined in the 1992 and 1994 agreements, by sending troops to such Georgian cities as Gori, Poti, and Senaki. Of course, some Russia's actions are reactions to the unfreezing of the conflict started by Georgia. But they objectively work against the earlier rules of the game. In 2008, the conflicts within CIS went to a qualitatively new level. If these rules were defined in the beginning of the 90s directly by the process of the collapse of the Soviet Union, today they are not determined by the inertia of the past, but by the current dynamics of the development and construction of the new nation-states.

There are no more frozen conflicts. This reality from the 90s disappeared with the „Yeltsin generation." At present, the conflicts are planned and resolved by a post-Soviet generation of politicians. However, this generation is developing new rules of the game as it goes. What the new configuration will be we'll see in the near future. In 2008, not only the states of the South Caucasus, but also Ukraine, announced its intention to move beyond previous agreements. Kiev's plan to block the ships of the Black Sea Fleet from

returning to the base in the Crimea is an assault on the entire complex of the Russian-Ukrainian agreements.

Redefining Borders

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first redrawing of borders took place. These lines were not always accepted as legitimate. The breakup of the Soviet Union according to the borders of its 15 republics (which seemed logical from the outside) provoked mixed reactions among the former autonomous formations, which were not entirely pleased that the former union republics became independent countries. The result was ethnic conflicts, which created winners and losers. Some states were not interested in preserving the results of the first effort at line-drawing. Accordingly, they had an interest in revising the boundaries with the aid of various external forces.

The losers did not accept the situation that appeared after the conflicts were frozen and they made it a priority to change them by any means possible. For South Ossetia, the five-day war had tragic consequences. Today, the politicians and experts cannot name the exact number of people killed. In fact, such numbers amount to political arithmetic for the various interested parties. The infrastructure of South Ossetia is effectively destroyed and without the Russian intervention, the region would have suffered the same fate as the Republic of Serbian Krajina, a Serb separatist region of Croatia that was ultimately reintegrated back into Croatia in an effort to preserve its territorial integrity. Many of the buildings have been destroyed and numerous refugees have fled their homes.

For the Georgians, the five days of August were also a terrible catastrophe. They effectively spelled the end of the „united Georgia" project. After the third war in 17 years, it will hardly be possible to reintegrate the citizens of South Ossetia into Georgia. Additionally, Georgia received a new wave of refugees from South Ossetia. At the same time, we must point out that between 2004 and 2008 the ethnic Georgian villages on the so-called Liakhv corridor (Tamarasheni, Kekhvi, Achabeti, and Kurta) have been well equipped as cement fortresses, well armed, and supplied with high-tech equipment from Tbilisi. These villages blockaded Tskhinvali, cut off its supplies, and closed the Transcaucasus highway. In 2008, the Georgian population of these villages ended up paying for the adventures of the Tbilisi politicians. As the former parliamentarian Ivliane Khaindrava correctly pointed out, „the teenage complexes of the commander-in-chief brought this unhappiness to the lives and health of thousands of people."

By formal criteria, Russia was the winner. Its actions were justified, taking into account the many connections between the security of the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus. Russia succeeded in blocking the total destruction of the military-political infrastructure of South Ossetia.

Russia temporarily took control of the city of Gori, which has been a staging ground for the Georgian attack over the last two years. The city housed a military hospital, morgue, and other elements of the military rear. Georgian subunits were pushed out of the upper parts of the Kodori Gorge, where they had arrived two years ago in violation of the Moscow agreement of 1994.

However, through its actions, Russia also helped destroy the status quo and unfroze the conflict. The benefits from the confrontation with the West are not yet visible, while the costs are all too clear. Under conditions of a complete collapse of security in the Caucasus, the attempts of international intervention will only increase. The success of the military campaign could also give Moscow the illusion that complicated problems can be solved at one stroke without long negotiations and complex procedures (was it really too difficult to convene the Federation Council to give legal form to the actions of the Russian soldiers and officers?).

The Role of the Russian Military Abroad

It was for the first time in many years that Russia took military action beyond its borders. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian military and border guards participated in localizing two civil wars in Tajikistan (1992-1997) and Georgia (1993). However, after these events, the Russian army participated in military activities only on its own territory. In 2008, the format of the Russian army's participation abroad differed greatly from its historical experience in both the imperial and Soviet periods.

The Russian forces did not seek to resolve ideological issues as they had in putting down the Hungarian rebellion of 1849 or during the events in Budapest in 1956 or in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The goal also was not territorial expansion, although Tbilisi is accusing Moscow of this.

The main goal of the exercise was to protect the security of the North Caucasus. If Russia had remained quiet in the case of South Ossetia, there would have been forces in the North Caucasus which would have been ready to replay the battle for Prigorodnyi Raion. It is another question why Russia either cannot or will not articulate this national interest, fearing that the country will be seen as weak or vulnerable. Whatever the case, Russia emphasized its role in the „near abroad," analogous to the role of the US in Latin

America, Israel in the Middle East, Australia in Oceania, and France in its former African colonies. Russia has laid out a qualitatively new designation for its zone of vital and legitimate interests.

International Consequences

The project to build up a Commonwealth of Independent States has now finally collapsed. This is one of the key results of the „five-day war." The crux of the matter is not simply Georgia's exit from the group and Ukraine's willingness to leave. The real issue is the way that the members view this institution. Even Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Belarus, which have the reputation of the main Eurasian partners of Russia, abstained from one-sided evaluations of the war. Most members of the CIS have their own separatist „skeletons in the closet" and therefore are afraid of Russia gaining too much power since it presents a threat to their own unity. Therefore, the CIS is no longer an appropriate instrument for developing common approaches and methodologies for solving conflicts. The five-day war only strengthened this tendency.

Likewise, the alter-CIS institution, GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) also did not prove very effective or unified in its positions. In the person of its president, Ukraine took a pro-Georgia position, although there were many different opinions inside the country.

The announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan on August 8 in support of Georgia's territorial unity consisted of general phrases („on the compliance of the Georgian operation with 'international law'") and did not receive any further development. Baku preferred to be careful since it is interested in stable relations with Russia. In contrast to Georgia, Azerbaijan has not built its foreign policy on the basis of sharp confrontation. Baku sees Russia as a counterweight to the West, with which Azerbaijan's relations are not as close as Georgia's.

Moldova's position was also cautious since it wants to reintegrate with the unrecognized **Pridnestrovian** Moldavian Republic (PMR) and is willing to accept important Russian conditions, such as not joining NATO, neutrality, and the recognition of Russian property on its territory. Accordingly, within GUAM there were various positions towards the Russian actions and varying degrees of willingness to enter into conflict with Moscow.

The main theme raised by the „five-day war" is the self-determination of unrecognized republics. In „freezing" the conflicts at the beginning of the 90s, Russia gave its agreement to the existence of such unrecognized republics as the main result of the conflicts.

The frozen status meant that the resolution of the conflict would be put off until better times, with a more profitable political situation and the achievement of compromise among the various sides. In such conditions, pre-determining the status of the disputed territories would not be rational. Thus, the unresolved status of the de facto states defined the political reality of the 90s.

This reality included preserving the status quo and the absence of significant military activity (in Abkhazia, there were attempts to change the republic's status in 1998 and 2001, but they were nowhere near the scale of Tskhinvali 2008). The relative peace gave hope that the sides would be able to agree in some form. Now, the self-determination of unrecognized states will be an additional instrument of influence for Russia, a situation that cannot help but arouse tensions among its neighbours. Finally (in order of discussion rather than importance), is the role of the West.

There is no united position among the US, countries of old Europe, and new members of the European Union. Only the representatives of the US pursued a consistently pro-Georgian policy. The others were more reserved. Even within the confines of old and new Europe, there were different opinions.

Nevertheless, overall, the West demonstrated the limited nature of its resources for influencing the situation. There were many emotions, ideologies and even more stereotypes from the past, but there was insufficient pragmatism. In August 2008, we faced a new South Caucasus with a qualitatively new agenda. After the Tskhinvali blitzkrieg, Georgia has almost no chance to restore its territorial unity.

Return to the status quo is also impossible since Russia has now recognized the independent status of the two territories. However, the work on determining exactly what this status means has only started.

■

The black sea in formation:
perception as a factor of geopolitics

Dr. Igor Munteanu,
Institute for Development
and Social Initiatives, Chisinau;
E-mail: viitorul@moldova.org

As a region in formation, the BS has all necessary assets to increase its strategic value, not only because of its energy potential, or as home to an evolving network of pipeline routes and trade corridors, creating a kind of natural hub between the Caspian Sea, Caucasus and Europe, but also because of its projected image in the world.

Since 1992, a multinational set of institutions has emerged to represent the Black Sea littoral states and their neighbours, among which is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project (BSEC) with a secretariat, a parliamentary assembly, an environment program, a national bank, a university network, and a research institution, all based in Turkey, Romania, and Greece.

In a short run, dozens of books, anthologies, and journals challenged their readers to uncover what is Black Sea, via historic facts dating back to the Greece trading colonies around the sea rim, as well of ancient settlements. ‚The Black Sea is back', stated Neal Ascherson, when he launched in 1995 his travel book, which sparked high interest among travellers to Crimea, Caucasus and the northern coast of Turkey. Nevertheless, for more than a decade after the dissolution of the USSR, the BS institutions had less than cordially cold relations with Europe, with limited results, and more than ceremonial meetings.

The very idea of a distinct Black Sea Area has huge implications for historians, political scientists, and policymakers alike. But, understanding the context in which BS states are functioning proves to be difficult if one would look only at the economic and political data. A wider Black Sea Strategy was presented in 2004 by the GMF, raising vivid discussions and a lot of concerted activities throughout Europe. Soon, with EU membership provided on January 1, 2007 to Romania and Bulgaria, the EU became actively involved in rethinking its role in the region.

Under German Presidency, in the same year of 2007, a 'Black Sea Synergy' Policy was launched which aimed to address the integration of the Black Sea Region into a wider framework of Western interests and initiatives. The German Presidency of the European Union stated its determination to promote integration, cooperation, independence and democracy for the coastal and

riparian countries, but within the scope and limits of the existing institutions of the region.

With all its obvious limitations, the Strategy proved to be an excellent attempt to see the region as part of the European Foreign Policy and Security concerns, but also as a promising field where soft-power strategies, promoted by a variegated number of agencies, funds and bodies of the European Union could prove their effectiveness and commitment.

Indeed, putting the Black Sea at the Centre of our historical gaze and treating the sea as a link rather than a barrier, is one way of encouraging this kind of cooperation and integration. Some of the most innovative writings on the America, the Mediterranean, and Southeast Asia from the recent years have been based on the idea of maritime peripheries as integrated units, an approach that owes much to Fernand Braudel's magisterial treatment of the Mediterranean in the early modern period. Nevertheless, with few exceptions, the history of southeast Europe is still written through a largely national lens, with the emergence of distinct, self-conscious nations as the central narrative and the establishment of national states as the historiographical telos.

Nevertheless, unlike the Baltic Sea Region, or even Balkans, the Black Sea Area is not seen yet as a region even following the minimalist tough prescriptive definition of Karl Deutsch, as „three i": identity, institutions, and common interests". Some of the obvious rifts of the BS seem to be even less solvable than in Balkans, which is still a denominator of its variegated ethnic homelands, or like in the Baltic case, the region is associated with the Hansa rule, a kernel of living together mood of life and habits for the Baltic nations. So, many still think about Black Sea in terms of a ‚transitional gateway' to the Caspian sea, rather than of a unitary space, in spite of a diverse and busy working organisations and structures.

The Aegean and Black seas were sometimes described as ‚an alphabet soup of American and European projects, programs, processes, and partnerships, all designed to encourage good neighbourly relations and prepare the way for entry into Euro-Atlantic institutions, which is however closed'.

The reason behind such a plurality of approaches was apparent related to a fatal combination of institutions, uncertainty, and limited offers from the integrating Western partners. As a result, definitions tend to be super-imposed from outside by dominant actors within or around the region, and this is proved by 4 factors:

- IDENTITY: The BS integrates outstanding cultural, religious and linguistic differences. Only churches registered in the countries of the BS are more than 30: Turkish-Muslim, Russian-Orthodox, Georgian

Gregorian Orthodox Patriarhate, Armenian Christian-Monophisit, Orthodox Patriarchates in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Old-style Orthodox Church, etc). Linguistic clusters are more than 20: Slavs, Chirkasian, Latin, Turk, Armenian, Georgian, and Greek.

- WEAK OR TRANSITIONAL STATES: A second major factor is due to the so-called ‚stateophobia' – with considerable frustrations accumulated because of the previously disrupted statehood in the ex-Soviet space, which resulted in violent conflicts, and even wars, after the USSR collapse, masterfully exploited by those who ‚privatised' the Soviet old-legacy, coupled with the Russian Empire legacy, within a resurgent Russian neo-empire.
- COMPETING LEGACIES: Another factor would be with the so-called ‚post-cold war' heritage, namely that some of the state which were perceived as ‚West', like Turkey, during the cold-war period, because of the NATO defensive line, were perceived less ‚West' after the end of the cold war), driving on a political play-back with their historical memories.
- VULNERABILITY TO EXTERNAL FACTORS: the BS is surely part of a large supra-regional geopolitical competition. This was a frontline between NATO in the South and Warsaw pact in the North, during the cold-war, and now, it resurrects as a divisive line between those countries which aim to become ‚part of Europe', via NATO, and those, who hesitantly oppose it, because of their domestic intricacies, frozen conflicts, difficult relations with their neighbours, etc.

There is no doubt that one of the outstanding factors fracturing the region is related to the internal/domestic weakness, exposed to important influences from abroad. Most of the countries of the region are weak states.

Most are multinational, not just multiethnic, with distinct historical nations sharing one piece of territory.

All are on the periphery of Europe, laggards in the race for membership in most European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, with the exception of Romania and Bulgaria, succeeding to receive the winning ticket in one of the last trains towards EU. Many have been beset by territorial separatism and interethnic strife.

All face the problem of endemic corruption. All these questions are of interest to political scientists, but interestingly, the norm has been to compare states outside the region – Latin America, say, with central Europe – rather than to look for comparisons among states from the same Neighbourhood.

There has been no major work, for example, that explicitly compares political transition in Greece and Romania. The role of the military in politics

might be examined in Georgia, Turkey, Russia and Armenia. So powerful has the idea of "post-communism" been in our mental mapping of Eastern Europe that we have tended to look far afield for comparable cases when in fact enlightening comparisons might be made in Eastern Europe's own backyard.

