

International PhD Program in International Relations

Black Sea Region: Internal and External Regional Conceptions and
Their Reflections in Regional Dynamics

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Preface

I declare that, except where otherwise stated, this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others. No part of this dissertation has been submitted to any other University for a degree, or a diploma or a qualification.

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Introduction

Discussions about the Black Sea region have been taking place for decades. Hard and soft security challenges of the given area, energy routes crossing the Black Sea region, building and strengthening the cultural ties among different littoral states and their neighbors represent only the incomplete list of topics actively debated by IR scholars and practitioners in the field of foreign politics. Those analyses rarely question the existence of the region, rather perceiving it as a single entity with particular characteristics to be further assessed. Unlike the majority of the research on the Black Sea region, given PhD thesis is an attempt to argue that there is no clear evidence showing the coalescence of the Black Sea region, not even among the coastal countries.

Research Problem

The Black Sea region has developed into a fashionable topic in the field of political science and practice in the last decade or so. It has become trendy to write and talk about the area which sits at the cross-roads of different cultures, civilizations, and political and economic worldviews. However, very few scholarly works or policy analyses could unpack in a comprehensive manner the internal and external conceptions of the Black Sea region, thus revealing its true significance/importance/character.

Different scholars and practitioners consider the economic, security, political and environmental developments around the Black Sea area often to be triggered by specific interests or conflictual intentions of key powers (e.g. Russia, Turkey, US, EU). Since 2007 – a year marking Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession to EU membership, which made the EU a direct neighbor of the Black Sea area – various Transatlantic and European Union perspectives about the Black Sea area have been drafted and argued about within the framework of different formats. The European Commission has been allocating its resources to issue communications about the Black Sea region, revealing the organizational conception towards its southeastern neighborhood. Numerous international and regional conferences (some of which were of transatlantic nature), unifying various think tanks, independent experts, governmental and university representatives as well as NGOs, have been held to

dedicate time and energy to setting agendas for the development of the Black Sea region.¹ Frequently different countries of the Black Sea coastline and its neighborhood were unified under the umbrella of the Black Sea regional initiatives without any specific set of criteria applied or valid explanations provided to why this group of states makes the cut and not the other.

Majority of this scholarly and practical work is *about and/or towards* different groupings of the countries in the Black Sea basin and its surroundings often labelled as a region. But despite all those policy documents, communications, reports and conference papers, there still is no clear understanding of the internal and external perceptions of the so called Black Sea region. Without clarity in this respect, political agendas will end up being misleading and even the scholarly work around Black Sea region might be deficient.

Brief Overview of the Studies That Address the Black Sea Area

Only a very small portion of the scholarly work around the Black Sea area is focused on unpacking its real essence both from inside and outside perspectives. Political scientists are mainly divided into two major groups: a) *those who study various dynamics around the Black Sea region, taking its regionness as a fact or as a part of the given reality, and b) those who believe that the Black Sea area is not a region, but still study different processes around it, taking the Black Sea area more as a tool of analysis, providing a context for studies.* However, in the majority of cases, both scientific works are focused on *meta-analysis* with either of the below listed as a key driver of interest:

- discussing the impact of the (frozen) conflicts (Abkhazia, South Ossethia, Karabakh) on the relationships among several Black Sea countries;
- describing the energy routes (both existing and possible ones) crossing the so called wider Black Sea area linking east and west;
- discussing interests of the big powers such as the EU, the United States, Turkey, and Russia in the area

¹ Center for European Policy Studies working document #297/July 2008 by Michael Emerson on the EU's Black Sea Policy, Black Sea Synergy Document of the EU, meetings and follow up reports on the Black Sea region generated with the strong support of the German Marshall Fund as well as the Centre for Transatlantic Studies at the Johns Hopkins University, DC is only a very small list verifying the interest and dynamics towards the Black Sea region

- describing and assessing the efficiency of various Black Sea related initiatives of the European Union (such as Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership)

In the majority of cases, Black Sea region is presented and analyzed as a geopolitical entity within the framework of which policy interests are studied.

Deficiencies in the Existing Studies of the Black Sea Region

While the scholarly work around the Black Sea region provides enough information about the needs and interests of the regional and global powers in this area, as well as well describes the security aspects of the regional dynamics, including the regional conflicts and energy routes (that at the end of the day can anyway be equaled to the big power interests), what is missing is the study of how the Black Sea region is conceived by the littoral states, US and EU and how the inside and outside conceptions of the Black Sea region are reflected in the intra-regional dynamics.

Understanding the US and EU strategic intentions towards the Black Sea region, being aware of why and how Russia and Turkey want to benefit from this area or what the new and old security challenges are in the Black Sea basin is useful but insufficient. Neither of the aforementioned aspects provides us with a solid understanding of what the Black Sea region stands for intra-regionally and outside its borders. Accordingly, there is a need to conduct additional research that will be primarily focused not just on security aspects or interests of key stakeholders, but it will aim at exploring the insiders' conception of the Black Sea region and how (if at all) it differs from the outsiders conception of it. More scientific evidence needs to be accumulated to judge whether there is any clear and specific conception of the Black Sea region intra-regionally, how the Black Sea basin countries perceive this area, and how it is reflected in their strategic political and economic thinking and actions. In other words, do they see it as a coherent distinctive social space, a region? Same would apply to some key external parties, mainly the US and the EU. All this goes beyond the awareness of conflicting interests and intentions of different players. It gives more clarity about the Black Sea as an experiential social construct generated in the political minds of the Black Sea basin countries and their close or far neighbors.

