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INTRODUCTION

During the last years, several important changes in the region of the Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) have brought it in the epicentre of world politics. Those were political changes mainly, but they had economic extensions as well. In addition, the fact that the WBSA is located within the geographical territory of Europe, Asia and Middle East creates challenges for all of the neighbours in a national and transnational level. Moreover, among the cohabitants there are countries that they have set European integration as a policy target. The expression of their integration desire has been virtually seen during the elections in which pro-European governments have been elected. On the other hand, there are local powers that do not perceive Western Institutions in their region in the same way. Domestic issues, challenges, preferences and differing agendas may present an obstacle towards their target having a domino effect in the overall reforming procedure of the territory.

The following essay will be study the effectiveness of Western Institutions in the WBSA, particularly the role of the European Union (EU) and NATO. The period of the analysis will be after the end of the Cold War. In these years both institutions are trying to engage, affect and boost their interests in the WBSA. They are becoming major players in the region and their role in determining the overall stability of the region proves to be important. In addition, the active role of EU and NATO will be debated in the reform process of the WBSA. Those institutions not only try to push their agenda, they also have a transformative power. Many countries of the region seem to respond positively in this procedure. On the contrary, there are states in the area with different priorities in their policies, and a dissimilar way of implementing them. Empirical evidence will be used in combination with articles of policy institutes and research centres in order to depict the challenges and issues that arise in the area. The effectiveness of those Western Institutions, their role and interaction with local organizations and principal stakeholders will be revised.

In the First Chapter, the present condition of the WBSA will be studied, meaning the principal stakeholders, the regional institutions and the existing political context. The Second Chapter records the challenges of the WBSA. The Third Chapter will focus on the active role of the EU and NATO. In the Fourth Chapter, the policies and effectiveness of the EU and NATO within the region will be studied, followed by an evaluation. Finally, the Conclusions Chapter will highlight the overall critic of the venture in combination with proposals for a more effective approach and interaction procedure.

CHAPTER 1

THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA

General

The Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) becomes lately the epicentre of political evolutions. Consistent of various countries with different political and economic background, global and regional influence and not always converging aspirations, it creates an unevenness compound. In addition, the evolving interest in the specific territory of international actors, merely from the West, generates a dynamic situation which needs to be addressed. Otherwise, the challenges that are currently appearing and the common objectives of the countries of the region, are not going to be adequately completed. Not to mention that those objectives have to be combined with the interests of the West. The latter appears in the WBSA in the form of institutions and through regional or non-regional initiatives.

The WBSA consists of the six littoral states plus those that do not have a direct connection to the Black Sea but they are influenced in a direct or indirect way by the evolutions in the area; or they are engaged in a political or economic manner. Namely those countries are: Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey, and Ukraine. All these countries belong to a regional or international organization or institution that is actively engaged or is trying to engage in the WBSA. But what makes the area that these countries occupy so important?

The most distinctive characteristic of the WBSA is its geographical location. It is the natural border of Europe, Asia and Middle East. All products and ideas have to pass through this border in order to reach their destination. WBSA offers a physical connection to people and civilizations. Consequently it is important not only for the immediate neighbours, but for the “neighbours of their neighbours”. It is not an isolated area reached only by air or sea after a long journey. Developments there will affect three continents in a short time. Vice versa, incidents in continents will influence the WBSA. Therefore it is an interactive geographical area undergoing developments, especially after the end of the Cold War, which will remain in the foreground for a long time. Who are the important regional actors of the WBSA, though?

Principal Stakeholders

The Russian Federation

Russian Federation (RF) is the biggest littoral state of the WBSA. The size of it goes equal to its influence. Especially after the end of the Cold War and since the uptaking of the presidency by Vladimir Putin, RF has been trying to forge its new role in the new global political system. It has an economy based on oil and gas transfer and production. Having a GDP which exceeds 8%, and a surplus of about 3% of the GDP¹ gives the strength a country would need in order to pursue its national and transnational interests.

Moreover the one-man centred character of RF, makes handling of several issues more complicated since there is no strong opposing voice. Even in the late role changing, V. Putin remained the main character of the decision-making procedure. Unofficially he remains the head of state by manipulating people and conditions. Of course he has the acceptance of the majority of Russian people which legitimates his role and his decisions. Hence, any initiative has to have in mind the peculiarity of the political system of RF as much as with its objectives.

But what are the priorities of the RF in the WBSA? Officially there is no information given, at least in English, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. It is not difficult though to understand from its actions the main elements of RF's policy. The end of the Cold War found RF in an uneasy condition concerning its worldwide status. So seeking a new identity was a high priority consideration. Maybe because of its size, RF wanted to reposition itself in a short period. President Putin headed towards this direction without any hesitation. This had as a result RF to use Energy (trade and transportation) as a Diplomacy tool. It tried to achieve the "superpower" status by using the energy supply². In a bipolar world, RF is trying to redefine its position with all political and economic means. Bilateral relations with the West do not seem to be a high priority in the Russian agenda. Instead influencing or manipulating its neighbours appears to be the often used methods.

As a result, foreign affairs of Russia could not be described easily. Tension, intransigence and manipulation characterize the moves of RF. But this is only the West-type approach to describe Russia's actions. One could say that Russia is positioning itself globally without indirect words and without having to read between the lines in order to comprehend Russian

¹ "CIA-The World Factbook-Russia", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html> (accessed May 13th, 2008).

² Andrew Monaghan, "Russia's Energy Diplomacy: A Political Idea Lacking a Strategy?", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2007, 280.

policy. An example to demonstrate this behaviour is the case of the dispute with Ukraine in January of 2006 when Russia interrupted the gas flow. The latter demanded that the debt of Ukraine should be paid and that the price should be renegotiated. The outcry for this action was intense, though Russia claimed that it did not want to position Ukraine in a Cold War era, where Russia appeared to offer protection and manipulated countries due to the low offered prices³.

The Republic of Turkey

The ambiguous role of Turkey has been a common subject of study. It is a country located at a strategic point that no one could refuse its importance. It is the crossroad of Europe-Asia-Middle East (ME) and Turkey's decisions can definitely affect the economic life of the Black Sea. For instance a simple refusal of Turkey concerning the passage of a pipeline from ME to Europe would mean that the pipeline would have to pass from the North, or to be submerged in the Black Sea. That would not be the best solution, since many countries face their own internal challenges, and a pipeline route should be passing from stable states. It would also be a cost effective project, since the distance that the pipeline would have to cover, would be bigger. Additionally, Turkey controls the Bosphorus Straits which connects Black Sea with the Aegean Sea and consequently with the rest of the world. The Montreux Convention of 1936 covers the legislative framework of the Straits and Turkey will not accept any deviation from this framework.

Turkey undergoes transformation in many fields. The EU's membership procedure demands compliance with the "acquis communautaire". This body of the entire European law is the first reform that countries should undergo. It is considered to be a very helpful tool for countries wishing to develop tested and functional institutions. Ministries, Courts, Councils, legislation and other fields have to adapt to a framework that is used by all countries of the EU. Furthermore Turkey has to pay attention concerning the external relations and internal affairs. This fact in combination with the ambiguous role of the army, creates an outcome that sometimes affects the relations of the country and its internal procedures.

³ Nadia Arbatova, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Department of European Political Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, in the Conference on "Security Concerns in the Wider Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions", Rhodes, 15-16 June 2007.

Turkey also, has played a significant role in the last years concerning the BS. As it will be examined later, it proposed an initiative that would boost cooperation and development in the region. This fact in function with its European orientation situates Turkey in a distinctive position. Of course as every country, it has its own setbacks and bilateral dysfunctions concerning certain occasions, but no one cannot overlook its offer in the WBSA as we will see in the following chapters.

Ukraine

Being the second largest country of Europe, Ukraine possesses a significant geographical location in the WBSA. It is a democratic state which consists of a republic with a government elected by the people. It is the littoral state of BS between Europe and Russia. It is a natural path of goods transferred by land or sea. Although Ukraine shares common origins with RF, in nowadays is on the way to become a West-institutionalized country. Ukraine has been among the major economic pillars of the former USSR. Unfortunately, after the end of the Cold War the country remained depended on RF concerning its energy supplies. Evolutions, which followed the Orange Revolution, gave the country a pro-European government; of course that was an uncomfortable fact for RF and added to the tension climate.

As a result, we had the aforementioned tensions of late 2005 and early 2006 in which RF cut-off gas supply to Ukraine. After the renegotiation of the prices, which ended up in an almost double price, relations appear to running without any major tensions. Despite all these facts, RF remains the largest trading partner⁴ of Ukraine. Its annual GDP growth rate for 2006-2007 was 7%⁵ but it will stay vulnerable to external economic fluctuations as long as its economy remains depended on one source of energy.