A decade after the demise of Communism, scholars, policymakers, and journalists still apply to Eastern Europe the same geographical descriptors that were born of the Cold War. Europe is usually sectioned into an integrating west, a reforming centre, and a struggling east. History-writing in the national mode, however, obscures what has in fact been the dominant social fact of southeast Europe's long history: hybrid identities, overlapping allegiances, and multiple definitions of what constitutes the community – not the ancient hatreds.

Since 2005, Ukraine, Moldova and the Caucasus countries are connected to the ENP; two BS countries are already Members of the EU, while Turkey is an accession candidate for quite a long period. The only state which is not aspiring to please, and perhaps, join EU is Russia, which maintains however a special relationship with the EU, based on the EU-Russia policy, or the so-called ,four common spaces'.

Security versus Prosperity – which one First?

The persistent maintenance of security threats in the BS is due to the persistence of several conflicts, which have many similarities, but also huge differences in their intensity, solvability and size. Their resolution is complicated by their dynamic nature, weak domestic capacities to resolve the disputes, and their origins, planted at the dissolution of the USSR, now substituted by its successors as ,interested parts' in these conflicts.

For instance, Russia is perceived in Moldova as a source of conflict in the Eastern region of the country (Transnistria). Russia has played there its role of a mediator and equally of a ,interested part' since the end of the 1992 military hostilities with the breakaway region, a factor that escalates or blocks the developments towards conflict settlement. Having de facto a kind of monopoly over the peacekeeping mission in Transnistria, and still retaining considerable amounts of ammunition and military personnel in this region of Moldova, Russia has visibly discriminated Moldova and the West when the latter attempted to engage in finding out a peaceful settlement plat through the ,5+2' format of talks. Moreover, it provided overt support in equipping the separatist regime and also directed considerable financial and material resources to subsidize the enclave.

All these steps are made to block Moldova's foreign and domestic policy towards more appealing integration projects with EU and NATO, and keep ,at low fire' the escalation of a conflict, which has very few real reasons to still exist. It is not an ethnic conflict, nor entirely an economic dispute.

Continuous intrusion into the domestic politics, irredentist claims in the case of the Crimean peninsula and variegated plans to divide the Ukrainian state (such as the Russia's self-proclaimed autonomy in Transcarpatia, or the disputed central laws in the regions inhabited by Russian speakers) were the targets of an expansionist policy of Russia in Ukraine. Sovereignty of Azerbaijan and Georgia is equally affected by the persistence of ,frozen' conflicts which cannot be unfrozen unless these states pay a full cost for it. Thus, the risks of failing transition to democracy and functional market economy is dependent on the domestic stability, but also on the external threats like the one which led in August 2008 to the Russian invasion in Georgia, huge pressures on Moldova, direct warnings to Ukraine, and a continuous exhibition of military/economic muscles.

Political turbulence is often embodied in economic punishments, thus the mutual hatred only emerges. In 2006, soon after the installation of the first EU Border Monitoring Mission in Moldova at the request of both Moldovan and Ukrainian Presidents, Russia decided that its interests would be then affected and introduced an official ,embargo' on Moldovan agricultural products. The economic embargoes on the Moldovan wines and vegetables sold for decades on the Russian markets, was ostensibly coupled with overt and much generous support to the separatist regime in Transnistria, whose leaders were invited to join high-level delegations in Kremlin, receiving outstanding decorations and honours, available actually only to official recognized state leaders.

Since March 2006, Russians has continued to transfer financial bonuses to the separatist Transnistria, estimated at 27 and 40 mln per month. That was the Kremlin response to the Chisinau decision to decline the 2003 Russian offer known also as ,Kozak Plan' to federalise the internationally recognized Republic of Moldova on a parity principle with the separatist Transnistria, which had announced it would block the westwards orientation of the state and bring it back into the Moscow's full subordination.

In both cases, Russians wanted to elevate the separatist enclaves in Georgia and Moldova to the status of ,real/functional' entities, in parallel with a black PR in the printed and electronic media. This made Ukraine and Georgia stir an active campaign to join NATO which will sooner than later happen with a MAP. In the case of Moldova and Georgia, the Russians wanted to upgrade the status of the separatist enclaves in order to push for a settlement

of conflicts under the ‚Moscow terms'. Escalation of frozen conflicts and proliferation of non-state actors play the role of Damoclean sword, having negative effects on the energy supplies, trade and economic cooperation. For instance, what made the war in Georgia so crucial to the EU is that it cannot be seen as an isolated occurrence, indicating to a new and worrying factor that has poisoned the partnership between the West and Russia.

Since the EU priorities for the region remain unclear, this leaves Russia with a white ticket and heavy guns in hand. Nevertheless, the last events show that the traditional game in the BS is not over and quite appealing to some of the coastal states.

Partially because of its rediscovered ‚unilateralis' ambitions, Russia responded to the Georgian and Ukrainian claims to join NATO by invading Georgia, having recognized in the end the separatist enclaves of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and afterwards, announcing its decision to redeploy strategic missiles ‚Iskander' in Kaliningrad. It would be surprising if the Russian' attempts to play ‚hard', would restrict NATO allies to invite Ukraine and Georgia for a MAP. Considering the huge implications of the world financial crisis on Russia, one should be blind not to see who's going to lose from a staged new cold war[15].

The gap in democracy and election organizations, continuous political instability in Ukraine, the war in Georgia, stagnation of the political and structural reforms seem to be highly remarkable in a vast number of states. For some of them, the self-complacency and huge profits from gas and oil business have underscored the role of dynastic plutocrats, like in Azerbaijan and Russia, who emerged as regional ‚petro-states', and seem to abstain from any signs of progress in democracy-building and rule of law, which thus discouraged the West and particularly EU.

The war in Georgia has equally highlighted the obvious difficulties for the EU to gain coherency and streamlined vision on issues like the BS area. While Poland, Baltic States, Great Britain and Sweden advocated for a new step of EU enlargement for Ukraine, Moldova, as well as towards NATO, other EU states appeared to prefer a policy of ‚containment' towards Russia. Traditionally, the EU has succeeded to achieve its goals when it created opportunities for development, providing a good mix of interests and values. Here is where

---

[15]   On November 10, President Medvedev acknowledged that Russia had lost in less than 3 months 1,5 trln USD, as a result of negative exchange rates, and cash withdrawal from Russia (www.lenta.ru), November 22, 2008.

a second difference lies since the Black Sea region has been standing between several competing legacies, with important security concerns.

Apart from Bulgaria and Romania, only Ukraine has received a 'free' rating in mass media freedom, while the rest are 'partly free' or 'not free'. Economic statistics show yet high growth rates, but also rampant poverty lines. Georgia and Ukraine show signs of business revival with the Ukrainian economy expanding by 7,3% GDP in 2007 while the Georgian growth rate went down after having reached 12.4%, which had made the World Bank call it 'the top reformer of 2006'. Both Georgia and Moldova are still affected by the trade-embargoes imposed by Russia in 2006, and still recovering.

The new EU members Bulgaria and Romania, although on top of their economic and democratic scores, compared to the rest of the BS region, still have to fight against corruption and the fragility of their judicial systems. The Failed States Index shows remarkable downturn in Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine, possibly because of the already top-scores registered in Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan. The average score in the EU area is almost 3 times lower than in the BSA and shows a warning label to most of the BSE states, except Romania and Bulgaria. This creates a large gap between the target region and the other regions, such as the Baltic, or even the Balkans.

So, what makes the BS unique and different is the lack of a common identity and considerable threats & risks, calling the EU to overstated prudence and vigilance. This include the EU 'mantra' on the urgency of finding out alternative energy routes for the EU consumers, but also a plethora of issues related to the internal affairs such as border control, illegal migration, reduction of the organised crime and violence, and even some of the most burning issues for the ESDP agenda- resolution of the 'frozen' conflicts, stability at the periphery, which is less a matter of geographic curiosity than a matter of awareness rising, and risk-realisation in EU as regards to the design of the future BS.

Table No.1 Comparative Analysis of the Failed States Index

Failed States Index (low means low risks)				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Armenia	N/A	70,9	70,3	70,7
Azerbaijan	85,7	81,9	81,2	81
Bulgaria	N/A	62,1	60,3	58,5
Georgia	N/A	82,2	82,3	83,8
Moldova	N/A	82,5	85,7	85.7
Romania	N/A	62,6	60,9	59,9

Russia	83,5	87,1	81,2	79,7
Turkey	86	74,4	74,9	75,4
Ukraine	88,8	72,9	71,7	74,4
Regional average	N/A	75,7	74,7	74,4
Benchmarks				
Estonia	N/A	51	50,5	51
Latvia	N/A	56,2	56,7	54,4
Poland	N/A	47,9	47,6	47,6
Average difference	N/A	24,0	23,1	23,4

Source: Failed States Index[16]

What are the observations which can be seen from this comparative analysis of the states belonging to both the Black and Baltic Seas? Particularly, one can remark that the states with 'frozen conflicts' on their territory seem to lag far behind the others and lack improvement trends. It seems that the gap in the democracy and civil society development compare to other post-transition EU countries that are quite visible in the international scores and ratings, has a cooling effect on EU.

Thus, the region hard-security threats undermine the potential for domestic progress and reforms that are only the second on the rank of issues on their agenda of priorities. In a comparative perspective, 2 international scores- BTI democracy score and Freedom House- show considerable deficiencies in the functioning of the state institutions, attesting a similar gap between the reference group (the Baltics) and the BS states, whose performance is lower if not minor.

Table No.2 BTI Democracy Status score[17] versus Nations
in Transit Index of the Freedom House, 2008

BTI democracy status scores (2006 – 2008)				Freedom House: Freedom in the world (2004 – 2008)				
	2006	2008			2005	2006	2007	2008
Armenia	6,1	6,0		Armenia	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5
Azerbaijan	3,8	3,8		Azerbaijan	5,5	5,5	5,5	5,5

---

[16] The Failed States Index 2008, Foreign Policy, The Fund for Peace, www.foreign policy.com.

[17] Bertelsmann Transformation Index, www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de; Freedom House NT, www.freedomhouse.org.

Bulgaria	8,5	8,7		Bulgaria	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5
Georgia	6,1	6,9		Georgia	3,5	3,0	3,0	4,0
Moldova	5,4	6,9		Moldova	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5
Romania	8,2	8,6		Romania	2,5	2,0	2,0	2,0
Russia	5,7	5,4		Russia	5,5	5,5	5,5	5,5
Turkey	7,1	7,1		Turkey	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0
Ukraine	7,1	7,4		Ukraine	3,5	2,5	2,5	2,5
Regional average	6,4	6,8		Regional average	3,7	3,4	3,4	3,6
Benchmarks				Benchmarks				
Estonia	9,4	9,6		Estonia	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0
Latvia	8,3	8,7		Latvia	1,5	1,0	1,0	1,5
Poland	9,2	8,8		Poland	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0
Average	9,0	9,0		Average	1,2	1,0	1,0	1,2

The 2007 BTI score shows strong deficiencies in democracy on a regional level with only Romania and Bulgaria performing close to satisfactory, and a clear gap between the non-EU Black Sea states and those who are ‚in'. In Russia, the media and opposition leaders are heavily controlled by resurgent elites, which instilled fear and panic far outside its borders.

Seen as a foundation for state power, the use of fossil resources and military muscles is reediting today the ignominious elements of the cold-war period dispersed from the past ideological curtain. The same 'usual suspects' Bulgaria and Romania showed improvements in the last 4 years, which restate the direct linkage between the EU roadmap and the way the state and society are functioning.

EU Club membership has a powerful force, influencing what the states do and how they are perceived by their citizens. Freedom of expression is rated low in the BSA with only two EU Members having the media 'free', and recently 'free' for Ukraine, while the other states are scored 'not free' or 'partially free'. It seems that the international scores are not too generous with the Black Sea region with the outstanding exception of those countries, which succeeded to join the Western Alliances (NATO or/and EU), a resolution which paid off immediate benefits with corresponding effects on their performance.

A Region where Perception is everything?

In our research, we wanted to explore the traits that could design the socio-psychological profile of the Black Sea identities, what they stand for,

what they are influenced by, and to what extent they could be changed. With this purpose, a matrix of analysis was built on 3 groups of indicators: social capital (encapsulating – trust in institutions, family, church, political parties, relatives), intensity of transition (social or economic pressures on population, cultural or religious splits, fears or perils perceived from internal or external enemies, friends and allies, self-image) and dominant issues (frozen or hot conflicts, political competition, model of state-building, tradition or modernization, EU or other regional integration paradigms, regional identities, concurrent or dual).

Fears shape more than anything else the public mindset. Upon the fears of the past, individuals build their own strategies of relationship with the states in which they live or plan to live. Subject to permanent changes, the states which surround the Black Sea have more common traits that one would believe.

- We found the Armenians fears are primarily related to: civil war – 21%, worsening of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict – 18%, and their individual social –economic situation – 13%[18].
- It seems that the Russian respondents are most fearful of losing their relatives – 28%, to be confronted with the war or mass casualties – 18%, or having no support in case of the elderly; of sickness or invalidity – 11%[19].
- Moldova's society is primarily fearful of health conditions – 16%, poverty – 11%, future of their children – 9%, war – 9% and unemployment – 9%[20]. The public fears are often shadowed by individual fears of personal sensitivity.
- Compared with older surveys (1992/94), the Russian respondents fear less of war, mass killings or famine (in 2007, these indicators dropped from 24% to 18%, and from 11% to 5%), and more of losing relatives (increasing from 21% to 28%), invalidity or sickness (11%), abuses or repressions of the state (from 5% to 10%). Fears of famine or poverty have lower incidence among people with higher education[21].

---

[18] Armenia National Voter Study July 2007.
[19] http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv.
[20] Moldova National Voter Study March 12-28, 2007.
[21] vtiom, чего боятся россияне? 30.05.2007пресс-выпуск № 701 МОСКВА, 30 мая 2007 г.

Table No.3 Fears across the region of the Black Sea

Armenia	Russia	Moldova
Civil war	Loss of relatives	Health conditions
Karabakh	War/mass casualties	Poverty
Migration, Poverty	Sickness or invalidity	Future of children, War

However, if people around the Black Sea fear most wars, conflicts, poverty, their projects of the future are rather contrasting. While some of them aspire to get closer to Europe, appealing to enlargement and conditionality from the EU, others want to preserve the limbo/ status quo of the ‚sea' with a mental map in which Russia is the sole ‚guardian of peace', and the region is too far from the West. This statement seems to be hotly disputed, however.