Significance of the Given Study

Conducting this research is important for numerous reasons. First of all various groups (e.g. IR students, practitioners from the littoral states working in the area of foreign politics, researchers interested in the regional dynamics in general etc.) of can benefit from its findings. It will also try to fill in the existing scholarly gaps. More rationale about the goals of the study and its general significance is presented below:

- we will fill in the scientific gap by exploring the internal and external conceptions of the Black Sea region; in other words, we will examine if there exists a specific Black Sea regional perception among the Black Sea littoral countries and outside players like the US and EU;
 - such information will help to better understand if there is any commonality and/or mismatch in the conceptions of the Black Sea region of outsiders and insiders; this information will be helpful in further drawing these two parties closer by building better collaboration ties;
 - Clarity and specificity of the perceptions of the Black Sea region among the Black Sea littoral states will help their governments to better understand the regional gaps and needs and thus set their foreign policy agendas accordingly.
 - findings of the given research will also be beneficial for the EU as it will have better evidence based on which more efficient foreign policy agenda can be set towards its eastern neighborhood.
 - This research will provide a historical account of the formation of the Black Sea area, which in turn will help us to understand the relationships inside of it, as well as between its member states and outside partners. If so, it may also prove to be useful in assessing the possible developments and transformations of the area.
 - Having in mind that the Black Sea region (however it might be defined) represents the hub of the states which at the same time are believed to belong to several regions like Mediterranean, Balkans, and the EU, then this research may help to provide some added value to the understanding of the dynamics inside those other regions.
 - The given research will also be beneficial for the scholars and practitioners of the discipline of International Relations, especially those who represent the Black Sea area and/or who are specifically interested in case studies of regionalism and region building.
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- This research will also provide a helpful opportunity to better understand the dynamics of the countries we live in and at the same time understand our neighbors.

The Purpose Statement and the Research Questions of the Given Study

This is an empirical study applying the bottom up approach within the framework of which our intent is to discover existing regional perceptions (if there are any) of the Black Sea area – something we call the conception of the region. We also want to understand how the presence of any of those regional conceptions, as well as the way they are shaped (if present), influence the intra-regional dynamics among the Black Sea littoral states. We want to unpack the socially constructed conceptions of the Black Sea region of insiders (littoral states), as well as outsiders (US and EU), and explore how those regional perceptions were reflected in the relationships among the coastal countries. It will also be interesting to see whether there are any similarities and/or differences in the regional perceptions of the insiders and outsiders.

Overall, this research will try to provide answers to these three central questions:

- 1. How is the Black Sea region conceived by the littoral states?*
- 2. How is the Black Sea region conceived by the US and EU?*
- 3. How are the inside and outside conceptions of the Black Sea region reflected in the intra-regional dynamics?*

Operationalization of key terms:

a) conception of the Black Sea region – When talking about the ‘conception of the Black Sea region’ we mean the presence of a concrete, specific perception of the area around the Black Sea as a single entity (not just a simple sum of certain states); it should be reflected in the particular state’s foreign policy agenda and might be part of the self-understanding of a respective nation presented in that country’s declared goals and roles outside its national borders; the conception of the Black Sea region must be clear about what countries it consists of, as well as what role and mission it has; we will try to unpack the individual littoral countries’ conceptions as well as discover those of the United States of America and European Union.

b) Littoral states – The six countries (Georgia², Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania) that share the Black Sea coastline are perceived to be insiders. We will be examining their understanding of the conception of the Black Sea region. Focusing on the littoral states is believed to be the most optimal approach for this study, because it raises neither concerns nor questions as to why particular states were selected for the research and not the others.³

c) Intra-regional dynamics – by “intra-regional dynamics” we mean the concrete relationships among the Black Sea littoral states; In the framework of these dynamics, we will examine particular flows: direction of trade, financial flows in the form of the FDI, and human flows reflected in different migration trends and movements of tourists; we will try to compare the intra-regional dynamics within each of those areas with the relationships of the region and the outside world towards the same area; that way, we will be able to see if those dynamics are stronger among the Black Sea littoral states or with the outside world; this will also be a good opportunity to see if the conception of the region and those intra- or inter-regional trends align with each other;

d) Coalescence __ under this term we mean a state of being among the Black Sea littoral states when their unity forms some community the dynamics within which are stronger than those of the littoral states and the outside world; this will be analyzed on the basis of the financial and human flows making a comparison of intra-regional dynamics with those of the littoral states and other countries beyond the region.

Brief Overview and the Structure of the Given Study

The given research will proceed in several directions, with each of them reflected in its respective chapter:

² Abkhazia is considered part of Georgia by the researcher, accordingly we don't make it part of this research as a stand alone independent Black Sea littoral state

³ There has not yet been reached an agreement on which countries should be included into the Black Sea region. Black Sea Synergy and Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation talk about different group of states; idea of the wider Black Sea region discussed by Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program further contributes to the complexity.

Chapter One: a Theoretical Overview of Regionalism – while this research does not take a theory-testing approach, we believe that it is important to represent the whole spectrum of theoretical perspectives around the region building process, its transformation and institutionalization; we will also be defining and making use of the diversity and richness of terms around regionalism. The overall purpose of all this is the following: to better explain why we will not suggest a specific definition of the concept of a region, elaborated on the basis of international relations literature, or adopt one of the existing definitions. We will analyze the problems related to the pluralism of existing theories and the vagueness, diversity, and the contradictory character of the definitions they offer.

Chapter Two: the External Players – here we will try to uncover the perception of the Black Sea region from the viewpoint of the US and the EU foreign policies. In order to do so, we will examine the national security concepts of various years of the United States of America in the case of Washington, and Black Sea Synergy (BSS) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiatives in the case of the European Union. A brief historical overview, covering important events such as the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to EU membership, and the 9/11 tragedy, will help to further understand how these players perceive the Black Sea region and how different events influence their policies and general attitudes towards the region.. We will be studying the efficiency, consistency and clarity of the Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership initiatives to better understand how clearly they formulate the EU's conception of the Black Sea region.

Chapter Three: the Internal Players – his chapter will try to group the Black Sea littoral states according to common characteristic: a) Turkey and Russia will be analyzed as the regional powers. We will analyze their MFA structures and certain foreign policy documents to understand what type of conception they have towards the Black Sea region; b) Romania and Bulgaria will be analyzed as EU member states playing a role in the promotion and implementation of the Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership programs. We will try to discover if their conception of the Black Sea region has changed since their EU membership, and if yes, how? c) We will analyze the MFA structures of Georgia and Ukraine to see if Black Sea regional affairs play a role in determining their foreign policy. We will also study different security concepts and national interests through different official sources to understand the role the Black Sea region plays in these affairs. Again, a special attention will

be devoted throughout the chapter to the clarity, consistency and specificity of the conception of the Black Sea of insiders and outsiders.