The European Union

The EU is an evolving soft power in the WBSA. Since 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania became full members of the EU, the latter overlapped those countries. Bulgaria and Romania solely would remain two important littoral states. Their role now has been intensified and one recognizes now that negotiating with those states is almost like discussing with the EU. This means that there must be a compliance with EU's rules and norms. Of course, bilateral

⁴ "Country profile: Ukraine", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1102303.stm (accessed 15th May 2008).

⁵ "CIA-The World Factbook-Ukraine", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html> (accessed May 15th, 2008).

relations are not prohibited, though the importance and the political weight of an institution such as the EU cannot be neglected. EU has many interests in the WBSA, and having two members on important strategic location, puts it in a more advanced position. Besides, EU acts as a “magnet” due to its soft power that does not frighten, does not threaten and it has proven to be a very effective tool.

Furthermore, there are several other states of the WBSA that would happily join the European family, overlooking the fact of geographical irrelevance to the continent. Georgia and Ukraine have made clear their orientation towards western institutions and particularly to become members of the EU. Turkey also is a candidate member. This fact shows that the EU will increase its influence in the WBSA indirectly, should these countries become members. No matter how many members wish to join the EU, the latter develops a substantial support to the region. For the time being the EU is not a stakeholder, at least with the traditional meaning. Nevertheless, someone cannot overlook the growing network that EU unfolds. To this day, this network consists of member and pro-european states.

Regional Identity

Is there a Regional Identity in the BS area? Has it ever been? The BS region is not a disintegrated area. In the last two decades, many initiatives and organizations have been established in order to assist the area to advance its interests. Those were considered to be common, and axiological there should be a great number of them. The absence of the former USSR gave the opportunity to countries that were more advanced in terms of economy and political status, to unreel their potential and express their anxieties concerning the future of the region. This should be their common future. The idea of interdependence was not unknown. Neither was the idea of uniting their forces. As a result, regionalization started to appear through initiatives, and regional identity was a “work in progress” issue. Nowadays there are functioning institutions and organizations that materialize and forge the regional identity of the region.

At this point, the rhetoric should be stressed which claims, that Regional Identity and Regional Approach have been undermined by several initiatives and action plans of non domestic initiatives. Challenging and undermining the Regional Identity will not help in any way the Region to achieve cohesion and consensus. A sense of common identity is crucial for the specific area, since it has to deal with a significant number of challenges. So, although this rhetoric might not reflect 100% the reality, surely inaugurates risks posing from the

diminution of Regional Identity. But which are those initiatives, organizations and factors that steer the WBSA towards convergence?

Institutions and Organizations

General

In the WBSA there are many institutions, organizations, initiatives and processes. In the following paragraphs, we will state in brief the main regional processes and initiatives. Those are either focused on the particular region, or they can directly affect it. In addition, Romania being a very active country has initiated trilateral co operations with almost all its neighbours. Those will be omitted since they belong in the sub-regional level.

Community of Democratic Choice (CDC)

The official birth of CDC was in December 2005. It is a Romanian initiative aiming at strengthening democracy, human rights and rule of law⁶. It consists of 9 states: Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Moldova, Slovenia, and FYROM. Four of them belong to the WBSA, and two of them (Georgia, Moldova) face serious security problems. Admittedly, the “stability” stated also in its founding declaration targets to security issues. It is worth mentioning that RF is no part of the initiative. It is also of equal importance to mention that the security problems of those states are directly connected to the RF, since it is stated by Georgia and Moldova that Russia supports separatist forces in the aforementioned countries.

Moreover, some commentators support that CDC aims primary at weakening Moscow’s influence in the BS region. They also add that Romania went on this initiative in order to accelerate its NATO membership and to counterbalance Russia⁷. The latter did not welcome warmly the CDC. Although president Putin was invited in the founding ceremony, he sent an embassy official in his place, while other invited countries had sent government delegates.

It appears that the operations and visions of CDC will be an uneasy task. It is not the fact that RF is no part of the initiative but the depreciation and degradation that RF seems to demonstrate against it. The CDC also comes to cover fields in which greater organizations are trying to establish, namely the security matters for which EU and NATO are trying to

⁶ “Declaration of the countries of the Community of Democratic Choice”, <http://nsc.gov.ge/download/pdf/declEN.pdf> (accessed May 16th, 2008).

⁷ “Ukraine: Regional Leaders Set Up Community Of Democratic Choice”, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/12/045AD9D6-04EA-41AC-9C8E-6501191F1CD8.html> (accessed May 16th, 2008).

tackle. Of course this does not prohibit any country or organization to initiate projects, policies and institutions that will contribute in regional stability. It should be taken in consideration though, that challenging and failing to take with your part a factor crucial to regional stability, would not help much in the declaration's inauguration. Besides, even when trying to act complementary, overlapping activities usually fail to achieve their target, and could have an opposite result.

GUAM

The GUAM group was founded in 1995. It consisted of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUAM). In 1999 Uzbekistan joined the group (GUUAM). In the organization's summit in 2006 in Kiev, it was renamed in GUUAM-ODED (Organization for Democracy and Economic Development). The main reasons of the establishment of the Organization can be listed as the common geography of the Black Sea, the lack of effective functioning within the CIS, the search for political and economic security, the desire to integrate with European-Atlantic organizations, the frozen conflict areas (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdniestar and Nagorno-Karabakh) and energy⁸. The official charter of the organization was issued in June 2001 and the objectives focus on economy, trade, transport and communication, interaction with international organizations and it enters in soft security matters (international terrorism, drugs and organized crime)⁹. The organization appears from its press releases to interact preferably with trans-atlantic institutions. But what is next?

Once more, four countries of the WBSA form a regional group in order to boost their interests. There is no doubt that it contributes to the regional identity of the area. However, its communication preferences towards West, might reinforce RF's displeasure for the member countries, especially those that belong also to the CDC. It is a sub-regional group acting in a area that tries to shape its regional identity. Cohesion and consensus cannot be guaranteed. Besides it is stated that Moldova is expected to withdraw from the organization in the next summit in July 2008, while Uzbekistan withdrew in 2005 after a period of suspension in 2002.

⁸ "Will GUAM turn into GUA?", <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/yazarDetay.do?haberno=138986> (accessed May 16th, 2008).

⁹ "Yalta GUUAM Charter", http://www.guam.org/doc/Yalta_char_7jun01_en.htm (accessed May 16th, 2008).

CIS

The Commonwealth of Independent States was established in December 1991 after the dissolution of the former USSR. It consists of twelve states of the former USSR: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia (joined in 1993), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. The organization considered to be the successor of the former USSR. The target of CIS was to create a “common economic space grounded on free movement of goods, services, labour force, capital; to elaborate coordinated monetary, tax, price, customs, external economic policy; to bring together methods of regulating economic activity and create favourable conditions for the development of direct production relations.”¹⁰ The members of the union under its Charter were independent and equal subjects under international law.

CIS in nowadays appears to be a collective security organization in the region. After CIS members signed the CIS Free Trade Zone Treaty (1994) the organization headed towards security matters. Since 1995 and afterwards, main agreements and protocols have been concerning in combating organized crime, drug trafficking, peacekeeping missions in the conflict zones of Abkhazia (Georgia), and have increased military cooperation among members. In 2007 the council of Heads of State discussed energy issues and some members of the Caspian region plus Belarus (including RF), signed an agreement to form a common energy market. Previously in 2006, Georgia had stated its consideration to pullout from the organization.

CSTO

The Collective Security Treaty Organization was established in September 2003. It consists of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Tajikistan. Among its members are two countries of the WBSA. According to the organization’s charter, the main purpose of the CSTO is coordination and deepening of military and political cooperation, development of multilateral structures and mechanisms of cooperation for ensuring national security of the member-states on collective basis, providing assistance, including military one, to the member-states who has been victims of aggression. The term “assistance” refers to the provision of support including military one in case that “aggression is committed against any of the member states”. Furthermore, we should no forget that

¹⁰ “About CIS”, <http://www.cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm> (accessed May 16th, 2008).

members of CSTO are also major energy producers and “assistance” could well mean the interruption of energy flow towards any state showing an aggressive attitude.

Whereas other forms of organizations and institutions are more focused in the WBSA than CSTO, the latter can affect it. RF and Armenia are entangled in important security matters of the region, namely the frozen conflicts. The absence of Georgia and Ukraine from the Organization brings them in a discomfort since both are parts of unresolved security matters. As a result, CSTO is a collective security organization that can complicate the security concerns of the WBSA. In this context the effort of NATO to enter the WBSA might create more issues than those wished to be handled. Besides it has been supported that CSTO could probably be the anti-NATO organization in the WBSA.¹¹ As a result two collective security organizations in the same region of a different origin will hardly find a common agenda.