For instance, Georgia and Ukraine called both to NATO membership, using this as a corollary to a European identity.The tactical move is partially responded to Ukraine with the emerging EU Eastern Partnership, now a priority for the EU Commission and the upcoming Czech Presidency, with vocal support from Poland and Sweden. Ukraine will possibly sign up an Association Agreement with EU, which could be an excellent reward to the democratic course of Ukraine. Nevertheless, this influences Ukraine to detach itself from the rest of the ENP countries, i.e. the Black Sea states, which are still heavily striving to implement their APs.

The transfers of power in both Russia and Azerbaijan: from Putin to Medvedev, and from Heidar Aliyev to his son Ilham, proved to be a sort of dynastic/ clientelistic adaptation rather than an evolution of the politics. In Ukraine, the formerly and united orange political camp split apart in Ukraine, and since 2003-2004 Kiev has changed 3 parliaments and 5 governments. The pictures taken from the orange power-shift of 2004 are neither anymore true nor credible, and even the former division between pro-Western and pro-Russian camps needs permanent reinterpretation, and rephrase.

Both relatively poor Armenia and Moldova showed a consolidation of authoritarian rulers, reversed democratic transition in the last 8 years, and severe decline in following the minimum election standards both in the 2005 and in 2007 elections. Unlike Armenia, Moldova is much clearer about its political desire to join EU, but the weak progress in the AP implementation left a sour feeling of misunderstanding in Brussels. In spite of warming up of the relations with Russia in 2007-08, Moldova failed to convince it to evacuate its troops from its territory or suspend its huge assistance to the separatist enclave.

In its part, Armenia seems to promote the 'status quo' of Karabakh and pay for this with its entire industry to the Russians who continue to patrol its borders. In both cases, the NATO membership is little debated in public. The lack of clarity about the kind of political agreement with EU will end up in 2009, after the general elections, when Moldova is willing to impress the EU with its positive changes though very few in reality.

Over 30% of the Georgians believed in 2008 that both Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions shall have an autonomous status within the Georgian state, and only 2% stated they shall become independent, while 0.8% – parts of Russia, compared to 60% who stated they shall be ordinary regions of Georgia without any autonomy.

Speaking about Karabakh, the respondents voiced in July 2007, that it shall be an ordinary region of Armenia without any autonomy, opposed to 31% who stated it shall be a region with an autonomous status in Armenia, and 30% – an independent state. No one believes it shall be part of Azerbaijan.

In Moldova, however, 72% of respondents opposed to any policy that would turn Transnistria into a subject of a federal state of Moldova and scored the unresolved conflict the 6th under other more stressing social priorities. At the same time, the Moldovan respondents see Russia as the main strategic partner (49,6%), followed by Romania ranked second (19.1%) and EU (19.6%), with the lowest scores to Ukraine (2.4%) and US (1.7%).

It its turn, the Russian public regarded Georgia in 2007 as a ‚enemy' (31%), followed only by USA (29%) at large distance from: Ukraine (5%) and China (5%), and ending the list of enemies with the Baltic States (4%) and Chechnya (3%). But, Russians believe they have fewer allies (38%) than needed, and more than 50% find it difficult to respond if the Russian state chooses rightly its external allies; only 32% consider its policy right, while 17% challenges it. Most of the respondents believe Russia has friendship relations only with the countries with mutual response (4%), while 3% have full confidence in the president's ability to choose the right policy.

Russians perceive Belarus as the closest ally (24%), followed by Germany (13%), China (10%) and Kazakhstan (10%). The enemies of Russia include, as perceived by the public in polls: Georgia (31%), USA (29%), followed by Ukraine and China (5% each).

Russia is clearly the most important partner for Armenians (with 88%)[22], followed by France (57%), EU (29%), Iran (29%), US (14%), and Georgia

---

[22] Armenia National Voter Study, July 2007.

(9%). The greatest political and economic threat is associated with Azerbaijan (89%) and Turkey (76%), followed by Georgia (12%) and US (8%).

For Georgians, in 2008, Ukraine and USA were the states in which people relied mostly (49% and 39% respectively), followed by EU (25%) and Russia (22%). On the bottom of trust, Georgians indicated Israel (7%), Turkey (10%), Armenia (11%) and Azerbaijan (25%). As external threats, Georgians indicated Russia – 71%, Iran 10% and US – 9%[23].

The public in Turkey think that the country shall increase its relationship with Azerbaijan and Georgia (83% and 75% respectively), but remain tranquil or decrease the relations with Northern Iraq, Armenia and Greece[24].

It is interesting that Turkey's populace would like to see Germany and Pakistan as the closest friends, with only 4% for Azerbaijan and 3% for the USA. In 2006, the Turks associated the USA with an unfriendly country (45%)[25], followed by France (9%) and Greece (8%). Most of the respondents stated that none is a friend to Turkey, while 24% found it difficult to respond. Only 1% regarded EU as a friendly partner. However, 53% were of the opinion that the EU membership would be an asset to Turkey, against 23% of respondents who were of a different opinion.

Table No.4 Friends and Enemies

	Armenia	Georgia	Russia	Turkey
Friends	Russia EU USA Georgia	Ukraine US EU Russia	Belarus Germany Kazakhstan China	Pakistan Germany Azerbaijan USA
Enemies	Azerbaijan Turkey Iran USA	Russia	Georgia USA China Ukraine	United States France Greece Israel

Over 94% of Armenians consider the relations with Russia to be good, followed by 83% – with EU, 70% -with Iran, 67% – with the USA, and with Georgia – 52%. On the other side, 94% stated the relations with Azerbaijan are bad and 86%- with Turkey, followed by Iran – 14% and US – 13%.

---

[23] Georgian National Voter Study, February 2007.
[24] Survey of Turkish Public Opinion, May 31 – June 7, 2007.
[25] Survey of Turkish Public Opinion, November 18, 2006 – December 5, 2006.

In April 2007, every second respondent in Russia (48%) stated his/her support for the unification of Russia and Ukraine, against 29% who rejected it and 13% who categorically stated they were against such a referendum. The elderly form the most vocal supporters of unification (aged 60 years and older), while the young respondents are less supportive of a possible irredenta[26].

Over 60% of Russians believe their problems resulted as a matter of circumstances and not because of their actions or inactions. Only 19,5% of respondents in Moldova believe their success in life and results are pre-determined by the fate/destiny, while the largest number of respondents (55,8%) believe their life is in their hands.

The Moldovan case is rather interesting characterised by at least 3 distinct opinion flows: 20.1% of respondents support the type of society which equalises the level of income of its members, while 41.7% think the income should be based on the level of individual efforts, and a mediating group of 20.8% is balancing between the two. Thus, the liberal ideas are shared by about 31.2% of respondents against 20.1% who stick to non-liberal egalitarian ideas (the first 2 scores at the polls of a continuum of 10). Almost 50% of Ukrainian respondents state that their economic situation depends on circumstances, opposed to 43% who believe this depends on them[27].

Comparing the scores on people's stated religiosity, the study found out that 39% of Russian respondents see the Orthodox faith as a matter of tradition and national heritage, while 20% see it as a matter of personal way to save the soul. 17% do not practice any religion (2007)[28]. Nevertheless, only 4% confess they follow religious proceedings daily (go to church, respect the canonical rules, etc), 3% – weekly, and 4% – monthly. The largest majority of those who define themselves as 'religious' in Russia (37%) do not seem to follow the religious norms or do this from time to time (24%), or only on holidays (26%). Moreover, 69% of respondents are not ready to defend their faith under arms, if it was offended, against 16% who would do this.

In Moldova, 83.9% of respondents claim they are Christian Orthodox but only 22,3% of them attend regularly the religious proceedings in church. Almost 60% believe they are religious without attending the church while 13.2% are interested generally by the religion. Only 5.2% stated they attend daily

[26]   ВЦИОМ – 20-21 октября 2007 г. объединение россии и украины: 48% россиян – «за»! 16.05.2007 пресс-выпуск № 691.

[27]   10.02.2006: http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/inter_pol/du06031007.

[28]   http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv/item/single/3769.html.

church liturgies, while 13.3% attend weekly the church, 14,6% – monthly, and 38,1% go to church only on very special religious holidays.

It seems a growing trend of defining individuals in terms of religious confession in Turkey with 53% respondents scoring as mostly religious, in contrast with 8% who are not religious or indifferent. From a comparative Romanian-Bulgarian survey, we have discovered that 83% of respondents in Bulgaria and 92% in Romania defined themselves as religious.

Despite the evolving order of the troubling problems, the surveys show a remarkable coherence of the major social problems affecting ordinary people. For instance, in 2006, the intensity of ,social insecurity and poverty' ranked as a foremost issue on the Georgian public agenda (81,6%), followed by tense relations with Russia (68,2%) and economic crisis (69,8%), pairing up with the unresolved conflict in the breakaway Ossetia and Abkhazia (60,1%)[29]. In 2007, the Armenians complained about their ,social-economic standing', ,unemployment', ,low salaries' (35%, 15%). Scaling of the most important issues creates a self-assessment instrument for placing individual expectations in a projected dimension of time and space.

The biggest issues for Georgians were associated with: ,social insecurity' and ,poverty' – 81.6%, ,worsening of relations with Russia' – 68,2% and ,economic crisis' – 60,8%[30]. The priorities of Armenia referred equally to the measures fighting unemployment -32%, steps to improve the social-economic situation – 21%, and hopes for a settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue – 10% [31].

Here the Armenian society is very close to the Turkish society[32], which sees the priorities as follows: fighting unemployment – 43%, economic development – 13%, ensuring educational opportunities to people – 10%, and ensuring individual security, .i.e. fight against terrorism – 6%.

Remarkably enough, the Romanians see the creation of new jobs as the primary priority for the country's leadership – 25%, curbing of inflation affecting prices of the primary goods – 12%, and improvement of the social protection system – 12%[33]. The first three most pressing issues in 2008 in Moldova have been reported by the respondents to be the poverty, inflation and prices, and the unemployment.

---

[29] Georgia Public Opinion Barometer 2006.
[30] Georgia Public Opinion Barometer 2006.
[31] Armenian National Study, December 2007.
[32] Survey of Turkish Public Opinion November 18, 2006 – December 5, 2006.
[33] Public Opinion Barometer, May 2006, Perceptions about mass-media.

Table No.5 Prioritisation of the problems

Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Moldova	Romania	Turkey
Unemployment Conflict settlement Low salariesUnemployment Conflict settlement Low salaries	Karabakh issue Unemployment Low standards of living Corruption	Social insecurity Poverty Worsening of relations with Russia Economic crisis	Poverty Inflation Future of children	Jobs creation Curbing inflation Improving of the social protection system	Unemployment Jobs creation Educational opportunities Individual security Fight against terrorism

People assess the achievements of their governments in terms of economic situation in a fairly contrasting way. Thus, only the Russians have improved their perception of the economic situation of their country – from 57% in April 2004 to nearly 74% in October 2007, while this indicator for the rest of the countries was quite low[34].

Nevertheless, when requested to select the most important problems of their households, most of the respondents in Russia indicated that the ‚low salaries, high prices and the quality of life’ makes up the main obstacle (22%), along with health problems (12%), and children education (10%). The low salaries, pensions, lack of money, increased prices, and financial problems have the highest influence on people’s life. Secondly, the people in Russia feel that the communal problems, building of a new house and renovation rank as the next group, followed by the health care problems and unemployment.

In Ukraine, the rate of those who assess positively the economic situation of the country remained relatively low (28% in 2007, indicating a relative decline from 40% in 2005 and 29% in 2004).

It seems that the economic situation (44%), inflation (27%) and health problems (27%) scared most of the respondents in Romania in 2007, while the Bulgarians were mostly fearful of the high rate of criminality (35%), the economic situation (34%) and the unemployment (30%). Unemployment is clearly one of the most important problems for the EU27 (34%), followed by the criminality rate and the economic situation. Emigration is considered to be the third most important issue by the Western European states, followed by unemployment and terrorism, the latter almost missing from the ranking priorities of Romania and Bulgaria.

---

[34]   www.euroasiamonitor.org/?p=64#more-64www.euroasiamonitor.org/?p=64#more-64.

Television undoubtedly remains the primary source of information in Georgia. Almost 94.0% of the respondents in 2006-2007 got their information mainly from the TV programs, 55.4%- from the printed media, 8.3% -from the radio and 6.7% – from the internet. To 53.6% of respondents it is the friends and kin who provide information while 19.6% get information from the family members[35]. The information programs of the Imedi channel have the biggest audience. They are watched by 87.0% of the population and trusted also by the biggest part – 80.7%. Rustavi 2's information programs are watched by a slightly smaller number (76.9%), but are trusted by far fewer people (59.9%).

The most important source of information in Moldova is the electronic media: TV – 52,6% and radio – 12,6%, followed at a distance by the family – 5,5%, friends and relatives – 4,9%. The TV programs are mostly trusted in Armenia (99%) as of 2007, followed by relative/friends (40%), printed press (41%) and work colleagues (9%). Only 7% value the information received from the internet or the direct contacts with political parties (11%).

The public TV (H1) is most watched in Armenia (86%), followed by the II Armenian Channel (62%), ORT – 56%, Shant – 50%. The electronic media is the most informative source for the Russians (99%), the second source being mentioned to be the relatives/ friends (40%), followed by the printed newspapers – 41%, work colleagues – 9%. Most Russians inform themselves from the central TV (90%) – Pervai Canal ORT, Rossia, RTR, and NTV- and the central newspapers (30%).

After the EU accession, the Romanians have become more pessimistic. 54% of respondents affirmed the direction of the country was wrong against 37% who praised it, as of May 2006. The Armenians are on the same mood, having declared in July 2007 they were pessimistic (33%) compared with 18% in May 2006. Social optimism was displayed by only 18% in 2007, compared with 23% in 2006. The Turks in 2006 were even more radical, stating the direction of the country was wrong (55%), against 37% supporting the direction, but showing slight improvement in June 2007, with 40% approving the direction, against 54% who were against it.

The only exception of the region was Russia, in which the public supported the direction of the country (52%) in 2007 against 35% who were more critical of it. Compared to the surveys of 2005, the supporters of the direction were equal to the critical ones: 40% against 40%. Over 50.2% of Moldovans

---

[35]   Nana Sunbadze, IPP, Georgia Public Opinion Barometer 2006.

stated in October 2008 that the direction of the country was wrong, against 27,9% who approved of it. Actually, this is the lowest rate since November 2004, compared to 82% in 2001 when the Communists won the elections.