Chapters Four and Five on Flows – after outlining the regional conceptions of the individual Black Sea littoral states, as well as those of the EU and the US, as a next step we will try to understand if there is any correlation between those conceptions (whatever they are) and the intraregional dynamics. In other words, we will try to see if those conceptions are reflected in the regional and international actions of the coastal countries inside and outside of the region. The best way to do it is to let the numbers speak. In this regard, we will be analyzing empirical data on the direction of trade: both the directions of FDI and the human flows, be it tourism or migration. We will try to compare these intraregional dynamics with the dynamics of the region with the outside world, to see which one is stronger. We believe that this will give us an opportunity to assess the impact of the conceptions of the Black Sea region on the regional and international activism of the littoral countries.

Throughout the text we will actively use the term region, however it will simply refer to the 6 Black Sea littoral states as a group and will represent a tool of analysis, rather than a unit of analysis which might need a special definition of its own. Considering that this study is not trying to argue whether the Black Sea area is a region or not, we believe that there is no need to agree on a specific definition of the concept, which would lay the foundation for the ensuing analysis.

For some it might seem a bit strange that no separate chapter is dedicated to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Most of the existing literature on this topic is a description of the organizational structure or its inefficiency, with a very little or no focus on its role in the Black Sea region building. The Executive Manager responsible for the BSEC's relations with international and regional organizations, including the EU and UNDP, Mr. Nikolaos Emirzas, in his interview to a researcher of this study stated that the BSEC could not play a role of the institutional foundation of the Black Sea region. It could more be perceived as ‘‘a middle man between the existing main gravity points, which is the European Union on the one side and Russia on the other with Turkey leaning, ... let's say the intermediate planet between these two bigger ones.’’⁴ A former senior official at the BSEC and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) also considered the BSEC as an

⁴ For more details, please, see the interview with Mr. Emirzas in the Annex 1 of this research

inefficient organization staying alive mainly because its existence does not harm anyone.⁵ All this led us to the decision that a simple descriptive narrative on this regional entity would not contribute to the provision of answers to the set research questions. Only brief analyses of the BSEC vis a vis the initial agreement to create the centre of statistics which would collect and analyze the BSEC states' data on became a part of the Chapter 4.

Theoretical Framework

In the field of qualitative research there are four different variations of theory usage. The first way, implies the application of a selected theory to any given study in order to provide some broad explanation of behaviors and attitudes, using variables and testing hypotheses.⁶ In the second case, the theoretical perspectives are used as a guide, orienting a scholar on his journey of finding the answers to various research questions.⁷ In the third case, the theory becomes more of an end result of an inductive research process, which made it possible to transform the analysis of the data into some sort of a generalized model or a theory.⁸ In the last, fourth, case scholars do not employ any specific theory to their research; rather they try to build a rich and detailed description of the central phenomenon.⁹ Some scholars argue that no qualitative study can begin from a pure observation; some sort of a conceptual structure always provides the starting point of any kind of scholarly work.¹⁰ Within the framework of the given research we take a stance of the fourth approach.

Like many other qualitative researches, the given study does not aim at testing any kind of a theory. Nor will it engage in building an intermediate theory of its own. We will try to confine our analysis to address the central phenomenon of the research: the different conceptions of the Black Sea region and its implications on intra-regional dynamics. However, we would still like to briefly point out two major frameworks that pushed our initial thinking and influenced the entire study.

As mentioned before, we will be trying to analyze the perceptions of the Black Sea region from the insider's point of view, as well as from the perspective of the outsider. Exploration

⁵ For more details, please, see the interview in the Annex 2 of this research

⁶ Creswell John W. (2009) *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Los Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapore: Sage, p. 61

⁷ Ibid. p. 62

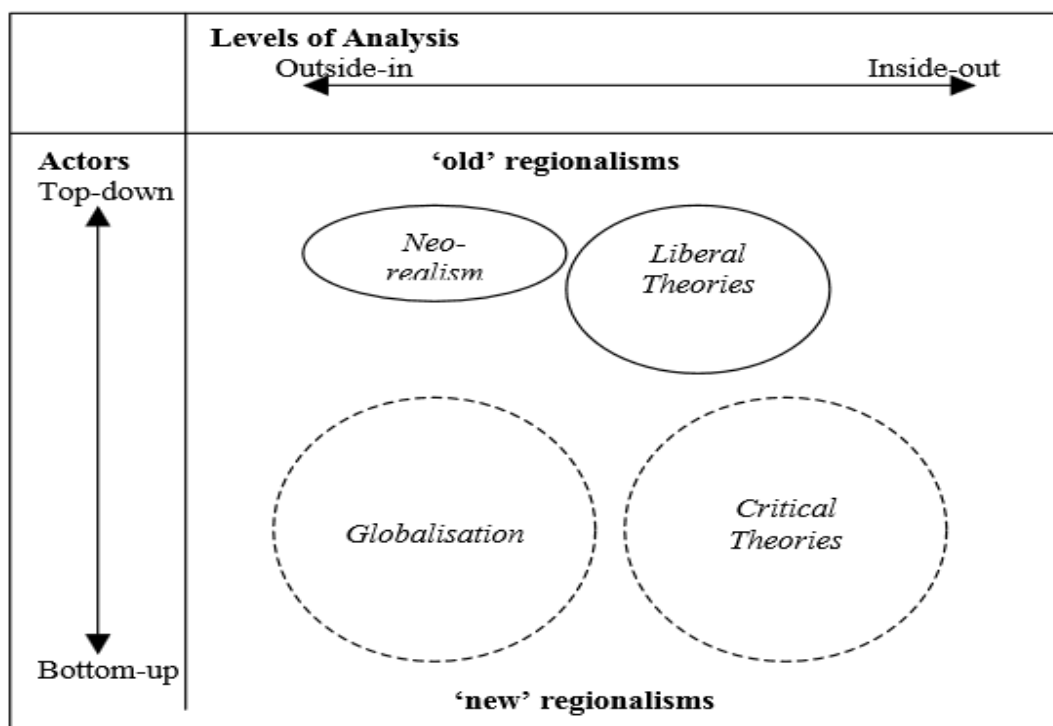
⁸ Ibid. p. 63

⁹ Ibid. p. 64

¹⁰ Ibid.

of the intra-regional dynamics, relationships of the littoral states to one another, as well as with the outside world, will be one of the key directions of our study. The influence of constructivism is noticeable in our approach. Constructivism affirms that regions, as well as any other form of institutions or structures, are the outcomes of reciprocal interactions, because structure depends on the process of interactions between states, during which actors define their interests while defining situations.¹¹ As part of this research we will be analyzing the interaction among the states trying to understand how this process reveals the regional perceptions of the Black Sea. It is important to keep in mind that we do not aim to test the constructivist theory on the basis of a case study of the Black Sea region. . Constructivism appears to be a guiding tool for us, rather than a theory we are trying to prove.