BSEC

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization was founded in June 1992 as a Turkish initiative. It consists of twelve member states, namely Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. The majority of them belong to the WBSA. The BSEC “represents the most advanced expression of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area.”¹² It is fostering peace and prosperity in the BS region through regional cooperation in the economic field. It brings in the same table countries with bilateral issues, and it can provide a tested forum for consultations¹³. The Organization needs the cooperation of all members involved, and any obstacle is a setback for its targets. The importance of the BSEC is also pointed out by the Observer status that EU acquired in the Organization. Although the BSEC is not a political institution, it has evolved and reformed in its 15 years of operation in order to adapt to the new challenges of the region. Its expansion beyond the strictly economic field (energy, transports, good governance, trade, organised

¹¹ Richard Weitz, “Is the CSTO the real anti-NATO?”, *World Politics Review Exclusive*, (2008), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1531>.

¹² Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “Report on the Progress of the Work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on BSEC-EU Interaction”, (presented at the Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the BSEC, Brussels, April 11th, 2006), 2.

¹³ ICBSS, “BSEC-EU Interaction: The BSEC Approach”, (2007), http://icbss.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=252.

crime), allowed the Organization to become a flexible and effective tool towards regional and trans-regional cooperation.

While other organizations and initiatives have a more restricted agenda and may appear to incline to security matters, BSEC mainly fosters economic cooperation. Concurrently without ignoring the evolving character of the region, expanded its field of operations in a clear way without putting aside its main pillar. Additionally no member has ever expressed the willing to pull out from the organization. Also RF is an active member of the BSEC having expressed its commitment to the Organization. In addition, many countries, organizations and institutions are observers to the BSEC. Someone could also say that trade and economic development can be a contributing factor to peace, stability and subsequently to cohesion and consensus: In other words forging of regional identity.

A multi-polar Region?

Several questions rise due to the existence of these regional initiatives. How effective can they be? Are they overlapping? Do they need reform? Could some of them be integrated? Are the challenges of the region tackled effectively? Are the produced policies and organizations productive? Do they provoke any of the countries of the WBSA? Is it possible to build bridges without destroying regional cohesion? Is the WBSA finally, a multi-polar region?

If some members put more weight on the side they will choose, it is natural to appear inclusion-exclusion phenomena in the region. Those will be more intense depending on the size of power (political and economic) the coalition will have. This may happen unintentionally, but it makes no difference to the result. Such events will probably provoke one or more countries and undermine local initiatives. Regional organizations and institutions may not be able to respond to such actions. Regional identity will be surely affected. Furthermore, all these will be combined with the existing issues of the WBSA producing instability. So in order to maintain cohesion and consensus, it is crucial to know and deal with the challenges and risks in the WBSA.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES IN THE WBSA

General

There is no doubt that the uprising importance of the WBSA is directly connected to the political and economic evolutions occurred in the late years, not necessarily in this very region. The area historically from Ottoman Empire since nowadays had always been significant. The end of the Cold War though gave the opportunity to multilateralism, which unfolded the manifold character of the region and unleashed hidden powers. On the contrary, it let a legacy that produced and nascent several issues.

In an area where regional identity is advancing with a low but steady pace, it would be better for all countries to tackle effectively the existing challenges and forge a strategy that will allow them to foresee and eschew future issues. For this reason, challenges have to be clearly pointed. In this way there will not be ambivalent priorities and the common targets are going to be boosted. An important element to resolve issues and reinforce regional cohesion can be the efficient resolving of the upcomings. In addition, the aid of external factors will be more successful since common scopes and targets will be elucidated. Of course, this provides the effective entanglement of external institutions and the precondition that those are going to be welcomed by the area.

Finally, it is essential for all WBSA countries to understand their role in the uprising importance of their neighbourhood. In a contemporary context, challenges should be viewed under the prism of regional cooperation and cohesion. The factors that accentuate the evolving significance of the WBSA can be categorized in the following two ways. First, is the geopolitical-geostrategic approach to the region politics¹⁴. According to this approach, WBSA is the location in which West antagonizes with RF and its successors. It goes beyond the field of competition and it might be partially viewed by some as a reward to post Cold War imperialistic powers. Secondly, is the approach in terms of cooperation at regional, subregional and transregional levels. This analysis is more encouraging and optimistic than the previous and allows space for rapprochement in levels and channels other than those of confrontation. It is an assertion of interaction that allows all sides to foresee and cope with

¹⁴ ICBSS, *Black Sea Monitor*, No.3, March 2007, 1.

upcoming challenges. It is the approach of cooperation and not the one of confrontation. But what are the current challenges of the WBSA? Are those issues connected? What are the main lines of policy that can be effective?

Security Challenges

The primary sources of instability in the WBSA are the frozen conflicts. Those “unresolved problems” as stated by the European Commission, threaten the state integrity and pose a security problem to the broader region¹⁵. Those concern Georgia (regions of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia), Moldova (region of Transdnistria), and Armenia-Azerbaijan (region of Nagorno-Karabach).

What do all these conflicts have in common is the demand for independence by secessionist areas. Georgia and Ukraine support that RF manipulates those conflicts, while it is believed that in the case of Armenia-Azerbaijan, RF supports separatist forces in an indirect way.¹⁶ As a result, there is undermining stability, of rule of law and state integrity and consolidation. Moreover, political and economic resources are spent in order to overcome or maintain this situation. In addition, there is development in corruption and organized crime.¹⁷ The latter are directly connected to states that do not control their entire geographical area. Consequently, economy that is the linchpin of development, cannot advance. This acts as a feedback to the already existing networks of unlawful economy that undermines further state consolidation, reinforces separatist forces and prohibits market interaction.

Equally important are the security issues that RF faces and that are not often stated. A principal stakeholder faces its own security risks that definitely affect its behaviour in the WBSA. In N. Caucasus there are Chechen Islamic militant groups which Russia believes are supported by S. Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan and Turkey.¹⁸ This is because RF defines terrorism in a different way than West does. It should be noted though, that there is a long going debate in Western forums concerning the definition of “terrorism”. This is not the case for Russia because it has a clearer viewpoint.

¹⁵ CSIS, “Economic Development and Security in the Black Sea Region”, (Brussels, January 3rd, 2007), 6.

¹⁶ Vladimir Socor, “The Frozen Conflicts: A Challenge to Euro-Atlantic interests”, *A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, July 2004, 8.

¹⁷ ICBSS, *Black Sea Monitor*, No. 1, July 2006, 3.

¹⁸ Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Area in the context of EU-RUSSIA relations”, *Xenophon Paper No.5*, (2008), 22.

In addition, security challenges emanating from the ME area can spread over the BS region. WMD, terrorism, illegal immigration and expressed threats over the integrity and existence of certain states affect the stability of the WBSA. Since the countries located in the borders of ME are not equally developed and consolidated, they do not have the right mechanisms to counter act to such issues. Those probably will have a domino effect in the already existing conflicts. The case of Kurds in Turkey and N. Iraq is an example. No one can have doubts about the security concerns of Turkey, since they are not “in its shoes”. Nevertheless the ongoing conflicts and attacks are a security concern of the WBSA.

Energy Security

Energy Security being the most important global consideration, remains a high priority in WBSA’s agenda. There are numerous oil, gas pipelines and tankers trespassing the region, and there are plans for the construction of many others. Energy that flows, from or through this area, originates from Middle East and C. Asia. It ends up to European consumers who are heavily dependent on oil, gas and coal. It is estimated that by 2030, 90% of oil 60% of gas and 66% of coal will have to be imported¹⁹. It is obvious that routes must be free, undisturbed and the supplier dependable.

The events that occurred in 2006 with RF and Ukraine raised the alarm for the European continent. No matter what diversification policy concerning the sources will EU follow, the route will practically be the same. WBSA is virtually important to bypass. As a result, the assurance of the transit area has to be guaranteed. Subsequently the challenge will be to eschew policies and practises that will bring no tension to the region. West has its own needs and agenda, even though it has to be combined with the current situation and requirements of the complex character of the WBSA.

On the other hand now, energy as a trade good is not only important for the consumer. The supplier is also interested in selling his product. Energy Security for the supplier has a similar but not the same definition. He needs routes that will be cost effective and that will pose no threat to his product. In other words, the effort from RF to control the pipes, will not appear strange to the West. The perception is much different, though the outcome is commonly pursued. In addition, energy diversification is differently interpreted by the RF. Alternative routes are needed in order to eschew perils coming from occasions in which a country would decide to stop the flow. This could be also interrupted by other reasons,

¹⁹ ICBSS.

mainly connected to the aforementioned security challenges. Energy diversification is a synonym to dependable supplying for RF.