Participation in the decision making is one of the main features of the liberal democracy. In 2006, 63.8% of Georgian respondents saw participation as a necessary precondition for solving the acute problems facing the country. This compares to 53.8% in 2002 and 56.6% in 2003. A feeling of helplessness prevails among those surveyed. 77.0% think that a lay person cannot exert any influence on decisions (77.6% in 2002 and 72.2% in 2003).

Closely linked to the participation is the belief that people in power consider the opinion of their citizens. 64.7% of citizens think that they do not. Only 2.2% appealed in 2006 to parliament (3.6% in 2002 and 4.6% in 2003), barely 4.7% to the local government (6.8% in 2002 and 8.0% in 2003) and 2.0% participated in any kind of collective action, like a street protest (3.9% in 2002 and 4.1% in 2003). Politics has low attraction to the ordinary people. Most of respondents say they attend rarely or hardly ever political meetings in Moldova (75,2%), against only 2% who participate regularly. 53,8% refuse to support a political party, or persuade others to vote in a way or another (53.7%).

Only 2% of respondents claim they have party membership[36]. Nevertheless, 11.2% stated they had participated earlier in authorized mass protests or had filled in written complaints to the state authorities (9.2%). The interest in politics remains relatively low in Armenia, with rates decreasing from 35% in May 2006 to 26% in July 2007. It seems that the high interest shown in October 2004, in Georgia, was likely to moderate from 32% to 28% in September 2007, on the eve of anticipated elections. The interest towards politics in Russia fell down from 57% in October 2003 to almost 29% in November 2007.

As polls show in Moldova, the interest in politics is determined by the incentives for political mobilization. Thus, the highest rates of interest were registered by February 2005 (general elections) with 22%, decreasing to 9.9% in 2006, regaining its position in May 2007 with almost 19,8%, and registering only 10.9% in October 2008, 5 months before the upcoming general elections[37]. Interest in politics remained rather high in Turkey, with 38% in November 2006 to 37% in 2007.

In terms of future alternatives, most of Armenians would like to remain part of the CIS (43%), with others supporting the option of joining EU (34%)

---

[36]   IDIS/CBS Axa, August 2007, Family Values.
[37]   BOP, IPP, September – October 2008, p. 99.

or even NATO (13%). If in 2006 only 25% of Georgians believed they shall still remain a member of CIS, in 2008, 79% were willing that Georgia joins the EU and 74% -NATO. In 2007, 72% of Moldovans were willing to join the EU, together with 40% maintaining Moldova shall still remain a CIS country and with only 28% supporting the NATO membership.

In October 2008, 72% of Moldova would have voted in a referendum to join the EU, 28% would have voted for joining NATO, while 40% insisted in preserving the CIS membership and neutrality of the country (35%). More than 60% of Turks would vote in case of a referendum for EU membership, against 30% who would oppose it[38].

Projected timetables for the integration of the BS countries: Asked about the expected time for Georgia to become a NATO member, 16% respondents expect this to happen already in 2008, while 30% say this will happen in 2010, the rest 11% expect this in 2012. Only 2% have no confidence it will be possible in general. Asked about a possible EU membership, 11% see Georgia in EU in the next 10 years, 34%- in the next 5 years while 9% expect Georgia could join EU already in 2009[39]. In its turn, most of the respondents (29,5%) expect Moldova to become a EU member in the next 10 years, 13,7% – in the next 20-25 years, 17.7%- in the coming 4-5 years, and 9.1% in the coming 1-3 years, while 7,5% say it will never become a EU member.

In terms of mistrust, Russians would certainly oppose mostly to NATO (57%) and US (50%), but will be less reluctant to Europe and EU (11-16%). Armenians are most favourable to the EU (84%), to the UN (79%) and CIS – 77%, while they seem to be more reluctant to NATO – 35% and OSCE – 20%.

In 2008, Romanians had 40% much and very much confidence in the EU, and 42% much and very much confidence in NATO. Romania seems to be one of the fewest states where the reluctance towards NATO is less than towards EU.

This perception complements the overall picture of the country's desired positioning in the world. It seems that Russians have generally a positive attitude towards Europe (77%), but only 56% have a positive standing towards the EU. In terms of confidence, Russians have more trust in CIS (59%) than in UN (55%), and more trust in IMF (42%) than in USA (34%) and NATO (19%).

---

[38]   Survey of Turkish Public Opinion November 18, 2006 – December 5, 2006.
[39]   Georgian National Voter Study February 2007.

Conclusions:

The conclusions drawn from the research is the following:
- In most of the BS countries, population shows an increased dissatisfaction towards their present situation, if compared with similar scores registered by the EU states – Eurobarometer (18% on average, and 56% – coastal states);
- The most trusted institutions in the BS Region are army and church, followed by media and Presidents;
- Moderate optimism displayed towards the very close future (39%, compared with 35% in EU);

Fears are connected to conflicts, civil wars, and social disruptures, which reaffirm that insecurity is still shaping up the public agenda in most of the countries of the region.
- Trust in EU institutions registers high scores. Although most of the respondents have limited knowledge about the EU policies and institutional constraints, in most of the ENP states, citizens equate EU with prosperity and growth. For instance, 76% trust is registered for EU in Moldova, similar to 68% trust in Romania, compared with 45% in EU).
- But, trust in external role of EU overshadows the lower scores of fundamental domestic institutions, such as judiciary, which accumulated not more than 30% of confidence, compared with the average score of EU of 50%).
- Among the most critical social issues having a great impact over the population of the BS countries are unemployment, migration, health, while the crimes and high prices rank second.
- The most trusted institution in Moldova is the church (43%), the army (13,7%), the president (11,6%), as opposed to low rates of trust in banks, judiciary, policy and political parties (3.1%, 3,2%, 3.0% and 2,6%).
- In Armenia, the army is most trusted (80%), followed by the church (76%), and the mass media (68%). Parliament and political parties are less trusted with 32% and 34% respectively.
- Georgians trust mostly the church (92%), the Ombudsman (67%) and the media (50%), next to President (35%). The lowest rates of trust are reserved to the judiciary (17%) and the government (18%), which are in fact, lower than the rate of the police and local governments (24 and 32% respectively).
- In Romania, the church received the highest rates of confidence (88%), followed by the army (66%), the media (59%) and the Presidency

(48%). Political parties are ranked at the lowest level of confidence (10%), scored positively by the Parliament (14%), Government (21%) and Judiciary (24%).

- Most trusted institution in Russia[40] is the President (82%), followed by the Prime-Minister (47%).
- The army shows the highest rate of trust in Turkey (7,84%), followed by the national security council (6,85%) and police (6,81%). Judiciary and Church overscore the confidence in the President of the republic (with 6,55 and 6,57%, reported to 6,45), while the lowest scores are attributed to the political parties – 4,19% and government – 5,71%.

■

---

[40]   http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/polit/rat_good/confidence_politician_2007/d075101#Abs1.

Turkey and Multilateral Cooperation in the Black Sea Region

Sait Akşit,
Centre for European Studies,
Middle East Technical University;
E-mail: saitaksit@gmail.com

Introduction

Multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region received a real setback with the August 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict. Various factors such as the frozen conflicts, the separate agendas of littoral states, lack of a real sponsor, have already been inhibiting cooperation in the region. Yet, it may well be said that any possibility to further regional cooperation goes beyond the attempts of the states of the region and is starkly intertwined with struggle and developments at the global level. The Georgian-Russian crisis was an example of this interconnectedness with implications at the regional and global level.

This interconnection was true with regard to Turkey's policy approach towards the region and was, once again, brought to the fore during the Georgian crisis. In this context, the determination of Turkey's policies towards the region depended on its perceptions and consideration of global level dynamics and was a reflection of the dialectical process of its relations with the regional and global actors. During the conflict, Turkey followed a cautious and a balanced policy approach aiming at a peaceful settlement of the dispute through diplomatic efforts. Indeed, Turkey was one of the few states which managed to meet both Russia and Georgia during the conflict. It refrained from taking sides or accusing and confronting any of the parties involved and tried to balance the demands of its western allies and those of the countries of the region.

The aim of this paper is to analyse Turkey's approach during and after the Georgian-Russian armed conflict by keeping in mind the dialectical relationship between the internal and external dynamics. In doing so, this paper will first present a historical background on Turkey's approach to cooperation in the Black Sea region. In this context, the study will evaluate the changing international circumstances, the opportunities and constraints presented by the new international setting and the main features of the Turkish policy approach under the changing circumstances.

1. An Overview: Turkey and the Black Sea Cooperation

Before the 1990s, the Iron Curtain of the Cold War period determined the status quo in the Black Sea region. The region was pretty much on the periphery of both the Eastern and Western blocks and the Cold-War rivalry prevented any kind of cooperation between the states of the region. With the collapse of the communist party rules and the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s, the states of the region found themselves in processes of political, social and economic transformation which are still in progress and far from complete.

Turkey and the Black Sea region in the 1990s

In the early 1990s, the fast changing regional and global contexts had deep connotations for Turkey's foreign policy approach and perception of its place within the new international setting. The political geography around Turkey was vibrant, unpredictable and unstable presenting Turkey with new opportunities as well as various constraints.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat and the perception of being excluded from Europe[41] created „a sense of vulnerability"[42] and a concern over the possibility of loss of its strategic importance because of the new developments. However, these perceptions disappeared as Turkey found itself in a partnership with the West given its geopolitical position in the midst of new emerging threats which included ethnic and religious conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus.

The Gulf War, the redefinition of NATO's role and in this context the interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo in the 1990s strengthened the common ground between Turkey and the West.

As Turkey had ups and downs in its relations with the European Union in the early 1990s, its relations with the US were further strengthened, with possible reflections in the Balkans and Central Asia. Turkey sought to become a regional power and an actor contributing to multilateral cooperation in the wider Black Sea region. In this context, it is possible to talk of compatibility between the US aims and ambitions in the region and the attempts

---

[41] Turkey applied for EU membership in 1987 and was subsequently rejected in 1989.

[42] Gökhan Çetinsaya, „A tale of Two Centuries: Continuities in Turkish Foreign and Security Policy" in Nursin Ateşoğlu Güney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey*, (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), p. 14.

of Turkish leaders, first Turgut Özal and later Süleyman Demirel, to build strong ties with the newly independent Central Asian countries. Turkey's ambitious policy approach towards the Caucasus and Central Asia -also encouraged by the West- intended to benefit from the erosion of Soviet influence that emerged because of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This gave way to a rivalry between Turkey and Russia which was also marked by the 1993 Russian military doctrine. The doctrine emphasised the importance for Russia of its near abroad and defined it as part of her sphere of influence. The doctrine aimed at preventing other countries from establishing close contacts with the states in the Caucasus.[43] In Turkey, this was read as a move targeting specifically Turkey as the only member of Trans-Atlantic institutions neighbouring Eurasia. Although the Turkish approach was a potential challenge to Russian influence and interests in the region, it was also argued that its extent was 'magnified' in the eyes of the Russians.[44]

In addition to a geopolitical competition the rivalry between the two was exacerbated because of suspicions and tensions over the Chechen and Kurdish issues, negative repercussions of the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-95) and Kosovo (1999) and Russian sale of S-300 missiles to the Greek Cypriots (1998). Turkey, indeed, was careful and aware that it was not possible to extend its influence at the expense of Russia. However, the rivalry between the two did not prevent the development of cooperation between the two which was described as a 'virtual rapprochement'.[45] Indeed, the second half of the 1990s was marked by cooperation developing towards a strategic partnership.

In this period, aside Russia, Turkey has greatly improved its relations with the Black Sea countries. The only exception was the relations with Armenia where Turkey and Armenia did not establish diplomatic relations due to the unresolved conflict on the issue of the 1915 events and the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, this did not prevent Turkey from including Armenia in its proposals for multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region.

---

[43]   See İdil Tuncer, „The security policies of the Russian Federation: The „Near Abroad" and Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 2, Autumn 2000, pp. 95-112.

[44]   Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, „Turkish-Russian Relations: The challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical competition with Economic Partnership", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 60.

[45]   'Virtual rapprochement' is used by Sezer to indicate increasing friendship and cooperation amidst circumstances where fear and mistrust of decision makers still persist. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

Turkey's active foreign policy approach in the 1990s was also accompanied by a multilateral cooperation initiative that was supported by the Russians as well. The initiative was launched with the establishment of the Organization for Black Sea Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992 through which Turkey intended to assist the newly independent countries in the consolidation of their independence, the protection of their territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The BSEC, in this sense, provided an important multilateral platform also aiming to support the economic transition and to enable the integration of the countries in the region with the Euro-Atlantic institutions. However, the economic crises in 1994, 1998 and 2001 as well as the political instability prevented Turkey from furthering and sponsoring with vigour the multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region.

The Changing Threat Perceptions and the 2000s

The 9/11 attack on the USA changed once again the scenery of the international relations. The attacks broadened the scope of security; a case with implications going beyond the capabilities of any state in effectively dealing with threats. Security risks and threats including issues of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, environmental problems and energy security increased the importance and the interest in the Black Sea region by NATO, the US and the EU.

The US used the Black Sea airspace as a corridor during the war in Afghanistan. The EU interest towards the region, on the other hand, became more concrete in 2003 with the Communication on Wider Europe where the EU emphasised its aim „to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood -'ring of friends'- with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations"[46] and the Strategy Paper on European the Neighbourhood Policy in May 2004.

The developing interests were also entangled with the enlargement policies of NATO and EU towards the Black Sea region. Indeed, the ENP presents a complementary picture to the enlargement policies aiming partly to prevent possible dividing lines in Central and Eastern Europe with EU's two waves of expansion in 2004 and 2007. In fact, after the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU, the EU became a direct actor in the region. The accession

---

[46] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Wider Europe- Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Brussels, 11 March 2003, COM (2003)104final, p. 4.

process can be considered as a turning point precipitating the creation of a Black Sea policy within the Union. The „Black Sea Synergy" programme, thus developed, aims to create initiatives and enhance cooperation in areas such as transport, energy, the environment, maritime management, fisheries, migration, and the fight against organised crime etc. addressing a comprehensive security framework. Indeed, the EU involvement in the region and its project-oriented approach has been the most welcome development in the region.