Our goal of unpacking the regional conceptions of the external and internal players and exploring their implications on the intra-regional dynamics somewhat resembles the bi-dimensional matrix about the different forms of regionalism, presented by Tassinari and shared below.¹²



¹¹ Wendt Alexander Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics, *International Organizations*, Vol. 46, No 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391-425, p. 398

¹² Fabrizio Tassinari: *Mare Europaeum: Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to Post-Enlargement Europe*, Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen, 2004 (PhD Dissertation)
<http://www.publications.fabriziotassinari.net> (last accessed on September 12, 2014 at 6:54 pm Georgia time)
 pp.32-33

However, as in the case of constructivism, this framework only provided an initial push which helped us in shaping the goals of the study, which, in turn, does not aim to test any of the existing theoretical perspectives.

Research Paradigm

A paradigm, or a worldview, is a set, or a framework, of ideas, beliefs and values that shape and guide our inquiries.¹³ Selection of the right paradigm is extremely important for leading the research process in a coherent and meaningful way.¹⁴ It reflects the way we understand the reality (ontology), how we gain the knowledge about what we are aware of (epistemology), and the role of values we apply to our surroundings (axiology). It also affects our choice of a particular strategy of research (methodology), as well as the choice of language we use in our study (rhetoric).

Within the framework of the given research, we believe that the *social constructivist worldview*,¹⁵ in combination with the *interpretivist*¹⁶ perspective, provides the best answers to the challenges and the imperatives of our study. Those paradigms hold the assumptions that meanings of different experiences, as well as of different phenomena and concepts, are constructed as a result of our engagement with the world (with other individuals, organizations, institutions, countries, etc.), which are then also interpreted. In other words, the process or the reality that the researcher might want to study is constructed through socially and experientially developed understandings and perceptions. What also needs to be considered in this particular case is that the attempts of making sense of the reality that individuals and groups face, and the interpretations of those experiences, are both strongly influenced by already existing historical and social perspectives.¹⁷ Developed as a critique of (post-) positivism, which claims the existence of objective reality and defines the role of the

¹³ Guba E.G. The Alternative Paradigm Dialogue pp.17-30 in E.G. Guba (ed.) (1990) The Paradigm Dialogue, Newbury Park, CA, Sage p.17

¹⁴ For more details about the paradigms and their usage please, see Guba, EG and Lincoln, YS. "Competing paradigms in qualitative research." pp. 105-117 in NK Denzin and YS Lincoln (eds.) (1994) Handbook of Qualitative Research

¹⁵ For more details on the social construction of a reality please, see Berger P.L. and Luekman T (1967) The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Garden City, NJ: Anchor

¹⁶ For more details on interpretivism please, see Blumer, H. (1969). Symbolic Interactionism. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

¹⁷ For more details on constructivism worldview please, see Crotty M (1998) The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process London: Sage

researcher as unpacking this objective reality as part of the study, the worldviews that we adopt assume that the role of the researcher, as well as his/her knowledge, has a strong influence on the way certain processes and phenomena are interpreted and analyzed in the study.

There are several reasons why we decided to use the social constructivist and interpretivist worldviews to guide us through the whole process of the research. Within the framework of our research, we take an effort to understand the part of the world, which comprises of the Black Sea littoral states. On one hand, we aim at unpacking the relationships among these states and on the other, we try to understand their interactions with outside players (US, EU). All this is done with several contextual aspects in mind: the most recent European Union enlargement and the accession to membership of Romania and Bulgaria, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the post-Cold-War political developments, and to a lesser extent, the post-9/11 foreign policy of the United States. Clarity around historical settings is important in understanding how the Black Sea Region is perceived by different players and how those understandings of different states influence each other. For that reason, we deem that the social constructivism worldview, coupled with the interpretivist assumptions, is the best approach to proceed with our research.

Studying how the Black Sea region is conceived by the littoral states and the outside players who interact with one another and thus influence the ways the regional perception clearly fits into the constructivist paradigm as it sees a region as a socially and experientially developed construct. Analysis of the data on human and financial flows presented in the Chapters Four and Five might seem for some a bit too material getting out of the scope of the constructivism paradigm. However, we believe that any regional study conducted within the framework of the social constructivist worldview might also focus on how the particular regional conceptions are reflected in different regional dynamics. Analysis of the direction of trade, investment and human flows within the Black Sea region help us to study this region as an experiential construct. In other words we try to understand how the Black Sea regional conception translates into the actual relationships among the littoral states and the outside world.

Strategy of Inquiry

After the selection of the paradigm, which shapes our reasoning and interpretation of the dynamics around the Black Sea region, as a next step we need to outline our **qualitative research strategies**. Accordingly, we will try to unpack multiple realities around the Black Sea region perceived by the coastal countries, by the outsider players (e.g. US), and by institutions (e.g. EU) (ontology). The distance between the researcher and the Black Sea region (epistemology) was tried to be lessened as much as it was possible during the actual information collection period by visiting several Black Sea littoral states for the interviews. The fact that the researcher is from one of the Black Sea coastal countries further helped in this regard. While describing the findings of the research, the author includes her own interpretations of different events, which does not exclude the influence of researcher's personal values on the analysis in the work (axiology). We do acknowledge that with such an approach, it is very hard, if not impossible, to completely overcome personal biases; however, different tools for the verification of findings (described below) were applied to increase the reliability of the research. The overall language of the research (rhetoric) used in this study is literary and at times, relatively informal, using qualitative terms. While we do present different definitions of key concepts such as region, regionalism, etc., the actual definitions around the Black Sea region are generated as part of the actual research analyzing the experiential interpretations. The whole research is inductive, analyzing in detail the specifications of Black Sea regional dynamics and then making some general conclusions based on them.