Strategic location and competition

As it has already been stated, previously the WBSA occupies an important geographical position. Going further than the energy and trade route, the region constitutes an area that gives access to Central Asia and Middle East. Following the way from Europe to Asia, institutions and organizations can approach countries of their interest.²⁰ In reverse, the same are valid for ME and CA to access the European Continent. Moreover, it has become a region in which Western institutions confront RF and its successors. Competition appears in political and economic issues, and it is materialized in strategic planning and implementation. One example is the pipeline construction. While West plans pipeline routes, RF goes into materialization of similar projects. It also signed agreements with countries of the region concerning pipeline control and energy transfer, while West still remains in declarations (i.e. Nabucco project – Blue Stream).

Equally important is the fact of political influence each competitor is trying to achieve. Weak states of the region look for support in various fields (mainly economic), even if they have nothing tangible to render. Stability though is the main element that competitors are looking for. The shortcoming in this case is that each side interprets “stability” in its own way. While the term really means no surges in political, economic and social life that could lead to disorder and interruption of energy flows and appearance of immigrating population, for other might mean influence, control and manipulation in order to serve their agenda.

Another element that leads to competition is the existence of several collective security mechanisms. Those are not only CSTO and NATO. Several other organizations and initiatives have entered in soft security matters, and those may not be perceived positively by regional stakeholders. Competition then reaches the limits of confrontation and the main damage goes to the area of confrontation, which in our case is the WBSA.

Political issues

The region is in the aftermath of two revolutions: the Orange and the Rose Revolution of Ukraine and Georgia respectively. It is true that these political issues fall into the strategic

²⁰ Janusz Bugajski, “The Black Sea Security Agenda”, paper presented in CSIS Bucharest Conference, 25 June 2007.

competition of external factors, but they have to be analyzed as a separate element. It reveals the orientation and the tendency of those countries towards a specific political culture. Of course democratic elections have not always given the best result, but in this case the message is tangible. People of the region cannot afford corruption, manipulation, economic decline and autocratic behaviour. Recent developments in Georgia have proven that democratic procedures are preferred to any other measures, even when the first show that they cannot respond fully to people's expectations. Democracy might have dysfunctions, especially in first stages of development, but it remains democracy.

Additionally state consolidation has to be supported since there are not only the two Revolution's aftermath, but also the post bipolar era. The region consists of countries that used to be members of the USSR and there are still cells that perceive RF as its successor. However one shall not adhere to this idea. The fact is that the legacy of the USSR left these countries to develop in an evolving context with bipolar strategies and perceptions. As a conclusion democracy, state consolidation and rule of law are the main political issues no matter what is their origination. The result though might not be positive for all the countries of WBSA. Turkey for example faces internal problems concerning minorities, and declarations of independence might not help its internal affairs. Moreover, its European orientation dictates respect to all democratic institutions, and this is a point that is currently being reformed in Turkey.

Also, one could not ignore the tensions that exist between Turkey and Armenia. This is a fact that is barely presented since there are no major conflicts. Their borders remain closed and no diplomatic relations exist. It is often stated that Turkey closed borders with Armenia due to the Armenia-Azerbaijan issue but this is not the only cause. The denial of Armenian genocide by Turkey is a major factor repeatedly neglected. Both countries though are not completely isolated from each other. They meet in a place and this is the forum of the BSEC. There had been in the past efforts by both sides to re-establish relations, but they were not fruitful. The Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, that was consisted, did not manage to encourage the opening of the borders, which was its main target.²¹ As a result, Armenia's cooperation with its bordering countries remains problematic. Despite this fact,

²¹ Council on Foreign Relations, "Hopeful signs for Turkey-Armenia", http://www.cfr.org/publication/8015/hopeful_signs_for_turkey_armenia.html (accessed May 16th, 2008).

there are circles in Turkey and Armenia that are trying for reconciliation and reestablishment of trade relations.²²

As a conclusion, since there is no legacy in democratic procedures in the region, institutions and organizations are needed in order to reinforce and sustain democratic procedures. Those can not originate solely from the WBSA. Existing initiatives can interact with global organizations and institutions. It shall be noted that those shall respect the sovereignty and not interfere in internal affairs of countries. Otherwise, those institutions will not only appear as ruling elites, but they will also create tension, instability and confrontation. Moreover, reliability of those factors will be questioned and the result there be a general suspiciousness concerning institutions and organizations founded by non regional members.

Similarly, the utilization of inappropriate apparatuses will have the same outcome. The term should not be confused with organizations because it refers to the policies and practices those use in order to achieve their targets. For example, one could not use a collective security organization to protect ethnic minorities. There should be a serious consideration whether some institutions would be more effective if they could alter the traditional methods they use, or if another organization or institution could undertake the venture.

Environmental issues

The WBSA consists of a variable environment. A number of littoral states surround a great sea that faces environmental problems. Being used as a sea route, it is susceptible to pollution from transit shipping. Not only the ships, but their cargo also constitutes a more serious ecological threat. Let us refer to the case of last year's shipwrecks where four freighters and an oil tanker sank because of gale. The environmental pollution was one of the greatest in the region. Even if someone calls for actions and anticipating measures, it should be pointed that the accidents were not a result of human error. Perils lie and will probably take place no matter what actions are taken to ward them of. The challenge here is to have the appropriate mechanisms to detent such catastrophes if and when they occur. These mechanisms definitely include collective action since not all countries have the appropriate apparatuses, while all of them are affected from such events.

Equally important is the environmental threat that particularly Bosphorus and Kerch Straits face from bypassing tankers. Pollution in the middle of Black Sea may be effectively

²² "A Caucasian cheese circle", http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11412925 (accessed May 25th, 2008).

treated, while pollution in Straits will have a disastrous effect. The proximity of sea routes to shores does not leave space for misjudgements. Appropriate measures are needed in order to prevent naval accidents and those have to be combined with the construction or further development of alternative terrestrial energy routes. Those measures can be hardware rigging or legislative restrictions concerning maximum trespassing freight.

Furthermore, the BS is the drain basin of rivers that cross many countries. Dnieper, Dniester, Danube and several other rivers end up in the BS carrying all the waste that have been purred in, intentionally or not. It is not only the fact that they pollute the BS, but being contaminated prohibit numerous of activities. Irrigation and drinking becomes a threat to humans and animals while the shores become degraded forbidding residence and tourism. On the whole, environmental pollution affects in medium and long-term human life and economic prosperity of the region. International experience in river management can prove very effective. New methods can be combined and work with existing ones. This will be a win-win situation since the size of Black Sea's rivers can act as a field for the evolution of innovative scientific programs that will be useful for other countries in the world.

A challenge for transregional cooperation?

Summing up the aforementioned challenges someone could make the following observations. The WBSA's character is significantly different from other regions of the planet. First, there are numerous new states in the area having common roots. This means, that they use to interact with each other and they are interdependent. They also have the experience of a system that did not prove to be effective and they undergo procedures of reformation and renovation in combination with issues of their common roots. Secondly, those issues do not pose an imminent threat to any country or region. Of course, there had been a number of cases of armed confrontation, which were not allowed to expand. On the other side though, those undermine states and institutions and in long terms may prove to be a serious threat to regional cohesion and cooperation. Lastly, the WBSA appears to be an area of multiple policies. Western policies, regional policies, principal stakeholder's policies, organizations and institutions that seem not to interact effectively. Maybe there is misinterpretation and no transparency in procedures so as the result appears to be problematic. The question arising is about the role, the policy and thesis of western institutions in WBSA's challenges.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF WESTERN INSTITUTIONS

Framework

The most important western institutions aiming at the WBSA will be examined in this Chapter. Those depicted in the following lines were chosen according to their effectiveness, durability, interests and relevance to the region. The effectiveness of their apparatuses was taken into consideration. And was judged by the efficiency they had in similar cases or their ability to adapt to the environment and produce suitable policies.

The institutions to be covered are the European Union and NATO. It should be noted here that EU will not be viewed under the prism of being a principal stakeholder. This was a result of its interest and it will not be used as an argument. The case of NATO on the other side appears to be an interesting and ambiguous case of an organization trying to engage in the area, even if it had been hostile in the past. This is because it is undergoing an internal reform procedure, while trying to entangle in a reforming area with an uprising importance. Of course, all organizations undergo transformations, though the case of NATO is the essential change of its scope.

To summarize, both institutions originate from the West, they have contributed and regulated in the past the formation of policies and building of cooperation, and they are probably the main channels of international interaction of the WBSA with the West. They are though of different nature. Can these institutions coexist in the WBSA? Do they have similar agenda? Are their policies conflicting? What about their effectiveness? Are they both accepted in the same level by countries of the WBSA? How countries view these institutions coming from the West?