The second half of the 1990s witnessed a reconsideration of Turkey's foreign policy. This was partly due to the disillusionment in the relations between Turkey and the EU. The setback in the Turkey-EU relations following the EU Luxembourg Summit decisions in 1997 strengthened the perception that the West could no longer be identified as a unified entity.[47] Consequently, Turkey sought to readjust its foreign policy and decided to focus on its relations with neighbouring Russia, the US and Japan.[48]

Despite common ground on the identification of global threat perceptions with the West and its continuing pro-Western orientation, Turkey was more willing to pursue these along its national political, security and economic interests. Given these circumstances, Turkey followed an active foreign policy to promote its bilateral relations as well as multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region. With this drive Turkey's economic and commercial ties with the countries of the region were enhanced.

Turkey also sought to improve these relations through various projects, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line besides the continuing projects under the BSEC scheme, which also had implications for Turkey's strategic importance in the eyes of the Turkish elite. In the security realm, the Blackseafor initiative in 2001 by Turkey aimed to tackle search and rescue operations for humanitarian needs, cleaning sea mines, arranging joint actions for protecting the Black Sea environment and organising good-will visits amongst the Black Sea countries.

Indeed, Central and Eastern Europe has been one of the targets of the Turkish investment and trade drive of the 2000s. The acceptance of Turkey's

---

[47] See Meliha B. Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p. 111; Çetinsaya, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

[48] This was the statement of the then Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz given to the German press. Cited in Gencer Özcan „Doksanlı Yıllarda Türkiye'nin Değişen Güvenlik Ortamı" (The Changing Security Environment of Turkey in the 1990s) in Gencer Özcan and Şule Kut (eds.), *En Uzun On Yıl: Türkiye'nin Ulusal Güvenlik veDış Politika Gündeminde Doksanlı Yıllar*, (İstanbul: BükeYayınları, 2000), p. 22.

candidacy to the EU membership with the Helsinki Summit decisions in 1999 and the start of the negotiations process with the Union in October 2005 did not inhibit this drive rather enhanced and improved Turkey's relations with the Black Sea region. Romania and Bulgaria received special attention because of their EU membership process and Ukraine and Russia because of their size and the opportunities they provided for contractors.

Turkey has also assumed a very supportive role of the EU involvement in the region, despite several drawbacks,[49] and considers the move compatible with its vision in the area. It is perceived that, coupled with the ENP, the EU involvement in the region may provide the multilateral framework and the sponsorship which would provide incentives for further cooperation and integration.

The Turkish-Russian relations in the 2000s are described as ones of intense cooperation and 'strategic partnership'[50] culminating into projects such as the Blue Stream pipeline. There were even arguments that in the early 2000s the Turkish decision makers and the general public in Turkey perceived Russia as more prepared to consider Turkey an equal partner than the EU and the US.[51]

The two have become accommodating in terms of including one another in their approach towards the Caucasus and Central Asia aiming at a multidimensional policy cooperation in achieving security and stability.[52] With respect to the Black Sea region, they both pursued a similar policy approach intending to prevent the direct involvement of another major power in the region.

---

[49] Strengthening the BSEC's multilateral relations with the EU was one of the priorities of the Turkish Chairmanship of the BSEC in 2007. See Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, „The Tukish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and Its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May-October 2007)" in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Views from the Region, *ICBSS Xenophon Paper No. 2*, July 2007, p. 133. The main drawback is considered to be the failure on the EU side to consult with Turkey and Russia during the formulation of the approach: see Yaşar Yakış, „The Black Sea and the Georgian Crisis", *ICBSS Policy Brief #10*, December 2008, p. 6.

[50] See Şener Aktürk, „Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 2006, p. 341-344.

[51] Gareth M. Winrow, „Turkey and the Greater Black Sea Region", in Nursin Ateşoğlu Güney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey*, (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), p. 122.

[52] Turkey and Russia signed a Joint Action Plan in November 2001 entitled „From Bilateral Cooperation towards Multidimensional Partnership". This was the move taking their bilateral cooperation to a more constructive regional cooperation in the Eurasian region.

Indeed, they are widely accepted by western critics as joining forces in opposing any US involvement in the region[53], which was first exacerbated in the face of US demands in 2006 to expand NATO-led Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in the Mediterranean into the Black Sea.[54] Certainly, the motivations of the two are different. Turkey proposed and launched the Operation Black Sea Harmony (OBSH) in March 2004 aiming to deter illicit trafficking and illegal activities in its territorial waters and beyond. The Operation Black Sea Harmony is primarily a naval operation developed as an equivalent of OAE aiming to strengthen the Turkish position without provoking the US.

Turkey has primarily been concerned with infringement of the Montreux Convention of 1936, which determines the legal status of the Turkish Straits, and disturbance of the delicate balance and cooperation that have emerged in the region after the end of the Cold War.[55] Another concern in this respect was the aggressive nature and unpredictability of the Bush administration and its policies, which, is believed, could easily unbalance the region. In recent years, Turkish public opinion viewed the US administration very unfavourably, a trend which was on the fall from 2004 onwards.[56]

The result could be attributed partly to the rift in the Turkish-American relations that followed the Turkish parliament's rejection of the use of Turkish territory by the US troops for access to Iraq. One of the arguments in the Turkey opposing further NATO presence in the Black Sea region was that if a task was to be taken up it should have been pursued through the littoral NATO members in order not to disturb the status quo in the region.

---

53 *Radikal* daily, „Fuller: Türkiye artık Amerikan müttefiki değil" (Fuller: Turkey is no longer an ally of US), 31 October 2008.

54 *Turkish Daily News*, „Black Sea force divides Turkey, US", 1 March 2006.

55 Mustafa Aydın, „Echoes of Ozal's vision", in The Bridge, BSEC 15, Cover Story Q2/2007, Issue 5, available at http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=74, (accessed on 25 December 2008).

56 According to Transatlantic Trends only 8% of Turkish people viewed the US leadership as 'desirable' (in 2004, the support was 28%) and 22 % the EU leadership. Turkey also had the lowest percentage of respondents who saw NATO as essential at 38%. The largest percentage of Turkish respondents (48%) felt that, on international matters, Turkey should act alone, compared to 20% who felt it should act with the countries of the European Union, 11% – with the countries of the Middle East, 3% – with the United States, and 1% – with Russia. See Transatlantic Trends 2008, pp. 19-21, and key findings for other years available at http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/index.cfm?id=123, (accessed on 25 December 2008).

Given the Russian opposition to NATO, such a move would not be welcomed by the Russians as well, perhaps reminding of scenes of the Cold War. Following its proposal, Turkey has insistently been inviting the littoral states to join the Operation. Later in December 2006, Russia officially joined the initiative and in January 2007, Turkey and Ukraine signed a Protocol on the Operation Black Sea Harmony initiating the process of Ukraine's participation. In this respect, Turkey seems to have gained US approval, the latter formally encouraging as well the participation of other NATO members in the OBSH.[57]

2. The Russia-Georgia Conflict and Turkey

The Russia-Georgia war is one of the most important turning points, together with the colour revolutions and EU membership of Romania and Bulgaria, with implications for security, stability and cooperation in the region. The Georgian offensive was a real challenge to change the status quo in the region as was the Russian reaction and involvement. While dealing with the crisis, Turkey had to take into consideration various factors and above all, its political and economic relations with Russia and Georgia, the involvement of the US and how to proceed with its demands for passage into the Black Sea via the Turkish Straits, the EU position and the Caucasian Diaspora in Turkey. As such, Turkey employed a cautious and a balanced approach paying due care to these external and internal concerns taking into account the fact that Turkey enjoys good relations with all the parties to the conflict.

Turkey reacted immediately following the surprise attack by the Georgian forces to „restore constitutional order"[58] in South Ossetia by stating its uneasiness and calling on Georgia to resolve its problems through peaceful means and on the Ossetians and the Georgians to engage in talks and dialogue.[59]

---

[57]   Judy Garber, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, „U.S. Perspectives on the Black Sea Region", Keynote Address at the Woodrow Wilson Centre Conference: „Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region „Washington, DC, 10 June 2008, available at http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/105827.htm (accessed on 25 Dec. 2008).

[58]   *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7551576.stm, 21 August 2008 (accessed 1 December 2008).

[59]   Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release NO:141 – 08 August 2008, Press Release Regarding the Armed Clashes in South Ossetia available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_141---08-august-2008_-press-release-regarding-the-armed-clashes-between-georgia-and-south-ossetia.en.mfa.

With the escalation of events and the Russian inclusion, the Foreign Minister Babacan talked with his counterparts in Georgia and Russia calling for restraint and dialogue. From the first days onwards, the Turkish leaders expressed their concern over the preservation of territorial integrity and political unity of Georgia, an issue that was reiterated by the Foreign Minister Babacan, Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül.[60] Turkey also brought up its concern in multilateral platforms. Experts believed that as a regional country/power with friendly relations with both parties Turkey should have assumed a more active role and mediate between the parties.[61]

An important aspect of internal dimension was the presence of a large Caucasian diaspora in Turkey. The Federation of Caucasian Associations was critical of the Georgian military offensive, claiming that the Georgian authorities were pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing in the region and demanding the Turkish recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[62] The Caucasian diaspora peacefully protested against the Georgian operation in front of the Georgian representations in Ankara and İstanbul[63] demanding from the Turkish government to step in, mediate and stop the Georgian attacks carried out with the weaponry provided by Turkey itself.[64] The federation also sent a letter to the Russian President Medvedev asking Russia to recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[65]

Indeed, the Turkish official circles have been silent on these issues. It was not possible to take major actions against Georgia as it is considered strategically important for Turkey as a gate to Azerbaijan and Central Asia- given the problems with Armenia- and crucial in the transfer of oil from the East to the West. Turkey's balanced policy eased the tensions within Turkey. Above all, the external concerns were more pressing.

The Georgia-Russia war was perceived in Turkey as tilting the status quo and the balance of power in the Black Sea region. But above all, it was seen as a Russian message at a global level, following the Kosovo independence,

---

[60] *Radikal* daily, 9 August 2008; After Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Russia the press reflected different viewpoints of Turkey and Russia on territorial integrity of Georgia: See Radikal daily 15 August 2008.

[61] Fatma Demirelli, „Crisis calls for urgent Turkish mediation in Caucasus", *Today's Zaman*, 9 August 2008.

[62] *Radikal* daily, 10 August 2008; *Today's Zaman*, 11 August 2008.

[63] *ANKA News Agency*, 13 August 2008.

[64] *Taraf* daily, 10 August 2008.

[65] *Sabah* daily, 21 August 2008.

the missile shield row etc., from its back garden. The statement by Medvedev laying down new Russian foreign policy principles including claims to a multi-polar world was simply a global challenge.[66]

At the regional level, the operation intended to counter the declining Russian influence in the region in the 2000s as against an increasing US influence. The claims by the Russian side concerning the sale of arms and training of Georgian soldiers by Turkey along with other NATO members, and preparing it for war aimed to put pressure on Turkey and others in order to force them retreat in the Black Sea region. In Turkey, the Black Sea region is perceived as a strategically crucial area connecting the Balkans with the Caucasus as well as the Eastern and Central Europe with Turkey in the midst of important energy routes.

Therefore any factor creating instability in the region would disturb the transfer of oil and gas from the Caspian and Central Asian regions. Aside the security concerns, the crisis was coupled with a trade dispute between Turkey and Russia which complicated further the Turkey's foreign policy. Although given consideration, no policy action was taken to take any measure against Russia. As has been emphasised above, the commercial relations between the two improved at a rate making it arguably difficult for Turkey to take any measures.

Similar to the EU, Turkey is dependent on the Russian natural gas. In addition, the commercial relations between the two have increased considerably making Russia an important market for the Turkish exports, construction services and Turkish tourism sector.[67] However, the conflict in Georgia and the Turkish-Russian trade dispute was later decoupled by arguments that the main reason for the trade dispute was the process of restructuring that Russia is going through.

Given the concerns that both Georgia and Russia were strategically important for Turkey and the need not to estrange them, Turkey had to keep a

---

[66] Paul Reynolds, „New Russian world order: the five principles", *BBC News*, 01 September 2008.

[67] The total value of Turkey's exports to Russia amounted to more than US$6 billion in 2008, the projects undertaken by Turkish contractors in Russia surpassing US$30 billion (22% of all the projects undertaken by Turkish contractors), making Russia by far the most important market for the Turkish construction services while the Turkish direct investments in Russia are estimated at US$5.6 billion. All values are taken from the Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (http://www.mfa.gov.tr) and Turkish Statistical Institute (http://www.turkstat.gov.tr) web sites.

balance and accommodate the two. While the hostilities continued, Turkey intensified its diplomatic efforts and followed an active foreign policy to mediate between the two sides.

The aim was to emphasize the dialogue and peaceful means for the resolution of the crisis. While the diplomacy was first initiated through telephone lines, the next move involved visits to Russia and Georgia. Prime Minister Erdoğan met with Russian President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin on 13 August 2008 and with Georgian President Saakashvili on 14 August 2008 conveying to them the Turkish proposal to establish the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP), with the aim of facilitating peace, security and stability in the Caucasus.

The proposal that the Turkish leaders coined on 11 August[68] was a reiteration of the Caucasus Pact that was put forward in 2000 by the then President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel. At the time, the proposal was rejected by the Russians perceived as a plan that intended to isolate Russia in the Caucasus. The CSCP seems to have been welcomed by the countries of the region. However, the criticism by the opposition parties concerning especially the timing of the proposal, given it is proposed at a time when Russia does a show of prowess in the region, is practically true. Yet, for the Justice and Development Party government, while one of the aims was to remind Russia of Turkey's interests in the region, the other was to give way to dialogue with Armenia with whom Turkey does not have any diplomatic relations.

The other important consideration for Turkey was to strike a balance between its Western allies and its neighbours. This was of utmost importance when the US decided to send humanitarian aid to Georgia which brought to the fore the use of Turkish Straits. It was very much believed in Turkey that what the US intended to do was to intimidate Russia by sending ships into the Black Sea.

The regime of passage through the Turkish Straits is governed by the Montreux Convention of 1936 which regulates the size of ships and requires declaration of passage. The negotiations for the two requested the US Navy hospital ships were interpreted by some through an analogy of the US pressure on the motion of March 1st which denied to the US troops the use of the Turkish territory to pass to northern Iraq.[69]

---

[68] Emine Kart, „Stuck in a tight spot, Ankara calls for Caucasus pact", *Today's Zaman*, 12 August 2008.

[69] *Radikal* daily, 20 August 2008. I would like to thank Nazli Senses for her able research assistance.

The problem was solved when the US decided to send navy ships in compliance with the Convention. On the other hand, Russian warnings found coverage in the Turkish press emphasising the fact that Russia would hold Turkey responsible for any non-compliance, as the Convention determines the time that non-littoral ships may stay in the Black Sea. The warnings were also accompanied by reports claiming that Russia considers Turkey important and would like to see the Turkish position alongside the Russian one.