The given research represents a **single case study**. In political sciences this particular term is used with multiple meanings. However, all the different definitions can be classified into two major groups of case studies: a) a specific method often used for establishing causal inferences and hypothesis testing, and b) a broader research approach aiming at explaining the lived experiences within a particular setting, emphasizing human meaning and reflexivity.¹⁸ Within the framework of the given study, we will be applying the latter understanding of the case study, using it more as an approach for explaining the dynamics among the Black Sea littoral states, as well as unpacking their extra-regional relationships with the west. The setting of our case study consists of the Black Sea basin with its six littoral states (Turkey, the

¹⁸ For more details on case studies please, see Yanow, D., Schwartz-Shea P. & Freitas, M. J. Case Study Research in Political Science. in A.J. Mills, G. Durepos & E. Wiebe (Eds.) (2008) Encyclopedia of Case Study Research Sage Publications

Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria) unified under the single case of a region. We fully understand that there is no commonly agreed list of states which can be considered among the Black Sea region states.¹⁹

Data Collection Procedures, Analysis, and Interpretations

This study generates its findings on the basis of three major types of resources:

1. Documents – the materials under this type of sources can be clustered into the following groups: a) extensive literature on regionalism; here we tried to unpack, on one hand, the conceptual pluralism and on the other, the theoretical richness and diversity of the phenomenon; Even though this study did not aim at testing either of the theoretical perspectives and so did not require coming up with a concrete definition of a region that would be used for further analysis of the Black Sea region, still, the presented literature played a significant role, as it helped to shed light on the various challenges of the study of regionalism, especially those related to the complexity of the conceptions, perspectives, and definitions around the selected phenomenon; b) the second group of materials was about the external players and their understanding and interests towards the Black Sea region; it included the US and the EU perspectives towards the Black Sea region; here we draw from official documents, like the European Commissions' Communications and the security concepts of the US, as well as from the analyses of other scholars through different books and articles; c) the third group of materials about the Black Sea littoral states consists of further sub-groups: one of the sub-groups includes books, articles, reports, and the security and national interests' concepts of the regional powers like Turkey and Russia. The other sub-group contains the information about the former CIS countries like Ukraine and Georgia, whereas the last sub-group is mostly about Romania and Bulgaria, who happen to be the only EU member states among the Black Sea littoral states.

2. Interviews – within the framework of the given research, we contacted various experts, scholars and policy analysts with a request to talk about certain issues at hand. The questions

¹⁹ The most widespread definitions of and/or concepts related to the Black Sea regions are the following: a) the Black Sea Region defined by the European Union in the Black Sea Synergy unifying Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey b) wider Black Sea area defined by BSEC unifying its member states and c) a wider Black Sea region used by the German Marshall Fund and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute/Silk Road Studies Program.

for the interviews were specifically drafted in advance on the basis of the researcher's interests and the research focus. Interviews were conducted via Skype, telephone, email, and tête-à-tête discussions. . The researcher specifically paid a visit to Istanbul in September 2014 to meet a representative from the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (the headquarters of BSEC is located in this city), as well as some other famous experts of the Black Sea region. During the Skype calls, telephone and face to face conversations, interviews were semi-structured, giving the opportunity to the scholar to expand on certain interesting aspects of the conservation. Per the interviewees' agreements, the conversations were recorded, transcribed and shared with the respondents for their final review. Selection of the interviewees was done on the basis of their availability, accessibility and active engagement in the analysis of the Black Sea area through scholarly work and policy papers.

3. Internet Resources – the internet resources, in the first place, include the websites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of all the Black Sea littoral states, which provided us with the organizational organograms, and some other important information about their respective security and national interest issues. In addition, we studied the websites of various regional initiatives like the Black Sea Civil Society Forum, Eastern Partnership Black Sea Civil Society Forum, Black Sea Universities Network, Black Sea Cross Border Cooperation Program, Kiev Initiative, etc. We checked the funding sources of those initiatives, the geographic coverage, their specific areas of work and so forth. The goal was to understand the nature of investments into the regional initiatives and to discover the different internal and external triggers that play a role in the development of regional dynamics. Finally we need to mention the data on flows (e.g. tourists, direction of trade, foreign direct investments, etc.) that we had access to on the websites of national statistics' departments of the Black Sea littoral states, as well as on the websites of the OECD, IMF and the World Bank. The official website of the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was also used during the research.

While no particular software of qualitative research was used during the study, the strategy of grouping the findings according to different literature groups helped a lot in analyzing and interpreting them appropriately.

Verification

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, we used several approaches that enabled us to check the accuracy and credibility of the research results.

- First of all, we listened to the interview recordings and compared them with the transcripts to ensure that no mistakes were made during the transcription;
- In order to build coherent arguments we also applied the triangulation of different sources of the information, thus cross-examining the findings and conclusions;
- During the analysis of the data on human and financial flows, as well as on the direction of trade, we were very careful to check for the outlier and discrepant pieces of information that oppose the identified trends. This strategy helped to look at the topic of interest from multiple perspectives;
- Finally, we utilized the feedback of an external reader from a totally different field of expertise, who read the entire research and provided constructive criticism about the findings and the conclusions of the research.

Methodological Barriers/Limitations

There were several limitations, methodological barriers, and other difficulties that we faced while conducting the research. First of all, the number of littoral states, whose conceptions of the Black Sea we had to study, proved to be challenging, as we had to gather, interpret, and analyze the information about the same subject for six different littoral states.

Another limitation is related to the scholarly bias. The matter is that many scholars and policy analysts studying the Black Sea region and its dynamics are from the Black Sea littoral or neighboring countries, like Greece, Romania, Turkey, etc. Many of these countries have their own specific interests in the Black Sea region, which possibly influences the arguments of respective scholars. The same would apply to the outsiders, who are often operating from Brussels, which also represents an interested party, as the Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership programs, as well as some other regional initiatives, were crafted by the representatives of the EU (Emerson, Tassinari).

Accessibility of the data on human and financial flows was another challenging aspect of the research. Unfortunately, not all of the countries' national statistics departments had the data about the same indicators of human and financial flows publicly available. Either the information for particular years was missing or the same areas (e.g. tourism, direction of trade) were unpacked via different indicators per country. In certain cases, there were some discrepancies between the datasets of the IMF and the individual countries. Analysis of factual coagulants like the frequency and number of Skype and telephone calls (both land line and cell) intra-regionally as well as outside the region turned out to be impossible. The researcher's official requests via email to get certain data from the telephone companies were not responded. No interested data was available on the website of Skype.