The European Union

Scope of engagement

Since January 2007 the Eastern borders of the EU have reached the BS area. The fifth enlargement materialized the importance of the concerns and interests of the EU in this locale. The EU brought the wider BS region into its close neighbourhood. The Republic of Bulgaria and Romania enjoy European membership while giving EU an indirect way of affecting politically and economically the BS entity.

It is obvious that the EU's role in the wider BS area is getting more serious. It is voluntarily entangling in an area characterised by developing regionalism, which is expressed in several institutional ways. Being an area of high importance (80% of the energy supply to Europe transits through the BS area²³), the EU cannot stay in the sideline and allow other regional players to control its vital interests. Therefore the enlargement appeared to be a necessary move in order to participate actively in the strategic planning of the region. This is of great importance since the EU is trying to cooperate in further with the BS region while this is aiming at its institutional integration.

Policies and Programmes

The entanglement of the EU in the WBSA did not come unexpectedly with the enlargement. There had already been policies and programs that merely covered the region. One of them was the TACIS programme that was launched by the European Community in 1991 and was valid until 2006. It provided grand financed technical assistance to 12 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. From the WBSA countries the programme covered Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, RF and Ukraine. Its target was to aid them in the transition phase after the collapse of the USSR. From the 1st January 2007 the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument programme (ENPI) substituted the TACIS programme. The ENPI “targets sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and legislation”²⁴. It actually provides financial support for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The ENP was initiated in 2004 “with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all concerned.”²⁵ In other words ENP aims at reinforcing relations of EU with its immediate neighbours without giving them the prospect of membership. However, the RF is not included in the ENP. Although is an immediate neighbour, the geopolitical role and importance of RF mandated the construction of a distinct policy. The result was the Strategic Partnership with Russia which covers the “four common spaces”. Built under the framework of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) it

²³ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, comment on “The European Union looks to the East”, The Dimitrios World Blog, comment posted March 30, 2007, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com> (accessed May 12th, 2008).

²⁴ “The European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument”, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/enpi_cross_border/documents/enpi_presentation_en.pdf (accessed May 18th, 2008).

²⁵ “The Policy: What is the ENP?”, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm (accessed May 23rd, 2008).

aimed at the construction of a common: a) economic space, b) freedom, security and justice space, c) space in cooperation in the field of external security and d) space in research, education and culture.

The aforementioned Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) are bilateral agreements between EU and individual countries that have no membership prospect. PCA's have been signed also between EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. All entered into force from 1997 to 1999 and are valid for 10 years. They are based on the respect of democratic principles, human rights, and set out the political, economic and trade relationship between the EU and those countries. Turkey, being a candidate member is not included in any of the aforementioned policies. Instead the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) covers financial support to the country.

However, those are not the only policies the EU has towards this area. Several programmes and initiatives that are supported by the EU exist, and they are in favour of the region. Last year in April, the European Commission put forward the Black Sea Synergy, an initiative aiming at developing the cooperation with the BS region²⁶. At the same time, the German EU Presidency had declared the will to expand the European area of security and stability.²⁷ This initiative proved once more the interest of the EU in the region and the evolving significance of it.

In addition, EU supports several projects such as the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia Programme (TRACECA). The project initiated in 1993 and aims at the development of the road network of the WBSA. It involves Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. By this project, the economy of the involved countries will be reinforced since trade will be enhanced. Moreover, the EU supports the Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe project (INOGATE). The venture was established in 1995 and aims at the convergence of energy markets, energy security (transit and diversification), supporting sustainable energy development and the attraction of investment towards energy projects.²⁸ It involves the countries of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia,

²⁶ Commission of the European Communities, "Black Sea Synergy – A new regional cooperation initiative", http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf (accessed May 12th, 2008).

²⁷ Presidency Programme 1st January to 30 June 2007, "Europe – Succeeding Together", http://www.eu2007.de/includes/Downloads/Praesidentschaftsprogramm/EU_Presidency_Programme_final.pdf (accessed May 18th 2007).

²⁸ "About INOGATE", <http://www.inogate.org/en/> (accessed May 25th 2007).

Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, FYROM, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. It should be noticed that the RF is absent from both programmes.

Furthermore, EU set up in November 2001 the Danube Black Sea Force (DABLAS) with the aim to provide a framework for cooperation for the protection of water and water-related ecosystems in the Danube and Black Sea Region. This came after an EC Communication adopted in 2001, which endorsed the importance for the environmental protection of the BS and highlighted priority actions required to improve and protect the environment. It should be noted here that the Commission on Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, a regional initiative consisting of the six littoral states of the BS, participates in the task force. In addition, in 2003 under the Greek Presidency, a scientific conference named IASON was launched aiming at the setup of transnational networks to protect the seas of Mediterranean and Black Sea.

Interaction with the WBSA

It is clear that the EU interacts with the WBSA in various ways. As seen in the previous paragraphs institutions, financial support and other programmes of the EU target towards the development and stabilization of the region. Most of the WBSA's countries are part of a programme or policy of the EU. Most of them bolster cooperation and add to the construction of regional identity of the area. On the other hand, one could ask how EU entangles in regional initiatives of the region? We define here that we view the role of the EU as an organization. This means that we do not examine the participation of individual members of the EU to local initiatives, but the participation of legislative bodies of the EU to the region.

The only regional initiative in which the EU has acquired and gained the observer status is the BSEC. The Commission of the EU is one of the sixteen observers to the Organization. The interaction story of EU and BSEC hails from 1997 when the European Commission presented the Communication to the Council on "Regional Co-operation in the Black Sea area: state of play, perspectives of EU action encouraging its future development". In the paper were depicted the main issues of the EU-BSEC relation. In 1999 the BSEC responded with the "Platform for Cooperation between the BSEC and the EU". By that time, the latter was not considered to be "a realistic and complete basis for further cooperation."²⁹ In 11th

²⁹ Panagiota Manoli, "Bringing the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the European Union closer", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, (2005), 168.

April 2007 though the Commission of the European Communities issued a Communication Paper to the European Council and Parliament in “Black Sea Synergy – A Regional Cooperation Initiative”. This Synergy was complementary to the existing policies of ENP and Strategic Partnership with Russia. It aimed at the development of cooperation a) among the BS region and b) between the region and the EU. Once more it is obvious that the EU was trying to bolster the regional identity of the region with this Synergy.

Concerning Russia, the PCA’s provision includes political dialogue among others. Those take place in Foreign Ministers Troika meetings, meetings of the Political Directors, monthly meetings of the Russian Mission in Brussels with the troika of the Political and Security Committee and at expert level on a wide range of topical international issues. The EU Troika includes officials from the EU Member State that holds the EU Presidency, the incoming EU Presidency, the European Commission and the EU Council Secretariat. Experts from fifteen Council working groups also meet with their Russian counterparts twice a year. These consultations take place once every six months.³⁰ In addition, twice a year the Head of States meet at Summits. To conclude, the procedure of interaction with the RF is obvious.

As for the interaction of the EU with the problematic areas, there is diplomatic activity of the Special Representative for South Caucasus (EUSR) in Georgia, who was appointed there in 2003. In addition, EU supports rehabilitation and confidence building measures in both conflict zones of the country. This means that it provides economic assistance. Also in Moldova, in 2005, was appointed the Special Representative (EURM) and his mandate concerned the Transdnistria issue. The EU has repeatedly expressed its interest in increasing its engagement in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue,³¹ but there is no official representative of the Union there.

NATO

Scope of engagement

It is true that the Organization has not issued a clear policy of engagement in the area. The distinct character of NATO in accordance with its former operation and target, make the future of the organization in the WBSA ambiguous. The Organization currently undergoes a

³⁰ “Political and legal foundations”, *The EU’s relation with Russia*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/intro/index.htm#pol (accessed May 25th 2008).

³¹ Sabine Freizer, “Responding to S. Caucasus Conflicts in the European Neighbourhood”, paper presented in the European Parliament Hearing on the South Caucasus “Promoting Stability and Democratization in our Neighbourhood: What role for the EU in the S. Caucasus?”, Brussels, 22nd February 2006.

transformation progress in order to adapt at the modern global context. Besides, it would be more difficult to build a new organization for a new era, than to transform an existing one, which already possess a significant experience. The “Comprehensive Political Guidance” issued in November 2006 provides the political framework and general directions of the ongoing transformation of the Organization.³²

Particularly for the WBSA the Organization has no special policy or a clearly defined scope of engagement. In the Bucharest Summit Declaration in April, the Organization reaffirmed the continued importance of the BS region for the Euro-Atlantic Security. It declared that it will “continue to support the progress in consolidation of regional ownership through effective use of existing initiatives and mechanisms.”³³ In addition, concerns have been expressed about the “regional conflicts” of the region and the support of the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The materialization though of the declared support and concern, remains vague in contrast to the ongoing global missions, where NATO has a clear presence and defined target. On the contrary, one could say that the scope of engagement of the Organization in the WBSA dictates a low profile presence in the region. How else could a security organization survive in a hostile region?