Conclusion

The Georgia-Russia war was perceived in Turkey as a mere offspring of a higher level struggle. The Georgian administration, in this respect, miscalculated its strength and the possibilities of Western support in case of an outright involvement with Russia. The Russian reaction, on the other hand, was an attempt to reconfirm the Caucasus as part of its sphere of influence and to send a message at the global level.

In this context, Turkey tried to play a constructive role which can be considered as continuity in its active foreign policy approach from the 1990s onwards aiming to ensure security and stability in the wider Black Sea region.

In doing so, Turkey has been trying to accommodate both Russian and Western, especially US, interests in the Black Sea region. Above all, the conjuncture of change presented by the new global economic crisis, the election of Obama as the new President of the US and the Russian aggressiveness will give way to new opportunities and constraints. This conjuncture of change will determine, alongside new calls for a new global order, the nature of multilateral cooperation in the wider Black Sea region.

■

Crossing the Borders on Border Crossing: Border Management and EU Accession in the Black Sea Region

Dr. Saime Ozcurumez,
Vis. Asst. Prof. Bilkent University;
E-mail: saime.ozcurumez@gmail.com

Introduction

This chapter addresses the issue of border management in three countries of the Black Sea region – Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey – as a major topic of concern in the European Neighbourhood. The main focus is to provide an overview of the issues and developments that cover border management activities in each of these states. Based on this overview the objective is to identify the main challenges, the transformation in policy processes mainly with the Europeanization process and its impact on this particular issue in the Black Sea region.

Processes of accession to the European Union (EU) with specific references to those of harmonization with the EU border management and migration policies will be the central focus of this chapter which will also reflect on the challenges and changes in the Black Sea region. Therefore this chapter discusses each of the three national cases in terms of their border management strategies as well as examining the impact of the Europeanization on border management, the effect of which could be considered a substantial part of the legal framework and implementation of the border management policies and related developments in this region.

The comparison of these three cases is interesting for at least two reasons. First, Romania and Bulgaria are recent members of the European Union, while Turkey is a candidate country in the pre-accession process. Such contrast provides an interesting opportunity to study the ways in which processes of border management and migration are shaped in the regions prior to and during EU accession processes. These countries also share the challenge of collectively becoming the new external border of the EU along the Black Sea Region.

Moreover it is possible to observe and analyze the changes which have taken place particularly from the late 1990s onwards as defined and constrained by the accession and pre-accession processes. Second, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey are all recent 'immigration countries' of both transit and destination, which also presents an intriguing comparison of the border management policies among these sharing similar recent challenges in the region.

Such similarity also allows for a comparison of the scope and ways in which the EU impacts on migration and border management in the region. In order to be able to draw a picture of the border management strategies of Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey concerning their relations with the European Union, the following questions will be posed for each country in this chapter: (1) What are the main areas of concern in migration and border management? (2) What are the major similarities and differences in each country's respective experiences? (3) In what ways and to what extent does 'EUization' matter for issues relating to border management? (4) How do the countries address challenges and utilize opportunities arising from new migration challenges?

Before elaborating on the evidence from each country, the chapter will provide a brief account of the topics which emerge as challenges at the borders of Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey which bring about the ways in which border issues in the Black Sea Region are interconnected.

First and foremost, one of the main aims of border management strategies in each of the countries is to prevent illegal border crossings. Through effective border management strategies, the countries try to reduce the number of people who have entered the country clandestinely and live in the state as irregular migrants.

The second issue emerging at the borders is the cooperation among these countries at check points.

Third, there are calls for collaboration between Hungary, Romania, Russia and Slovakia.

Fourth, there is cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria.

Finally, increasing trade relations among the countries emerges as a significant area for increased cooperation in formulating and implementing common strategies within the context of cross-border relations across the region.

The transformation of local economies as the main centres of trade between the countries creates zones of attraction and interaction at different levels and such processes also bring about a major opportunity for the region particularly enhanced through the advancement of economic activity.

In the next section, the concept of Europeanization and why it becomes significant to discuss this in the Black Sea region is discussed briefly. Then the next section provides an overview of the challenge areas in the border management for Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey as they are reviewed in the EU accession process.

In order to do so the regular progress reports of the European Commission prepared for each of these countries are used to first highlight the major border management matters and also how the EU defines and constrains the scope and the direction of reforms to be introduced along the lines of policy priorities and harmonization requirements set forth by the EU. Such review introduces the themes around which the border management matters are highlighted by the EU and the extent of transformation in the light of changes accelerated by the EU accession process as part and parcel of the developments in the region in each of these countries.

Europeanization and the Black Sea Region: Emerging Issues

Europeanization has been defined and conceptualized in various ways in the literature.[70] One of the most cited and operationalized definition of Europeanization is made by Radaelli, as a „processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli 2003, 30). Therefore, based on this definition, Europeanization affects the formal and informal rules, policy paradigms and styles, and shared beliefs and norms in the direction of the decisions taken at the EU level, in the countries that have formal relations with the European Union.

Utilizing the same definition as Radaelli, Grabbe (2003) identifies five mechanisms of Europeanization, which are instrumental tools in carrying the effect of the European Union in the candidate country context. These are: „models: provision of legislative and institutional templates," „money: aid and technical assistance," „benchmarking and monitoring," „advice and twinning" and „gate-keeping: access to negotiations and further stages in the accession process" (Grabbe 2003, 312).

In this chapter, the Europeanization is also understood in terms of the parameters set by Radaelli. Therefore, it is argued that the rules and policy paradigms concerning border management in Romania, Bulgaria, and Tur-

---

[70]   The review of the contributions on Europeanization in the literature is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. It is intended only to highlight how this process becomes significant while analyzing change in the region, particularly for countries which experience accession processes.

key are under the influence of the decisions taken at the EU level, and that the institutional and legal developments incorporate the logic of the European Union on border management matters. In order to trace the influence of Europeanization, issues emerging in the progress reports on border management are described in the next sections for each country.

2. EU Accession and Borders
2.1. Romania

In terms of the international migratory movements, Romania is mainly considered a country of origin.[71] Great numbers of Romanians are heading for the western European countries to become migrant workers there. However, since 1989, Romania has also emerged as a transit country for migrants, who are travelling from outside the European Union.

Prior to 1989, large numbers of people migrated to Europe and elsewhere mainly due to political reasons. Later on, with the fall of the communist regime, large numbers of people migrated to other countries because of economic hardships and for better economic opportunities. The target countries of Romanian emigration were mainly Germany, France, Israel, Turkey, Italy and Spain (Istvan 2007).

In the meantime, Romania has also become a transit zone for some asylum seekers who are coming from Iraq, Somalia, India, China, Bangladesh, Guinea, Ecuador, and for illegal immigrants who target other European countries by crossing the border towards Serbia or Hungary.

In general, the border management is highly related with the flows and trends of illegal migration. Most of the time an integral aim of the border management strategy in most of the countries is to enable smooth and legal transit through the borders of the country. In relation to that, for Romania in particular, the main challenge of the border management is the issue of illegal migration.

It could be stated that the main drive for change concerning the border management strategy for preventing illegal immigration flows into and out of Romania started with integration measures taken in order to bring them into the line with the directives of the European Union. In other words, Euro-

---

[71]   Themes around which migration matters are discussed in Romania in this paragraph and are based mainly on the information provided on the website of IOM-Romania, which is accessible from http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/819.

peanization became the driving force behind the developments in the border management. It was the „demands" put forward by the European Council that the border policies, the Authority for Aliens and the National Refugee Office, had taken into account while developing their border management strategies. Relatively speaking, illegal migration into and out of Romania has decreased after implementing these border management measures starting with the accession to the European Union.

When the European Commission's progress reports[72] are reviewed to better observe the developments in line with Europeanization, we observe first in the 1998 progress report a statement saying that „particular attention should be paid to the borders with Moldova and Ukraine and the port of Constanta." Thus, the port of Constanta is identified by the EU as a problematic border of Romania.

Next, in the 1999 and 2000 progress reports it is stated that a „restructuring" of the infrastructure and equipment related to the border management has started. Following this remark, in the 2001 progress report, it is stated that in terms of the administrative capacity, the Regional Directorates which were under one regional level of command, have been decreased to one for each land border, and one for the Black Sea. The 2002 Progress report informs that an inter-ministerial group was established in October 2001.

The goal of this group was to bring together the work of the authorities that are responsible for border management and through this mechanism to facilitate the communication and cooperation among them. On the other hand, the progress report of 2004 notifies that Romania had approved a Border Security Strategy in December 2003. Moreover, in the same report it is stated that an agreement had been ratified and signed with Hungary in November 2003 on the establishment of new border crossing points between the two countries. In the 2005 progress report there is emphasis on establishing and increasing surveillance capacity along the Black Sea and the Danube. It stated that the surveillance capacity in this region should be enhanced together with the coordination of Bulgaria. Finally, in the 2006 progress report it is underlined that in order to develop the fighting capacity against illegal activities across the border and to develop cooperation on these matters an agreement was signed with Moldova in 2005.

---

[72] European Commission's Romania Regular/Progress Reports which are cited in this section are available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargment/archives/romania/key_documents_en.htm.

2.2. Bulgaria

Similar to the case of Romania, in Bulgaria the fall of the communist regime in 1989 was a turning point regarding the issues concerning the border management resulting in major changes in border management and particularly in the rules covering entry and exit requirements. „Before 1989, Bulgaria like the other former Soviet-bloc countries was a country with limited migration. After 1989, the country became part of the European and the world migration system being at present under increasing migration pressure." (Poptodorova 2004, 125).

Only the border management with Turkey gave the Bulgarian Turks the chance to legally cross the borders towards Turkey. Thus, a great number of Turks emigrated to Turkey between 1950 and 1989 (Vasileva 1992). After the fall of the communist regime, when the border regime was liberalised and people had a chance to legally move through the borders of Bulgaria, for the first time in its history the country experienced a decrease in the number of people residing in Bulgaria. This was due to the population outflows from Bulgaria.

The elimination of the Schengen visa requirement for the Bulgarian citizens in 2001 as a significant change in the management of borders between the EU and Bulgaria has also contributed to the population outflows across the Bulgarian borders.

In addition to the population outflows across the borders, Bulgaria has also experienced being a transit country for illegal immigration. It has become a route for human trafficking mainly from the former Soviet Union and Central Asia to the Western European countries.

As in the case of Romania, the development and enhancement of the border management strategies to fight against illegal border crossings has been motivated mainly by the recommendations and demands coming from the EU side during the EU accession process.

A review of the Progress Reports for Bulgaria also highlights the main areas of concern.[73] The 1998 report underlines that in 1997, Bulgaria adopted a comprehensive strategy to fight against illegal immigration. In 1999 visas were introduced for the nationals of a number of countries such as

---

[73] European Commission's Bulgaria Regular/Progress Repots, which are being cited in this section are available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/bulgaria/key_documents_en.htm.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cuba, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

In addition to that, the 1999 report states that Bulgaria signed readmission agreements with Hungary, Norway, and the Benelux countries. The report also underlines that Bulgaria had to sign readmission agreements with the United Kingdom and Ireland. On the other hand, the 2000 report states that „a new definition of border control was adopted, of „guarding and controlling" instead of „guarding and protecting" the state borders" which means that the control of borders was prioritized over the protection of borders.

The 2001 report also shows that the administrative capacity has been enhanced. In the 2002 report it is stated that as a future strategy for integrated border management, the Bulgarian government adopted a regulations on border checkpoints in order to create the necessary inter-departmental conditions for integrated border control.

As another issue concerning the management of borders, in the 2003 progress report, it appears that for the installation of the necessary equipment for border control the priority is given to the external borders with Turkey and the Black Sea Coast. Similar to this, also the 2004 report underlines that concerning the level of control at the external borders „significant investments were made at the Danube, the Black Sea Coast and at the border with Turkey". Finally, the 2005 report states that an agreement was signed with the Romanian government on the establishment of cooperation between the Border Guarding Authorities.

2.3. Turkey

Similar to Romania and Bulgaria, Turkey is mainly identified as an emigration country. Emigration to western European countries began in 1961 with an Agreement between the Turkish and West German governments (Kirişçi, 2007, 91). However, from the 1990s onwards, Turkey has also been considered a transit and immigration country (Kirişçi 2007). Together with legal migrants such as aliens marrying Turkish nationals, professionals, retirees and students, there is also an increasing number of illegal migrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as from many African countries arriving to Turkey.

These illegal immigrants usually aim at transiting Turkey towards Europe though they usually remain in Turkey. In Turkey the border management activities are mainly related to the visa regulations, illegal migration flows, and measures taken against human trafficking activities.

In terms of the visa policy, the main challenge for Turkey in the pre-accession process is the fact that the positive and negative visa lists of the EU and Turkey do not coincide, and the European Union demands that these lists are brought into the EU lines. Thus, since 2002, with the effect of Europeanization, Turkey has introduced visas for the Gulf countries (Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) and others including Indonesia, the Republic of South Africa, Kenya, the Bahamas, Maldives, Barbados, Belize, Seychelles, Jamaica, Fiji, Mauritius, Grenada and Santa Lucia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia. Currently, in order to fully harmonize its visa lists with those of the EU, Turkey needs to include eight more countries in its positive visa list and revise its negative list by introducing visas for the nationals of Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

In order to manage illegal border crossings, Turkey has signed readmission agreements with a group of countries. These measures have also been taken in order to meet the requirements of the European Union accession process. In 2005, the EU and Turkey opened negotiations for signing a readmission agreement. Readmission agreements were concluded with Romania in 2004, Ukraine in 2005, and Syria in 2001. Negotiations concerning readmission are also going on with Bulgaria, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, and Libya.

In addition to that, in order to control the human trafficking activities on the borders, amendments were made to the Penal Code, which came into force in 2005. These amendments have substantially increased the penalties for smuggling and trafficking of human beings.