Finally, while using the discourse analysis method, it is always hard (if at all possible) to verify that whatever is indicated in the official statements and speeches of the country leaders actually reflects the real intentions and strategic views of those countries (of both, the key decision makers and the populations).

Literature Review

Even though the region existed as a unit of analysis during the Cold War period and even earlier, still by that time regional agencies were subordinated to either of the existing superpowers designed to serve their interests within the scope of the East-West conflict.²⁰ Regionalism was also seen as a tool to fight against the exploitation of the Third World countries by the industrialized countries via the creation of the so called Third World regionalism. Unfortunately, no great achievements of unifying the Third World states under one common goal took place. Therefore, by the end of 1970s the idea of regionalism was considered to be obsolete.²¹

The disintegration of the Soviet Union leading to the end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a new era in the development of regionalism. One of the biggest changes caused by the termination of the bi-polar international system was the transformation in thinking

²⁰ Fawcett Louise 'Regionalism in Historical Perspective', in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell, eds. (1995) *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 13

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 14, see also

among the political elites of the former superpowers and other countries as well. Clinton's administration focused on the Open Regionalism in the Asia Pacific and Americas, while Gorbachov declared the importance of finalization of Russia's isolation from Europe.²² In addition, organizations like EU and NATO managed to ensure their resurgence as well as expansion of their membership. Within the post-Soviet space new regional constructs were created in the form of the CIS. Simultaneously certain countries from the former Soviet bloc tried to enter or at least cooperate with western organizations.

For all those years the Black Sea Region has been disregarded under the mainstream politics and security policies towards Russia, Europe, US, Middle East etc. Lying at the cross-road of European, Middle Eastern, and Eurasian security spaces the Black Sea Region was often envisaged just as a periphery of more important political and/or geographic unit(s), being it a backyard of the Russian empire, or an extension of the Mediterranean. However recent NATO and especially EU enlargement processes marked the new beginning for the Black Sea Region and academic research of the given area.

After the integration of the Central and Eastern European countries (starting from the Baltic States and ending with Romania and Bulgaria) into NATO matched with the expansion of the European Union to new member states (especially the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to membership in 2007), West has started waking up to the need of a new conception of the Black Sea Region, as of its direct eastern neighbor.²³ After launching the Black Sea Synergy in 2007 the EU for the first time made a special focus on the Black Sea region as a single district policy area.²⁴

All the aforementioned historical preconditions had their own influence on the development of the scholarly work about the Black Sea region. Below, we present a very simple literature map, which might provide some basic information about the major directions and sub-directions in the existing literature that we discuss throughout the research. We see this literature map as a simple guide map, without any special ambition to be a very comprehensive one. It can further be enriched according to the need.

²² Ibid

²³ Asmus D. Ronald "Democracy and Human Development in the Broader Middle East: A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership Istanbul Paper #2" Istanbul, Turkey, June 24-27, 2007, pp. 1-3

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Black Sea Synergy _ A New Regional Cooperation Initiative, Brussels 11.04.2007 COM(2007) 160 final

Literature Map								
Regionalism Literature		Literature on the Black Sea Region						
Old Regionalism	New Regionalism	Outsiders' Look			Insiders' Look			
		US/NATO Perspective	EU Perspective		Regional Powers	Former CIS	EU Members	
			Black Sea Synergy	Eastern Partnership		Turkey & Russia	Georgia & Ukraine	Romania & Bulgaria

A conception of the United States of America towards this area was more related to its security interests. Official Washington emphasized the importance of the security component of its Black Sea Region strategy where the main emphasis was on “combating terrorism, organized crime, and smuggling of WMD (weapons of mass destruction), through enhanced border security and civil-military response. Particularly important in this regard has been US support for the Black Sea Border Security Initiative (BSBSI) as well as the US Defense Department funded Black Sea Civil Emergency Response Planning designed to enhance trans-border coordination.”²⁵ As part of the counter-terrorism cooperation within the Black Sea Region, the official Washington launched the Operation Black Sea Harmony, led by Turkey, to monitor the movement of ships across the Black Sea.²⁶

Since then there has been a growing interest among scholars and practitioners in the issues related to the Black Sea Region. Countries identified as the Black Sea Region representatives, as well as external stakeholders like the United States of America and some other members of the European Union (e.g. Poland), pursue their own conceptions of this area.²⁷

²⁵ Larrabee, F. Stephen (2009) 'The United States and security in the Black Sea region', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 9: 3, 301 — 315, p. 302; see also Bryza J. Mathew *The Policy of the United States Towards The Black Sea Region* in Asmus D. Ronald (ed.) (2006) *Next Steps in Forging the Euro-Atlantic Strategy for The Wider Black Sea*, The GMF of the US and Individual Authors p. 38-39

²⁶ Ibid Bryza p. 40

²⁷ Ibid. also see *The National Security Strategy of Romania*, Bucharest 2007, pp. 32-37; <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/challenges-for-the-black-sea-region-tr.mfa> (last time accessed on September 10, 2011)

While the debates about the Black Sea Region are still going on, two key directions can already be identified. On one hand, scholars like Triantaphyllou Dimitrios believe that despite its entailing challenges and paradoxes, the emergence of the Black Sea as a region is undeniable.²⁸ Triantaphyllou does acknowledge the non-existence of a regional identity. He also clearly accounts for the challenging factors like internal conflicts within the given zone (Azerbaijan vs. Armenia, Georgia vs. Russia, etc.), the weakness of institutions, and the unwillingness to fully implement programs like BSEC. However, Dimitrios still sees a good potential in Black Sea regional cooperation.²⁹ It is interesting to note that he does not provide many arguments or verifications in order to further strengthen his own position. On the other hand, scientists like Charles King and Stephen Larrabee are very pessimistic about the further formation of the Black Sea as a region. On a side note, they do not consider the Black Sea area to be a region from the current perspective either. The reason of such skepticism lies in the following factors: a) the diversity of the region hinders the integration and formation of a common regional identity. b) Historical animosities and ethnic conflicts get in the way as well. c) The lack of strong regional institutions further undermines the regional integration prospects. All this in turn creates challenges for players outside region to elaborate effective policies and action plans towards the region.³⁰ Unlike Larrabee, Charles King puts a bigger emphasis on the external factors (mainly the pace and nature of the future enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions) which might define whether or not the Black Sea zone, as King calls it, will transform into a Black Sea Region.³¹

While analyzing the developments within the Black Sea area, Felix Ciuta indicates that this part of the world should be studied only as a Black Sea Region project, which should be perceived as a “combination of four different conceptualizations of the region as (1) a security complex, (2) a geopolitical entity, (3) the product of a historically and geographically grounded common identity and (4) a discursive construction.”³² Interestingly enough, Ciuta skips the idea of economic cooperation and its role in the process of region formation.