Simultaneously it is debated that NATO seeks from the WBSA a transit corridor to the global hotspots. Afghanistan is the first where NATO has an active role and Middle East follows. The proclaimed “war on terror” can certainly be a serious reason of engagement and since neither the idea nor the Organization hail from the region, is not an easy task to complete. There are no missions of NATO in the ME (the mission of NATO in Iraq is excluded since it is a training mission and not operational). The proximity of the area with its members, is not an element to be neglected. But how is the Organization entangled in the WBSA?

Programmes

NATO began approaching the region after the Cold War. In 1994 initiated the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP) which actually was the bus to give the membership status to the former USSR countries. Most of the countries that joined the PfP then, are members of

³² “Comprehensive Political Guidance”, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b061129e.htm> (accessed May 26th 2008).

³³ “Bucharest Summit Declaration”, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> (accessed May 26th 2008).

NATO today. The PfP provides a bilateral relation framework between the Organization and interested countries (Partner countries). One characteristic of PfP is the ability of each country to define its own priorities for cooperation. By the establishment of the programme, virtually all the countries of the WBSA joined in. It is obvious that Russia was no part of it.

RF, differing from the cases of its former members needed a distinctive approach. As a result in May 2002 the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established. Its purpose is to act as a forum for consultations, consensus building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action on a range of security issues. It includes monthly meetings at levels of ambassadors and military representatives, and twice a year, meetings of Foreign and Defence Ministers and Chiefs of Staff. The Council remains active and the next meeting at the level of MoD will be on 19th of June.

In addition, in November 2002 NATO launched the Individual Partnership Action Plan programme (IPAP). This plan targets to countries that have the political ability and will to deepen their relations with the Organization. Although it might seem similar to the PfP, the IPAP has predefined objectives. It actually gives NATO the ability to provide advice on reform purposes while the PfP is tailored to needs of countries and the pace is chosen by each participating government. In particular, IPAP objectives focus on political and security issues, defence, military issues, public information, science and environment, civil emergency planning, protective security and resource issues.³⁴ The first member from the WBSA to join was Georgia in 2004. In 2005 Armenia and Azerbaijan joined and finally Moldova joined in 2006. Finally, the countries of Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Greece are already members of the Organization.

Presence in the WBSA

It is obvious from the programmes mentioned above that NATO interacts with the WBSA within bilateral programmes. There is no active policy aiming at the area and there is no cooperation with regional initiatives. This places the Organization in an uneasy position concerning its effectiveness of its apparatuses. Despite the fact that Russia, a principal stakeholder, interacts in an institutional way with the Organization, someone could not say that it has reached the desired level. Hence, we should rather talk about the presence of the Organization in the WBSA rather than its interaction.

³⁴ "NATO topics: Individual Partnership Action Plans", <http://www.nato.int/issues/ipap/index.html> (accessed May 26th 2008).

In addition, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have diplomatic missions in NATO. Those aim at political consultations, practical cooperation and participation of those countries in NATO missions. Furthermore, there are the already members of NATO, Bulgaria and Romania where there are no bases of the Organization, but there is frequent presence of military forces for training missions. The interaction with Ukraine gives also the opportunity to the Organization to access the region. It should be mentioned here that NATO cannot intensify its naval presence in the BS. Under the Montreux Convention, naval forces of non-littoral states cannot remain in the BS for more than twenty one days. Turkey, having two identities, firmly supports the Convention and it uses it as the base of any policy and action aiming at the BS.

CHAPTER 4

EFFECTIVENESS OF EU AND NATO

General remarks

Summing up, we have two institutions of the West entangled in the same region. Initiatives and organizations aiming at the WBSA are either domestic or of international origin. The EU and NATO presence in the region is motivated by their distinctive agenda. The EU additionally is on the way to consist a stakeholder of the region, but it cannot be perceived as one yet. It can be perceived though as a western institution. The same case exists for NATO which is an exogenous Organization trying to gain a role in the region. It would be more precise to say that members of the WBSA who try to approach the West, try to approach NATO first. Hence, NATO cannot stay indifferent.

These two institutions are not of the same nature, neither use the same apparatuses. The EU consists a soft power with policies that have the ability to transform countries and regions. Those are based on conditionality and regional cooperation. In addition, the EU has never exercised military might in any region. As a result its legacy does not frighten neither provokes. On the contrary, NATO even after its transformation remains a collective security organization. The use of military power is provisioned in its constitutional charter. The memories from bombing the Balkans are still fresh while in Afghanistan NATO is actually at war. When this Organization approaches the WBSA, it is rational to make several countries suspicious about its agenda that remains unclear. Of course, someone could lay on the declarations of the Summits or on the Comprehensive Political Guidance. Who can fail to notice tangible evidence?

Effectiveness of EU

The context

The EU is a giant and appears like a security pillow. It is a union that many countries would wish to join. The above are not conclusions coming from nowhere because how can someone explain the inclination of the majority of the WBSA to the EU? Is it a coincidence that so many countries wish to join it? Why do not they turn towards the dominant power of the region? Why do they prefer West to the East?

On a personal discussion with Dr Temuri Yakobashvili of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, when asked why Georgia turns to the EU he replied: “Because there is no other option for us.”³⁵ He went on describing the disappointment of his country towards the RF. He gave some examples of manipulation by the side of the RF. The problem of his country with Abkhazia and S. Ossetia was more than a setback for Georgian politics.

This is only one approach. Surely, the RF does not accept the allegations. The problem here is the lack of transparency and reliable information. There is no clear view of the WBSA that is so close to Europe. Two Special Representatives for four conflicts in a region where EU policies are probably unreachable, cannot ensure proper information flow. Of course, the PCA’s framework provides inputs for the EU. One shall not forget that those have expired, even if they are silently continued. In addition, the proclaimed manipulation and interference of RF in the internal affairs of several countries, complicates more the context in which EU has to function.

In this context the EU has managed to affect the area. Maybe not as effectively as someone would wish. However, subtle achievements are not the only ones. There are accomplishments that exist in different levels.

Achievements

In the following paragraphs we will focus on the achievements of the EU in the WBSA. It has to be defined though that the scope will not be the distinctive fields in which the EU interacts. The procedure of interaction differs from the potential that the WBSA acquired. For example free movement of people, transparency, rule of law, state consolidation, and institutional protection are the main fields covered in various EU’s policies. Conditionality though which refers to the willingness of the countries to participate is the power that moves interaction in the aforementioned fields. This is an achievement not mentioned and mechanisms of enforcement do not exist.

The enlargement policy of the EU towards the East was a major element of the effectiveness of the EU’s policy towards the WBSA. After the fifth enlargement, many countries felt that they could be the next members of the EU. Except Russia and Azerbaijan, all other countries of the WBSA have expressed their European aspirations. The EU can offer and aid new member countries in various fields. The freedom of movement of people, goods,

³⁵ Temuri Yakobashvili, discussion with the writer, 16 June 2007.

services and capital, are among the very first substantial achievements that EU offers. However, these consist only the beginning of the European transformation process.

Countries that wish to join undergo transformations in various fields of EU's interest. Dr Yakobashvili states: "If we comply with the european "acquis communautaire" why shouldn't EU accept us?"³⁶ It is obvious that the EU acts as a magnet for countries. It gives them a discreet orientation concerning their political, economic and social future. Those are fields that determine the prospect of each country. Besides, there are numerous paradigms of countries that gained growth after joining the EU. This also happened to countries that joined other programs, initiatives and policies of the EU. A brief look at the countries of Eastern Europe is more than convincing.

The EU also adds to the cooperation. The specific procedure is a necessary tool that boosts the development of countries. An isolated state stands no chance to survive, no matter what its resources are. Since the area was under the control of the former USSR, in the post-bipolar world the cooperation procedure between them and other countries needed to be reformed. The reform of the cooperation did not happen only in the bilateral relations of the countries. Some organizations were built on the european framework of cooperation. This means that their function was similar to the interests of the EU. The BSEC is a characteristic example of a regional organization for economic cooperation. Someone should not forget that the EU hails from the European Economic Community, or the once called "Common Market". EU acted like a starting reference point.

Equally important is the fact of stability. The WBSA surely faces security challenges, with an outcome still unknown. Particularly, for the frozen conflicts the EU has stated repeatedly its support for state integrity. The interesting point here is that there has not been a serious military incident. Several episodes may have occurred, but none of them ended in a prolonged armed conflict. This shall be attributed to the soft power of the EU. It is difficult to abandon an evolving and promising environment. While one side calls for independence and uses weapons, the other side despite the possession of a more organized army has not resorted to war. This element is common for all three states involved in those conflicts.