When we look at the progress reports, these issues on visa regimes, the readmission agreements, and prevention of illegal migration are all repeatedly addressed as issues of border management. In addition to these matters, in the progress reports[74] one can observe developments concerning an integrated border management strategy and enhancement of the administrative capacity concerning the border management. As an illustration, the 2000 progress report states that Turkey started the training of its personnel on border control and in 2001 it is stated that a process of cooperation and coordination began between various Ministries and bodies involved in bor-

---

[74] European Commission's Turkey Regular/Progress Repots, which are being cited in this section are available at http://ec.europa.eu//enlargement/candidade-countries/turkey/key_documents_en.htm.

der control issues. Moreover, the progress report of 2002 highlights the developments aimed at developing an integrated border management strategy. It is stated that this strategy should take into account the February 2002 Schengen Catalogue. In relation to that, in 2004 it is stated that „work has begun on drawing up a National Action Plan to implement the Integrated Border Management Strategy adopted in 2003." Finally, the 2006 document reports that Turkey adopted a National Action Plan in order to implement the Integrated Border Management Strategy.

Concluding Remarks

What this brief overview of the recent trajectory of border management presents is that 'EUization' does matter in identifying the challenges and policy priorities for each of these countries in the Black Sea region. The EU becomes instrumental in providing guidelines and financial support particularly in addressing the challenges concerning illegal/irregular migration. As summarized in the progress reports, the EU also contributes to identifying the needs in terms of administrative capacity for border management.

As challenges are highlighted by the European Union accession process, various opportunities for collaboration in the region are unveiled simultaneously. The main challenge in dealing with illegal/irregular migration across the borders of all these countries provides new venues for enhancing collaboration on these matters including the enhancement of administrative capacity, mutual learning and creation of cross-border partnerships.

Moreover, this and various other challenges call for sharing resources and knowledge on these matters in order to facilitate collaboration and effective management of cross border movements. Such collaboration is likely to yield advanced levels of policy solutions whereby these countries individually and collectively in the region could provide best practices around human treatment and seek sustainable, long-term solutions to causes of illegal/irregular migration and its consequences for all involved- immigrants and destination/transit countries. Last but not least, the increasing partnerships are likely to be enhanced by 'bringing people back' into the collaboration process which already seems to advance through trade and cross-border cooperation.

References
European Commission, Bulgaria Key Documents, Progress Reports.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/bulgaria/key_documents_en.htm

European Commission, Romania Key Documents, Progress Reports.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/romania/key_documents_
en.htm

European Commission, Turkey Key Documents, Progress Reports.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key_docu-
ments_en.htm

Grabbe, Heather. 2003. Europeanization goes East: Power and uncertainty
in the EU accession process. In The politics of Europeanization, ed. Kevin
Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli, 303-330. Oxford University Press.

Horváth, István. 2007. Romania. Focus Migration, Country Profile 9
International Organization for Migration- Romania.
http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/819

Kirisci, Kemal. 2007. Turkey: A country of transition from emigration to
immigration. Mediterranean Politics 12: 91-97.

Poptodorova, Elena. 2004. Bulgaria's migration policy. Mediterranean
Quarterly 15: 125-132.

Radaelli, Claudio M. 2003. The Europeanization of public policy. In The
politics of Europeanization, ed. Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radael-
li, 27-56. Oxford University Press.

Vasileva, D. 1992. Bulgarian-Turkish emigration and return. Internatio-
nal Migration Review 26: 342-52.

■

Conference Key Findings:

The Wider Black Sea Region has truly acquired new prominent and political visibility over the last decade of global changes. However, it conveys nowadays different messages to different people, like Janus-like heads mask, the god of gates, doors, beginnings and endings in the Greek mythology.

The region is an area of growing strategic importance for the European Union as a zone of great economic potential with a market comprising 190 million inhabitants and also as a vital transit route. The area combines a huge diversity of human and cultural treasury that is by itself a rich resource for the domestic and international development strategies.

Gaining steadily important political assets to both EU and US, and to other major powers, as a key-transit area for energy supply and as a line of defence against transnational threats, the region is still home to a number of unresolved conflicts in the post-soviet space.

The list of these conflicts is long and challenging for the West, while the propensity of the involved regional powers to contribute to the resolution of these conflicts in a democratic manner, by preserving the main ingredients of the international law (independence and sovereignty of the recognized states, prevalence of the political and civil rights, etc) is severely questioned, particularly seen through the effects of the August 2008 Russian invasion in Georgia.

Scared by the complexity of the unresolved issues in this region, some of the authors have rightly pointed out that today the Black Sea region is associated with a few words: uncertainty, turbulence, even revisionism, crisis. This situation and the ongoing events are showing us more and more the uncomfortable position and feeling of „in-between" of a big part of states and citizens in the region, especially of those situated between the NATO/EU border and Russia's border.

In the midst of perpetual demands for further enlargement issued to EU and critical vulnerability produced by fuzzy borders, uneasy state-building processes and non-linear political trajectories, the countries around the Black Sea try to define their future as well through a region-building visioning. Bound by a common geography and to a certain degree by multiplicity of common weaknesses, they try to accommodate the political concepts that proved their practical and functional use in other regions.

As a first step towards an institutional design for the region of the Black Sea, one could mention the creation in 1992 of the BSEC, which defined its objective 'to promote peace, stability and sustainable development". The

BSEC was transformed into a full-fledged international organization in 1999. It has a developed institutional structure and a wide membership'.[75] From the outset, it included a wide area of states: Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova in the West, Ukraine and Russia in the North, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the East and Turkey in the South. If BSEC is working on a multi-stakeholder basis and has a regional dimension, the bilateral approach of the ENP could create the necessary links for the sectorial integration into the EU main fields.

The completion of the fifth enlargement took the European Union into the very heart of the region, exposing it to the utmost generous benefits of it, but also to its extreme vulnerabilities. Balancing between the two and shaping the region to work together towards mutually beneficially objectives seems to be a positive message that many in the region have expected from the European Union. This was the key-word heralded by the German Presidency of the EU when it announced the adoption of a special policy towards the Black Sea region – the Synergy Policy – which was defined as a balanced and inclusive approach for the region, working through the existent institutions and structures of the region, and involving Russia and Turkey as long-standing regional actors.

The Synergy Policy added its consistent grain to the earlier launched EU Eastern Dimension of the ENP, operating through a range of bilateral country-based agreements, as Action Plans, which include: focused policy approach, bringing all thematic policies into bilateral relations, making „neighbourhood" a special category (focus) in external relation, intensifying relations and deeper cooperation, encouraging of reforms, (economic, political, institutional), increasing of the financial and technical assistance.

Some of the ENP states have already accomplished their first Action Plans (Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia) while others are still fighting to report over the progress accomplished so far (Armenia and Azerbaijan, but not Russian Federation, which remained outside of this process due to its size and magnitude, but also because of its insistence to be seen more as a trade partner rather than a candidate for accession to the EU).

At the end of 2008, the Eastern partnership as a an initiative propelled by Sweden and Poland specifically for the countries seeking the EU membership, has been announced by the Czech Presidency, with the aim to define the

---

[75] Members are the 10 Black Sea countries as defined by the Commission and also Serbia and Albania (The „wider Black Sea region").

region as a special community, closely connected to the EU and consisting of important ingredients of security and defence matters, in the ESDP, JHA and energy fields.

Apart from the Synergy and ENP Policies, the EU has also encouraged the creation of a conceptualized Black Sea Euro-region, which is an instrument dealing not with state-level authorities, but primarily with coastal regions and municipalities, various tiers of local government authorities of the rather diverse landscape of Wider Black Sea countries and legacies. Other policies reported in the area were the Black Sea Forum, dealing with a plethora of NGOs and civic associations of rather diverse origins and aspirations, and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation of the German Marshall Found, which aims to assist and promote democratic developments by networking with governmental and non-governmental actors, academia.

All of these projects are essentially important since they refer to different forms of cooperation and complementary ways of addressing the regional cooperation. The basic principle is the one that says that where there are huge discrepancies, there is a place for conflicts and, on the contrary, where the level of discrepancies and differences is reduced there is room for cooperation.

The target is not to eliminate or replace one of them, but to find a suitable way of harmonising them in order to avoid duplication and give coherence to these projects. Consistency between various projects is also important. With the creation of a Black Sea region dimension as a separate and particular dimension of the EU and with Bulgaria and Romania gaining EU membership in 2007, it became more and more active and interested to contribute to the regional cohesion.

Search for stable and security environment is in fact what most of the coastal and non-coastal BS states have on their top-political domestic and international agenda, and that is why they are insistently looking to approach the EU/NATO perspective. All of them, have a hectic time to advertise their strategic relevance to EU and NATO, and advance domestic reforms, generating economic progress, stable and effective governments, pluralist and democratic societies. Preservation of the status quo, or even a regained past imperial status is another goal, which is insistently claimed by other larger neighbours.

The paradox is that the new neighbours will continue to be demanders of enlargement, despite the lack or absence of such offer from the EU. The ENP envisions support to build stable, open and pluralist democratic societies, governed by the rule of law. The EU standards and norms are taken as a model when the BSEC countries tailor their policy for improving the

economic management, strengthening political institutions and promoting sustainable development. However, the ENP is largely shaped on bilateral approach which means that the relationship with EU may evolve only on the basis of progress made by each of the individual states according to their bilateral Action Plans.

On the whole, the area represents a vibrant bridge for the most important actors of the international scene, thus making the concept of the Black Sea Region an extremely useful instrument for self-assessment and future planned strategies. Many would say that the ENP recipients have stretched too much the imagined political and geographical limits of the EU. And this gives birth to legitimate questions: Are there any alternatives to enlargement? Can the EU afford to promise enlargement prospects today or tomorrow? What will be the price for leaving these countries indefinitely outside of the unified and prosperous EU?

And, since security is one of the major concerns for these countries, of what type shall be the relationship with Russia in order to secure the stable development of the applicant countries in a way that will be not be perceived as a zero-sum game, for anyone in the region?

This relaxation of security pressure on the Black Sea region from formally dominant Cold War powers and the appearance of new independent players such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and others, resulted in different security consequences. It freed many suppressed historical rivalries and grievances abundant in the region, opened the previously sealed borders, and created new opportunities for economic and cultural exchanges, for which they all were not well prepared. Other than its bilateral focus, the EU is faced with a dilemma as many BS countries claim they want to join EU and irrespectively of the enlargement fatigue experienced by the West, they deserve to be treated in the same manner as other Central and East European countries were by the time of their candidacy to the EU.

Of course, the cost-benefit ratio in case of being a EU member and being its neighbour, is totally different as long as the ENP does not provide sound incentives to the political elites and societies concerning the political and economic reforms. However, the policy will put them closer as compared to the non-EU countries. The region cannot be consolidated unless a sound security agenda is well defined and addressed. The transition from former authoritarian to democratic regimes is still underway in almost all specific fields/aspects of their societies.

The region is more diverse in ethnic, cultural and religious terms than the Balkan sub-region of the South-Eastern Europe, which explains the ti-

midity if not the full disarray of some politicians in Brussels, who realized with sudden surprise that the EU external border is washed up in the BS. Corruption and human trafficking are almost endemic, while many frozen conflicts seem to have no end since their 'architects' still play the role of the mediators in these conflicts. Some of the countries have not decided yet on the model of development they will build their future: Euro-Asiatic or Euro-Atlantic. Their political regimes are still suffocated by dynastic or despotic habits with full lists of human rights irregularities.

More vulnerable Black Sea member states are becoming addicts of the Russian energy-power games, while the lack of effective alternatives to gas dependencies still impedes the structural security reforms in these states. There is little hope that these antagonistic goals could be harmonized with or without the existing regional organisations such as the BSEC. Therefore, the 'permanent residents' of the area hoped that the EU would bring them something equal to the level of effort in the Baltic area – the Northern Dimension or the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Thus, the key words for the countries of the Black Sea region are differentiation and democratic solidarity. However, in order to expect democratic solidarity from the EU and even most close neighbours, the countries of the Black Sea region need to develop their own credentials of good governance, law-abiding rulers, and democracy-loving people.

So, this is the order of priorities for today so as to have a sound ground for more ambitious priorities tomorrow. A credible prospect for the integration with EU, although hardly imaginable under current circumstances (of the EU non-signed Lisbon Treaty), generates expectations and provides stimulus for domestic progress.

First, it increases the individual chances of each country in the region to get what it will deserve and thus, convert individual efforts into viable chances of political integration with the EU.

Second, it provides great incentives for reshaping the arena of disputed legacies and troubled memories into an area prone to stabilize and associate to EU on a longer perspective.

Third, the prospects to join the EU will demand considerable efforts to secure the borders and as a consequence, a solid framework of cooperation, not ambiguities, will be demanded for the whole region and not disparate parts of it.

But, what shall be done in this regard?

First of all, the signal that EU shall send to the nations and states of the region is that it expects them to choose a way towards a predictable, peaceful

and westernized region. This will speak in terms of democratizing the agenda of democratic reforms in the ENP countries. If someone still fears that democracy could endanger the EU positions in the region, this should be updated and revised. The key word of stability in the Black Sea region is broader regional dialogue targeted through EU differentiation. The region seems to depart from a backyard area of peripheral relevance towards an enhanced involvement of the Western economic and political organisations, which have great credentials in the minds and hearts of the people of the region.

Second, consistent regional cooperation can create incentives for regional interdependencies and successful international reforms. This would imply a broad-scale reform and institutional upgrade of the BSEC Secretariat and its multiple bodies, but also the need to search for regional champions in the various fields of economic and social cooperation. As in the case of the Baltic Sea region, there are focal points for critical areas of cooperation which respond to the increased institutional diversity, integrated by grand design aspirations, multiplicity of actors, aiming to produce valuable contribution to democracy, economic-business activities and cultural communities.

Third, some of the ENP states have negotiated a new generation of political agreements with EU. This new package shall encompass new benefits and opportunities for the economic growth, such as comprehensive free trade agreements opening the way to the customs union and common market, provided the respective states adjust to the rules, norms and institutions required, as well as take the necessary commitments.

The proposal contains also institutional and normative coherence; visa liberalisation agreement- going to the visa free regime as soon as the states assume the responsibilities for each stage, including the costs and building up of functional institutions to deal with the side effects of this perspective; energy community, with an Energy Chart plus an agreement between the EU and the transit states, including observance of the EU competition rules when accessing the energy transport infrastructure, and also parts of the Energy Security revised papers, as much as each state can afford to take in terms of costs.

Fourth, the Black Sea region can be integrated into the milieu of democratic rule and prosperity only if the states adapt themselves to the ideas of good governance, ruled by the people and for the people. Consistent efforts shall be directed towards good governance seen as a platform for modelling and disseminating accountable and better governments in the BS area. Making local authorities act as carriers of the Synergy Policy aims would substantially save it from expeditious bureaucracy and inertia by increasing the level of public sensitivity, transparent use of resources, dissemination of the

EU standards on effective delivery of public services, protection of human rights all over the region.