²⁸ Triantaphyllou, Dimitrios (2009) 'The 'security paradoxes' of the Black Sea region', Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, 9: 3, p. 1

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Larrabee, F. Stephen(2009) 'The United States and security in the Black Sea region', Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, 9: 3, 301 — 315, p.303

³¹ Hamilton Daniel and Mangott Gerhard (eds.) (2008) *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* Center for Transatlantic Relations, The Johns Hopkins University/Austrian

Institute for International Affairs p. 19

³² Ciută, Felix (2008) 'Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region', *Geopolitics*, 13: 1, 120 — 147, p.128

The review of the literature around the Black Sea area cannot be considered complete without the reference to the works of Fabrizio Tassinari, a research fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and Michael Emerson, an associate Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and head of the EU Foreign, Security and Neighborhood Policies research program. Emerson initially provides a brief description of nine forms of regionalism that he outlines, stating that Black Sea will be characterized with a combination of 'technical' and 'security regionalisms', while Russia has been attempting to further push the 'geopolitical' regionalism. He also adds that with the suspension of further enlargement of the EU for other Black Sea regional states, there is a very high probability for this area to end up with a compensatory regionalism.³³ While Tassinari tries to further explore the suggested types of regionalism that might develop in the Black Sea region, he himself admits that such a multiplicity may lead to lots of ambiguities and confusion, which is true because at the end of the day, it is not clear what type of regionalism we have in the Black Sea area. Also, no explanation is provided as to how the Black Sea region is presented in terms of its member states, why is such choice made in the first place, and by whom. In this regards, while the core of the region must be the Black Sea littoral states, still different sectoral initiatives should go beyond this group.³⁴ However, it is not clear whether it can be concluded, on the basis of the above statement alone, that the Black Sea region consists of the littoral states only and other states are simply a part of the sectoral initiatives. Most probably, such idea would be rejected as the Black Sea Synergy document does extend its coverage beyond the littoral states. But otherwise, it is not clearly explained why this area does not represent a region, or what does the core of the Black Sea region mean at all. Having in mind that both Tassinari and Emerson represent the CEPS, while at the same time Emerson is the head of the EU Foreign, Security and Neighborhood Policies Research Program, the concerns over the impartiality of the analysis remain to be an issue. .

³³ Emerson Michael, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism Is This?* CEPS Working Document #297/July 2008 pp 2-12

³⁴ Tassinari Fabrizio *A Synergy for Black Sea Regional Cooperation Guidelines for an EU Initiative* CEPS Policy Brief #105/June 2006 p. 10

Chapter 1. Region __ Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis

1.1. Introduction

The issue of the region formation and regional integration has been a topic of interest of political scientists and practitioners for a long period of time. Even though the term regionalism actively entered the vocabulary of the discipline of International Relations only after the Second World War, its importance was recognized earlier, especially in the area of peace and security. Thus in 1944 when the initial version of the UN Charter was being drafted at Dumbarton Oaks, it was emphasized that the existence of regional bodies should not be precluded.³⁵ Chapter 8 of the current version of the UN Charter further underlines the role of regions and regional organizations in the context of conflict resolution within their boundaries:

“The Members of the United Nations entering into such arrangements or constituting such agencies shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council.

The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council”³⁶

In the early 1950s, with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), Europe became the region of the world based on which regional integration processes were studied by a wide group of scholars. That was the time when Ernest Haas introduced the concept of spillover (discussed below)³⁷ and Lindberg further extended this concept in his later work.³⁸ During the Cold War period a lot of attention was paid to the arrangement and progress of regional developments, as there were several rounds of attempts of regionalization in various parts of the world. As Stanley Hoffmann noted, “the division of a huge and heterogeneous international system into subsystems in which patterns of co-

³⁵ Nye, Joseph Samuel, ed. *International Regionalism. Readings*. Boston: Little, Brown &, 1968. 5-6.

³⁶ "Charter, United Nations, Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements." UN News Center. Accessed November 17, 2014. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter8.shtml>.

³⁷ Haas, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958.

³⁸ Lindberg, Leon N. *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1963.

operation and ways of controlling conflicts are either more intense or less elusive than those in the global system” stressed the increased role of regions.³⁹ With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and transformation of the international system into a multi-polar one, regionalism further gained its popularity.⁴⁰ This in itself paved the way to a revised vision of regional integration and region formation, commonly known as the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism.

However, despite the huge interest and the sheer amount of scholarly works in the field of regionalism, its conceptualization remains to be one of the most difficult obstacles that the researchers, analysts and even policy makers face. According to some political scientists, the challenges related to conceptualization of the phenomenon are so serious that the existence of comparative regionalism and regional studies, as a part of academic scholarship, can be questioned.⁴¹ No commonly agreed definition of the region, the lack of minimum threshold of indicators for any kind of region to be present (or not), multiplicity of terms (region, regionhood, regionness, regionalization, regionalism, regional integration, regional cooperation often used interchangeably (not always rightly though)) are among those challenges, which make the study and analysis of the formation of certain group of states under the umbrella of the region very difficult. In addition, it is not easy to track the steps of the process of regionalism and/or regionalization to better understand what impedes or triggers the region building process, and when can we say that a region is born (if this moment ever comes). There is no agreement about any criteria – possibly a minimum number of certain characteristics and/or outcomes reached through the cooperation among states – that would indicate the presence of a region. Questions related to the types of regions, depth of their integration and/or problems with lack of coalescence are also hard to be responded as no clearly identified indices and scopes of integration depth and stages are agreed upon by the majority of scholars. Different IR specialists suggest different visions and such multiplicity adds more obstacles to the scholarship of regionalism. While the existence of different visions makes the regional scholarship richer, it still adds a layer of complexity and difficulties to study and analyze this phenomenon.