Furthermore, stability is not translated in terms of military conflict. It also refers to political and social stability. The political life has been more stable than it used to be in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR. Of course there have been tensions and challenges, but the democratic character in terms of political institutions that the WBSA develops, is

³⁶ Ibid.

praiseworthy. Democratic elections in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Turkey can prove it. All the above have European orientation. In Armenia, elections met international standards³⁷, which was a positive development.

At this point, we cannot neglect the case of the RF. This refers to the recent change of role of V. Putin. Someone could say that it is an autocratic behaviour, since he manages to retain power by swapping roles. There is a different approach though. Since 1991, only two presidents had stepped down. Those were M. Gorbachev in 1991 since the state he presided was disbanded and B. Yeltsin in 1993 due to his physical condition.³⁸ The case of Putin is different. He stepped down because of the procedure mandated by the constitution. It was an easy task for him to change it but he preferred though Russia to be treated as a civilised European nation.³⁹ In this way he would be considered as a democratic leader and reformer, and Russia would narrow the gap with the West, in political values.

As a result, political and social stability leads to democratic experience. The latter is not an easy task to complete, especially in regimes like the WBSA. European and Atlantic experience in this field, counts many years of practise. On the other hand, the WBSA counts only sixteen years. As a result, democratic institutions cannot develop in the pace that would do if they were applied in countries of the West. The political and economic reforms though, are a positive signal. The development makes people to trust and believe in institutions that originate from the West. The understanding of democracy is attributed to the West, and a great share belongs to the EU with its applied policies.

On this occasion, we shall present an idea that was proposed in the Socialist's Group in the European Parliament late this May. The idea presented , was the creation of the "Union for the Black Sea".⁴⁰ The speakers stressed that the cooperation in the region should go beyond strengthening relations with the EU. There was a reference to "find common solutions for the problems facing the region". It included environmental, migration and security issues. The involvement though of Russia and Turkey considered to be a determinant. It is a proposal that aims at further cooperation and includes all BS countries. This means that EU encourages new regional initiatives. Even a Euro-scepticist cannot

³⁷ OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report, "Republic of Armenia, Parliamentary Elections 12 May 2007", http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdf/html/26169_en.pdf.html (accessed 31st May 2008).

³⁸ Arbatova, 17.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "European Socialists propose Union for the Black Sea", <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=143402> (accessed 31st May 2008).

overlook that the EU provides forums in which new proposals, initiatives and organizations can be created.

Moreover the EU provides the framework for innovation, cooperation and development. It is not viewed as a zero sum policy. The interaction of local representatives with the EU countries and its institutions functions as a feedback. It is not only the framework of rules and norms of various EU policies. It is the subtle paradigm that is viewed in EU's countries. It is the knowledge of countries that have acquired the experience to tackle their challenges, whatever these could be.

The last but not least achievement of the EU in the WBSA is the perspective it has given to these countries. It has to be defined here that perspective is not membership and the latter shall not be viewed as an ultimate goal. The perspective that EU has offered refers to the chance of the countries to leave back a system that proved to be inadequate to offer them prosperity, stability and development. It refers to the hope that countries will move forward following a proven effective structure. This is necessary, not only, for people and their countries but for the global system too. The creation of regions that have different speed of development will probably generate new dividing lines. This is more important for regions of geographical proximity. Besides, a cell that expands not by force but by the willingness of countries, definitely creates strong pillars. Or at least stronger than trying to impose forcefully policies and institutions. Experience still proves it.

Effectiveness of NATO

The context

The case of NATO effectiveness in the WBSA is ambiguous. A collective security organization trying to entangle in the region is suspicious. Of course the organization is undergoing reform, as stated previously. It is the legacy though, that follows the organization. The past of NATO is acknowledged while in the present bipolar world has become unclear. The bombings of the last decade are hard to forget. The reason usually fades, and what remains is the aftermath of the actions. Looking at the present NATO we see that it has a hard power character. No one can deny that the organization is at war in Afghanistan. So what about the future of the NATO? Which or what is going to be its next target? How can someone place a non regional security organization in the territory of a former enemy (even if the latter no longer exists)? What about the "former enemy" and its successors? Is it the right time for NATO to approach the region effectively? Is it possible?

One also should not forget about Turkey which after the cold war became an evolving and important power in the WBSA with its role reinforced after 11th September 2001. Although it is a NATO member, Turkey does not view positively on NATO's appearance in the WBSA. Using the Montreux Convention as a framework, it does not accept agreements and cooperation that can pose a threat to the hard security of the area. Maybe it is a diplomatic tool that Turkey holds opposite to the USA. The last serious incident between NATO and Turkey concerning Iraq and Article no.5 of the Alliance is still fresh. RF also, for military balance purposes opposes any NATO appearance in the BS.

Many questions arise concerning the effectiveness and scope of NATO in the WBSA. In this context, we shall add the emerging power of RF. Not only, the past of the RF, is non compatible with the co-existence of NATO in the area, but its present also. Not to mention here the existence of CSTO and the territories who wish to join RF. It is a complicated occasion that needs special attention. On the other hand now, NATO's existence in the WBSA has not been completely fruitless.

Achievements

NATO has acted as an antechamber for EU accession. It is not formally stated in any document, though experience of the 5th enlargement of the EU proved it. It provided the framework for the initial reform of countries. It foreran the cooperation and reforming framework that would follow. The initial experience that countries acquired in Western Institutions helped them in their EU's accession. This procedure though created a gap between reality and expectations. Countries believed that NATO's membership would lead them in EU's accession.

Despite this misinterpretation of the role of NATO, the PfP programme gave the opportunity for Partner Countries to develop initiatives concerning their own interests. It was a method that helped the countries to look inside and prioritize their areas of consideration in the fields that the PfP offered. In addition, the IPAP acted as a second step to provide a ready framework for interaction and cooperation. Countries had to adapt to it. In this way, they cooperated in preset fields. This can be viewed as a learning procedure of cooperation in fields of mutual interest. It was a formula teaching through collectivistic approach that all members had considerations and priorities and the common ones were bolstered.

The endeavour to mitigate the relations with RF, is also an effort to mention. It is a sign, pointing that hostility no longer exists between participants. The interaction between them assists the transparency. Therefore misperceptions can be avoided and effectively settled.

Even if the cooperation has not reached desired levels, still remains a positive development. A more tangible achievement though, is that of the access in Afghanistan. NATO, by cooperating in various ways with the region (members, partners), has managed to provide air support to troops in Afghanistan. Additionally some countries of the BS provide troops to the Organization for the international missions. There seems to be an interaction between NATO and Partner countries, in exchange to gain the membership.

Evaluation

General

The difference between these two institutions is obvious. On one side, there is the soft political and economic power of the EU, while on the other there is the might of a collective security organization. The effectiveness of both would have been different, if they did not operate in the WBSA. Not only the nature of institutions but the context as well, affects the influence of them. While the EU is generally accepted in the region, NATO is seen as an exogenous and unpredictable Organization. If the EU had developed a common foreign policy and an army, reality would have been different. If the so debated ESDP had been further than St Petersburg tasks, would probably have changed the character of EU and the influence of Western Institutions in the WBSA.

Effectiveness is connected to the role and the EU's role and scope is stability in the region. The Union is armed with economic power. Harder security matters cannot be tackled by the present shape of the EU. At least not in a direct way. Financing countries and proper organizations would be a more effective approach. Even in the future in which ESDP will evolve, it would be advisable not to enter fields of armed confrontation. Crisis management is what ESDP should stay on.

On the other hand, NATO is probably the most appropriate institution to engage in hard security matters. While it uses almost the same armed forces with the EU, the label is different. How many people recall Holland in the siege of Srebrenica and not NATO? The slip was directed to NATO and not to EU, or the Dutch troops. The challenge is how to adapt in the WBSA. The recent failure of Ukraine and Georgia to receive Membership Action Plans (MAP) proved that the Organization did not want to confront RF⁴¹. Article no.5 of NATO, frozen conflicts and CSTO can become a dangerous combination. As a result, even if NATO

⁴¹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, comment on "The Wider Black Sea Area and its Challenges", The Dimitrios World Blog, comment posted May 12, 2008, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com> (accessed June 1st, 2008).

is the most appropriate institution to engage in such matters, the distinct character of the WBSA makes it a difficult task. An indirect action of the EU would probably be more effective.

EU and NATO in the WBSA.

As a result, it is estimated that NATO under its current form could not entangle effectively in the WBSA. The Organization has no policy for the issues and challenges of the region. What can NATO do for the environment except an inauguration? Is it possible to deal with energy security matters in the region of RF? Can it add to the political issues? The only possibility is to entangle in the frozen conflicts by providing a police mission. It would surely find the opposition of Russia, CSTO and probably of other factors that are likely to be hidden now. Also, articles of both security organizations provision collective action in case of an attack, and there is no definition what a country will perceive as an attack. A simple police mission can easily entangle in fire exchange. This fact in combination with the suspiciousness would cause more trouble.