Public confidence in local governments is very high in our countries (ranking third after the church and mass media, in Moldova, as well as in Ukraine and Georgia), therefore, involving regional and local governments as agents of change in an Europeanization format would fit exactly the peoples' core identification and perception. Modernization of their legal and regulatory systems, which would allow them to build adequate institutional and administrative mechanisms for functional democracy and market economy, is certainly the scope of most of the riparian and non-coastal states of the BSA, with the exception of the Russian Federation, perhaps. Therefore, the reform and Europeanization of the local and regional governments shall be promoted as a strategic objective expanded far beyond the bilateral agreements, with wider implications towards institutional renewal and good governance, including proper safeguards for transparency and accountability.

Fifths, progress towards good governance shall be done according to the EU criteria and standards which will provide great incentives to the countries aspiring to a membership perspective and being determined to invest their inner efforts in order to attain this goal. It is obvious that investing targeted resources in more accountable and better performing municipal authorities will generate confidence in collaboration, willingness to cooperate among business and cultural organisations, educational institutions, and various civil society entities, thus providing a strong incentive to stability and openness across the Black Sea area.

Differentiation shall be seen here as a key-word to allow the countries of the region to catch on the OECD standards and governance rules that belong to the European administrative space. Communication on the general approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and EU funds and agencies would allow in general the ENP states to establish closer cooperation with certain Community policies and programs, such as: European Maritime Safety Agency, European Environment Agency, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Galileo Supervisory Authority, etc). However, the list can be further expanded to all 21 non-executive agencies in various fields of competence, which are financed or not from the Community budget. This may require though a special policy for the ENP countries willing to join gradually and selectively some of these commitments.

Sixth, adequate financing built on other lessons learnt. Regional cooperation shall be assisted by adequate and flexible financial means. Practical

solutions for co-financing specific projects, involving the BSEC Member States, European Union programmes as well as international financial institutions (EBRD, EIB, BSTDB, etc.), private funds and international donors, where appropriate, should be envisaged.

Of course, local partnership shall be encouraged for the ideas and topics proposed by the regional actors, although the Commission shall be much more adequate to provide quick support to the announced regional cooperation framework. Priority should be given to the development of effective synergies in multi-party projects, whereas bi-party projects will be substituted by three- and four-party cooperative engagements in economic, administrative and capacity-building projects in a regional format. These projects shall bring tangible effects to the well-being and modernization needs of our municipal/regional governments, consonant with EU objectives and priorities.

Sevenths, strengthening of links between local, national and regional (EU) civil society actors will provide a system of 'self help' and capacity building to partnerships. The Community of Democratic Choice offers interesting programs regarding such forms of capacity building, which should be further supported and strengthened. An additional advantage of civil society partnerships lies in their flexibility and independence from the government. Civil society actors can generate, support and complement conflict resolution efforts.

Traditional diplomacy has to rely on governmental and intergovernmental actors to facilitate talks and mediate between conflicting parties. Civil society-led debates and mediation efforts have the power to build trust and understanding at grassroots level, and can create an unofficial discussion forum and problem solving exercises for conflicting parties. In some cases leadership might even accept to invite civic actors to mediate formal negotiations, recognising the importance of civil society in the partnership.

At community level, NGOs can effectively provide objective information to various stakeholders. They can also effectively implement cross border initiatives that build confidence. Such efforts should be actively supported. At the international level, international NGOs can provide objectivity and impartiality in order to gain necessary funding from donors such as the EU. Of course, it is of interest to the NGO community that the EU financial support be as non-bureaucratic and quick as possible.

Finally, complementarity between the Synergy and other policies and organisations reported to the region. Thus, Council of Europe has produced a number of key-legal instruments on cross-border cooperation that have shaped the way in which cooperation evolved in Europe over the last 30 years.

The Madrid Outline Convention (adopted on 21 May 1980) aims to „facilitate and foster cross-border cooperation between territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction and territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other contracting parties (34 members).

To facilitate and foster may indeed look as a relatively minimalist undertaking. However, the implications may be significant for the states concerned. If the local authorities engaged in cross-border cooperation and if the state recognised this right to them alongside other responsibilities, if the Euro regions spread quickly throughout the territory of Europe, these could change and substantially Europeanize the nature of the public governments of the region.

That is why the EU should join forces with as many institutions as possible with a view to the BS reconstruction, preserving the leading coordinating role, which will confirm its strategic interest.

Research Department
IDIS

CHISINAU, November 21, 2008

Bibliography

Celac, S. Manoli, P. „Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area", *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 6,no. 2, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, London, June 2006.

'Black Sea Trade and Investment Potential' published in 2007 and the 'Black Sea and Central Asia Economic Outlook 2008 – Promoting Work and Well-Being', published by the OECD Development Centre in 2008.

European Commission, *Eastern Partnership*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2008) 823/4, Brussels, 3 December 2008.

European Commission, *Black Sea Synergy-A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2007) 160final, Brussels, 11 April 2007.

Дацюк А. В. Політика України з урегулювання збройних етнополітичних конфліктів: досвід та перспективи// Стратегічна панорама. – 2006. – № 1.

Zafer SÜSLÜ. Georgia at a Glance; Abkhazian and South Ossetian Conflict. *IBSU International Refereed Multi-disciplinary Scientific Journal* № 1, 2006, p. 105.

Закон України «Про основи національної безпеки України»//Відомості Верховної ради України. – 2003. – № 39. – ст. 351.

Svante E. Cornell, Johanna Popjanevski, Niklas Nilsson. Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World. Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, SAIS. August 2008; After August 2008: Consequences of the Russian-Georgian War. CIPDD, 2008.

Luke Harding. Personality clashes: As Putin's alleged desire to hang Georgia's president by the balls shows, sometimes geopolitics comes second to simple hatred. Guardian , November 14, 2008.

The Failed States Index 2008, Foreign Policy, The Fund for Peace, www.foreign policy.com.

Bertelsmann Transformation Index, www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de; Freedom House NT, www.freedomhouse.org.

Gökhan Çetinsaya, „A tale of Two Centuries: Continuities in Turkish Foreign and Security Policy" in Nursin Ateşoğlu Güney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey*, (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), p. 14.

See İdil Tuncer, „The security policies of the Russian Federation: The „Near Abroad" and Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 2, Autumn 2000, pp. 95-112.

Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, „Turkish-Russian Relations: The challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical competition with Economic Partnership", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 60.

'Virtual rapprochement' is used by Sezer to indicate increasing friendship and cooperation amidst circumstances where fear and mistrust of decision makers still persist. *Ibid*., pp. 62-63.

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Wider Europe- Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Brussels, 11 March 2003, COM (2003)104final, p. 4.

See Meliha B. Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p. 111; Çetinsaya, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

Gencer Özcan „Doksanlı Yıllarda Türkiye'nin Değişen Güvenlik Ortamı" (The Changing Security Environment of Turkey in the 1990s) in Gencer Özcan and Şule Kut (eds.), *En Uzun On Yıl: Türkiye'nin Ulusal Güvenlik veDış Politika Gündeminde Doksanlı Yıllar*, (İstanbul: BükeYayınları, 2000), p. 22.

Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, „The Tukish Policy Towards the Wider Black Sea Region and Its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May-October 2007)" in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Views from the Region, *ICBSS Xenophon Paper No. 2,* July 2007, p. 133. The main drawback is considered to be the failure on the EU side to consult with Turkey and Russia during the formulation of the approach: see Yaşar Yakış, „The Black Sea and the Georgian Crisis", *ICBSS Policy Brief #10*, December 2008, p. 6.

Şener Aktürk, „Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 2006, p. 341-344.

Gareth M. Winrow, „Turkey and the Greater Black Sea Region", in Nursin Ateşoğlu Güney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey*, (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), p. 122.

Radikal daily, „Fuller: Türkiye artık Amerikan müttefiki değil" (Fuller: Turkey is no longer an ally of US), 31 October 2008.

Turkish Daily News, „Black Sea force divides Turkey, US", 1 March 2006.

Mustafa Aydın, „Echoes of Ozal's vision", in The Bridge, BSEC 15, Cover Story Q2/2007, Issue 5, available at http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=74, (accessed on 25 December 2008).

Judy Garber, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, „U.S. Perspectives on the Black Sea Region", Keynote Address at the Woodrow Wilson Centre Conference: „Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region „Washington, DC, 10 June 2008, available at http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/105827.htm (accessed on 25 Dec. 2008).

BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7551576.stm, 21 August 2008 (accessed 1 December 2008).

Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pres Release NO:141 – 08 August 2008, Press Release Regarding the Armed Clashes in South Ossetia available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_141---08-august-2008_-press-release-regarding-the-armed-clashes-between-georgia-and-south-ossetia.en.mfa.

Radikal daily, 9 August 2008; After Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Russia the press reflected different viewpoints of Turkey and Russia on territorial integrity of Georgia: See Radikal daily 15 August 2008.

Fatma Demirelli, „Crisis calls for urgent Turkish mediation in Caucasus", *Today's Zaman*, 9 August 2008.

Radikal daily, 10 August 2008; *Today's Zaman*, 11 August 2008.

ANKA News Agency, 13 August 2008

Taraf daily, 10 August 2008.

Sabah daily, 21 August 2008.

Paul Reynolds, „New Russian world order: the five principles", *BBC News*, 01 September 2008.

Emine Kart, „Stuck in a tight spot, Ankara calls for Caucasus pact", *Today's Zaman*, 12 August 2008.

Radikal daily, 20 August 2008.

European Commission's Romania Regular/Progress Reports, which are being cited in this section, are available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/romania/key_documents_en.htm.

European Commission's Bulgaria Regular/Progress Reports, which are being cited in this section are available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/bulgaria/key_documents_en.htm

European Commission's Turkey Regular/Progress Reports, which are being cited in this section, are available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key_documents_en.htm.

Annexes

The black sea region: a security minefield or a partnership road?

International Conference organised by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDSI) Viitorul in cooperation with the Middle East Technical University (Ancara) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Chisinau, Moldova
November 21, 2008: LeoGrand Hotel, Begonia Conference Hall, Mitropolit Varlaam 77

Thursday, November 20, 2008

19.00   **Informal Working Dinner – Friedrich Ebert & IDIS Viitorul**
           Location: *Symposium Wine Restaurant, 31 August Str., No.78*

Friday, November 21, 2008

9:00 – 09:15   **Key Notes from the Host Organizations**

Speakers: *Dr Igor Munteanu, Executive Director, IDIS Viitorul*
                 Ana Mihailov, Programme Coordinator at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
                 Dr Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, Centre for European Studies, Middle East Technical University

Session I:

09:15 – 11:00   Panel I: „*Towards a New Model of Constructive Regionalism in the Wider Black Sea Area*"

Topics: Regional Dynamics in the Wider Black Sea Area, EU Synergy Policy and its Forecasted Effects, Geopolitical Changes in the aftermath of the Russian-Georgian War.

Speakers: *Dr Panagiota Manoli, International Centre for Black Sea Studies, Greece*
                 Dr Jiri Schneider, Program Director, Prague Security Studies Institute

Mindaugas Kacerauskis, Political Advisor to the EUSR for the Republic of Moldova
Dr Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, Research Fellows, CES-METU: Ancara

Moderator: Igor Munteanu, Director, IDIS Viitorul

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 Panel II: „*Integrative and Disintegrative Processes in the Wide Black Sea Region*"

Topics: Drawing Lessons from the Russian – Georgian War, Consequences of the Frozen Conflicts and Instability-Producing 'hidden' agenda, Security Management in the Wider Black Sea Area, Rationalizing the Wider Black Sea Agenda of Cooperative Engagement.

Speakers: *Hanna Shelest, Senior Researcher, National Institute for Strategic Studies, Odessa Branch, Ukraine*
Dr George Tarkhan Mouravi, Institute for Policy Studies, Tbilisi
Dr Iulian Chifu, Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Initiatives, Bucharest
Dr Octavian Tacu, Chair of the Political Sciences Department, International Free University of Moldova

Moderator: Victor Chirila, Foreign Policy Association of Moldova

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Session II:

14.00 – 16.00 Panel III: „*Tackling the Major Neighbourhood Issues: Border Management, Energy Security, Conflict Resolution*"

Topics: Fostering Synergies of Cooperation and Integration around the Black Sea: local and international agendas;
Instruments to tackle Insecurity Threats;
The Identities in formation and Comparative Analysis of Social and Political Attitudes

Speakers: *Dr Sergey Markedonov, Institute for Political and Military Analysis: Moscow*
Dr Igor Munteanu, Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, Chisinau

Dr Saime Ozcurumez, Vis. Asst. Prof. Bilkent University
Dr Dan Dungaciu, Professor, Bucharest University

Moderator: Sorin Mereacre, Director, Eurasia Foundation

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16.00 – 18.00 Panel IV: „The Black Sea Security Prospects: a Regional Outlook"

Topics: Security Agenda of the Black Sea Region; BS Neighbours between 'Neighbourhoods' Territorial. Interpretation of Integrity and Sovereignty in a new geopolitical context

Speakers: *Prof. Dr Oleg Serebrian,* Democratic Party, MP, Parliament of Moldova
Vlad Lupan, Political Analyst, Former Head of the NATO Department, MFA
Dr Sait Akşit, Research Fellow, CES-METU: Ancara

Moderator: *Dr Iulian Chifu, Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Initiatives, Bucharest*

Concluding Remarks

End of the Conference

Annex No.2

Authors and references

Panagiota Manoli, Lecturer at the University of the Aegean;
Director of Studies and Research International Centre for Black Sea Studies
(ICBSS), Greece

Dr Burcu Gultekin Punsmann, Associate Research Fellow,
Centre for European Studies, Middle East Technical University, Turkey

Jiří Schneider, Program Director,
Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Republic

Hanna Shelest, Senior Researcher,
National Institute for Strategic Studies, Odessa Branch, Ukraine

Dr George Tarkhan Mouravi, Director,
Institute for Policy Studies, Georgia

Dr Iulian Chifu, Professor of Conflict Analysis and Decision-making in Crisis at
the SNSPA (National School for Political and Administrative Studies) of Bucharest,
Director of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Centre, Romania

Vlad Lupan, Independent expert,
Former Head of the NATO Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Moldova

Dr Sergey Markedonov, Lecturer
Institute for Political and Military Analysis, Russian Federation

Sait Akşit, Research Fellow,
Centre for European Studies, Middle East Technical University, Turkey

Dr Igor Munteanu, Executive Director
Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, Republic of Moldova

Dr Saime Ozcurumez, Visiting Assistant Professor
Bilkent University, Turkey