If NATO wants to cause no harm to the WBSA, it can be used as a think tank. There is no doubt that the Organization possesses significant experience. Police missions, strategic planning, crisis management, armed conflicts, training missions, airlift capability and other functions of the Organization can prove to be an effective aid towards the region. Turkey also, being a member to the Organization and a principal stakeholder in the WBSA, would be more satisfied to deal with an institution that can directly affect and participate in the decision-making mechanism. This function of NATO, needs a supporting platform.

The key would be cooperation with the EU where the “effective use of existing initiatives and mechanisms” could then become successful. The cooperation framework between EU and NATO already exists. The acknowledgment of EU’s development of an autonomous decision making capacity for military actions “where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged” was decided in NATO’s Washington Summit 1999. Additionally the Berlin Plus Agreement of 2003 provides the framework for the use of NATO forces, logistics and infrastructure by the EU. Then, a common agenda, strategy and an effective approach needs to be defined. The EU could approach the WBSA and its frozen conflicts by using NATO rigging. The EU’s acceptance by all countries of WBSA could be more effective in the case of frozen conflicts. Since NATO cannot enter this field, it could provide suggestions and predictions to the EU.

Moreover, the EU has ready solutions for the majority of challenges in the WBSA. Further reform of policies and tools is not immediately required in order to adapt in the area.

What it needs, are interaction mechanisms and prevention of overlapping. Not only to receive information from the region in order to improve its policies, but to promote its mission and scope there. Formal political institutes can be deceiving in some occasions. NGOs funded by the EU can prove to be a very effective tool. Those accentuate problems and challenges that sometimes are not visible on the formal announcements. The EU is overall rigged with the right tools for all challenges depicted in Chapter Two. Every single challenge has an ongoing policy. Some of them may appear to be ineffective, but those policies are not completed yet.

To what the EU should pay attention first is, the institutional overlapping and second, is the “europeanization” procedure. The first refers to initiatives and institutions having almost the same members and working on similar fields. It is loss of economic funds and think tank power. The effectiveness of them is lost and the impression of the people is misleading. This happens since overlapping institutions give the impression of too much work without an outcome. In addition, if some institutions and initiatives fade, they have to end. The procedure though demands that the overlapping function of them has to be pointed out.

The second procedure of “europeanization” is probably more serious since it might affect the scope of the EU and the potential of the region. The term refers to the desire of countries to become members or to completely aspire norms of the EU. The problem is that, placing the centre of gravity in the EU and not in their neighbour, it can affect the regional character of the area. In addition, the excluded countries from the accession procedure would try to find another pillar, and that would make the situation worse. The danger of a new dividing line is possible, and this would amplify the suspiciousness of the RF. The EU then could be perceived as a non-stabilizing factor and the confrontation with the RF would be imminent.

Equally important is the effect of “europeanization” on regional cooperation. If the latter is neglected or misinterpreted, countries of the WBSA can end up in antagonism. They would put themselves in a racetrack with prize to gain EU’s membership. Regional initiatives, organizations and institutions would become dysfunctional and the regional identity that is slowly advancing would perish. A WBSA running to the West would be catastrophic for the region and for all neighbouring territories. The institutional approach of Western Institutions in the WBSA should be a win-win situation and this point has to be clearly defined to the region.

As a result, the EU has to be very cautious with any reform of policies. The message should be clear and repeated in case that it is not understood. Accession procedure is different from reinforced cooperation. The growing interest of the EU in the WBSA must not be misunderstood. The reform of policies is used to better adapt those in the context of the

WBSA and will help to the building of regional identity. Although there are already many bilateral agreements between the EU and WBSA, it is the time to view the region as an entity. The ongoing cooperation with regional organizations is a good starting point. And the weight should be transferred from bilateral agreements to institutional cooperation.

This is not a suggestion that supports the formation of a BS Union. Although it has been proposed, the region is not ready yet. It is a proposal for further cooperation with local initiatives. The EU – BSEC interaction is a positive development. In this way, the region is viewed as an entity. The cooperation of a Western Institution with a local Organization, helps the building of regional identity. In addition, there is the proof that the WBSA developed a fruitful initiative which interacts with an successful institution that is widely accepted in the region.

The same interaction of EU with GUAM or the CIS would probably not have the same outcome. None of both initiatives includes all the members of the WBSA. Furthermore, their future is uncertain and the commitment of the members is under question. There is no active policy or plan of the EU to interact with any of these two organizations. Although GUAM had stated its interest in deepening relations with the EU⁴² there was no response. In addition, further cooperation of EU with GUAM would send wrong messages since it consists of countries that want to join the EU. Moreover, someone can perceive it as an “elite” group and this fact will have no positive results for the WBSA. Although the case of CIS would have been an interesting case for further cooperation with the EU, the fact that it has turned to security matters make further interaction impossible. Region building requires economic development and this is based on economic cooperation initially.

The CSTO interaction with the EU is out of the scope and would have no meaning. CSTO is a security organization, and that makes it similar to the CIS. As a result, no cooperation can be formed with the Organization.

⁴² “GUAM - United States Joint Statement Kyiv, May 22-23, 2006”, <http://www.guam.org.ua/226.605.0.0.1.0.phtml> (accessed June 2nd 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

In the contemporary context of the WBSA, variables are changing progressively. Those include political and economic reformations. And one should not forget about the challenges. The latter include various issues. In this context different institutions and organizations meet. Some of them belong to the region, and other are exogenous viewing the region under their own distinctive interests. The coexistence is not an easy task. Some regional actors are considered as principal stakeholders, meaning that they should approve every policy aiming at the region. The Western institutions of EU and NATO are present in the WBSA and act as poles. Their approach to the region is different but not clashing.

The EU has a clear policy; In brief, it can be described as cooperation under the principle of conditionality. Many countries have chosen either to join or to aspire those standards. It is obvious that the EU's approach to the region makes no harm and does not provoke any side. It brings reform in a steady pace, even if this is not going as fast as someone would wish. The soft power of EU and the attraction it appeals, adds to the building of regional identity of the area. An example is the regional initiatives that arose from the WBSA and have their scope to interact with the EU.

Additionally the EU has a clear agenda. It has pointed out the main challenges of the area and plans and implements specific designed policies. Those are characterized by an interaction and feedback procedure. Economic assistance tools have been reformed and applied in a more flexible way. The relations with regional initiatives are also placed on a new base. This fact makes EU a trustworthy partner. Dependability is combined with the harmless past of the Union and the prosperous future that offers to countries cooperating with it. The only setback is, the false expectations with the reality gap, that creates. This is due to the willing of the countries to join the Union and receive certain policies as pre-accession procedures.

On the other hand, NATO is not perceived in the same manner by the WBSA. Its unclear policy and ambiguous agenda add to the past and present of the organization. The outcome is suspiciousness by principal stakeholders. An organization or initiative that has not the support of RF and Turkey in the WBSA is more likely to fail, and NATO provokes both of them. It will be difficult to interact effectively in the region, no matter what its intentions are. The reference to the frozen conflicts in the Bucharest Summit under these circumstances can

only reinforce the existing doubts about its true reasons of engagement. The NATO in the WBSA is viewed as the footstep of USA in the region. The only reason probably that adds to the acceptance NATO is the 5th enlargement of the EU which included NATO members. Furthermore, NATO membership is connected erroneously to EU membership. The Organization would create serious risk, especially concerning the case of the frozen conflicts in the area. As for the rest challenges of the region, NATO lacks the capability of an effective approach.

Quite different from the approach of those Western Institutions in the WBSA, one could not ignore the role and interests of the RF. Although it is often criticised, it is hard to judge a state of sixteen years old and compare it with western prototypes. The comparison becomes more unfair if we consider the legacy of RF and the deep state that exists and is probably difficult to tackle. Maybe there are new possibilities of cooperation concerning the RF but more time is required in order to see them become effective. The approach of RF should be viewed in a new basis and without suspiciousness. The appropriate institution to review this basis, is the EU.

This analysis target is not only to study the effectiveness of EU and NATO in the WBSA but to point the important role of principal stakeholders and the European aspirations of several countries as well. One essential aim is to highlight the importance, for EU and NATO, to become acceptable to regional stakeholders. Since NATO cannot become accepted, it can effectively cooperate with the EU, and give useful experience. In a further expansion of this dissertation, someone could study the approach of RF to the West, and particularly the EU, so that the interaction of WBSA and Western Institutions could become more effective. This would give a new perspective and would help transparency to be achieved without any unfavourable effects and results.

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