³⁹ Hoffmann, Stanley. "International Organizations and the International System". In *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics*, 293. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

⁴⁰ Fawcett, Louise. "Regionalism in Historical Perspective." In *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, edited by Louise L Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell, 12-17. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁴¹ Sbragia, Alberta. (2008), "Review Article: Comparative Regionalism: What Might It Be?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46: 29-49.

Considering all this, the upcoming chapter will present the most notable scholarly approaches to regionalism. Our goal is to briefly summarize the variety of conceptual and theoretical frameworks concerning the region and its formation. We will not try to either compare or analyze those theoretical perspectives and/or triggers of the region building process in depth, as this goes beyond the purpose our research. Our aim is to conduct a single case study about the so called Black Sea region. In the process we will not select any particular definition of this phenomenon or choose one of the existing theoretical perspectives and completely base our analysis on it, hoping to discern the regional dynamics among the Black Sea littoral states. Such a one-sided approach would not help us with in depth study of the intra-regional processes. A solid explanation, why to do analysis from the perspective of one particular theoretical framework and not the other, would also be hard to bring, as there are too many strong and weak aspects and gaps around each of those (as will be shown below) as well as too many (counter) arguments. On the other hand, it would not be wise to start studying the intra-regional processes from a totally clean page, disregarding the decades of work and efforts to understand and explain why and how regions are born, transformed or developed. While the given empirical study of the Black Sea Region won't apply any single theoretical framework or any particular definition of the region suggested by regionalists, it is still useful to show the reader a complexity of the mosaic of the scholarly work on this phenomenon. It will hopefully make it clear, why the study does not select any of the ready recipes of how to analyze regional dynamics, and rather focuses on the analysis around financial and human flows, as well discussing the roles and impact of various stakeholders in the process of the Black Sea region building (presented in other chapters).

1.2. Conceptual Pluralism

One of the biggest challenges related to the provision of the definition of a region is related to the key question: what are we trying to define – a process or a product? Some try to explain region through the process of integration taking place among respective states. Others are more focused on the final product in their definitions. But in many cases there is a consensus, that region (or to be more exact – regionalism) is both a process and a product. The wide variety of approaches, from the very beginning, reflects the challenges of conceptualization of the given phenomenon.

Interestingly enough, the majority of definitions of a region and/or regionalism is very broad and often lack specific details. Looking through the widespread definitions of a region presented below will once again make it clear how difficult it is to explain the essence of a region with specific terms and how hard it is to provide readers and other scholars with such definitions that carry distinctive features:

1. Joseph Nye tries to provide us with basics by describing the international region as a “limited number of states linked by geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence;”⁴²
2. Barry Buzan suggests a more accurate definition of the same concept when he says that “by region we mean a spatially coherent territory composed of two or more states;”⁴³ He also stresses the importance of *proximity* by underlining the fact that for a region to be present there should be ‘relations among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other.’⁴⁴
3. In an effort to define the phenomenon of a region, William Thompson stresses the importance of internal and external recognition,⁴⁵ which adds further ambiguity to the already complex discourse on the definition of regionalism;
4. Michelle Pace defines regions as political units characterized by an increased interaction between political actors in certain geographic settings;⁴⁶
5. Some try to explain a region by stressing what regions are NOT; thus one of the existing definitions points out that regions are formations which are not states but have some resemblance to them;⁴⁷
6. a more reflectionist perspective defines regions as social constructs which are constructed and re-constructed through social practices and in discourse;⁴⁸
7. those scholars, who still believe in the necessity of minimal common understanding of a phenomenon to study, suggest us to be focused on essential characteristics of the region thus

⁴² Nye, Joseph Samuel, ed. *International Regionalism. Readings*. Boston: Little, Brown &, 1968.

⁴³ Buzan, Barry, and Ole Waever. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998. 18-19.

⁴⁴ Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. Second ed. Boulder: Rienner, 1991. 188.

⁴⁵ Thompson, William R. (1973), "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory." *International Studies Quarterly*, no. 17: 89-118. 101.

⁴⁶ Pace, Michelle. *The Politics of Regional Identity Meddling with the Mediterranean*. London: Routledge, 2006. 1.

⁴⁷ De Lombarde, Philippe, Fredrik Soderbaum, Luke Van Langenhove, and Francis Baert. “Problems and Divides in Comparative Regionalism.” In *Comparative Regional Integration Europe and beyond*, edited by Finn Laursen. Farnham, Surrey [England]: Ashgate, 2010. 23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

differentiating it from non-regions; Van Langenhove thus proposes the idea of regionhood which sees regions as non-sovereign governance systems with certain statehood properties existing in between national and global levels;⁴⁹

8. Professor Manoli also suggest for a purposeful region to be present the willingness of its elite to act as such, i.e. the willingness of the elite (business or political) of an interconnected area to act collectively as a regional actor on the basis of organized interests⁵⁰

This *incomplete* list of different definitions of region shows us that the given concept is defined through various terms like interdependence, coherence, and interaction among states as main regional players; but such definitions are still too broad and in a certain way too vague. These intermediate terms and concepts through which the region is defined often need further clarification, e.g. what do we mean under cohesion or what kind of interaction among states transforms them into a region? Why is economic cooperation within a particular sector just called cooperation in one case and regional economic integration in another? How would interaction among states in one case be a simple collaboration in the area of politics, economics etc. and in another case it would be a process of region building? Is the factor of territoriality the key determinant, or do we need additional characteristics as well? Naturally, such questions have been posed and there have been various attempts to respond them, but the only agreement achieved so far among scholars of regionalism is that the region is a “container concept with multiple meanings.”⁵¹

Many believe that amidst a very intense process of economic globalization, in addition to the complexity of international relations, the concept of a region might become an “empty idea.”⁵² Frequently, the analysis of dynamics within and in between regions (as well as studies of regional and global processes and linkages between those two) is based on outdated and/or poorly examined concepts, ideas, and images. Such perspective was granted a special name of “**jigsawpuzzle view**” when scholars of different areas, studying the phenomenon of a region, believe that “static continental units fit together in an unambiguous way.”⁵³ In the majority of cases (as partially reflected in the definitions presented above) regions are defined with physical, economic and/or political criteria without any consideration of theoretical

⁴⁹ Van Langenhove, Luke. “Theorizing Regionhood”. UNU/CRIS working paper (2003). 1

⁵⁰ Please see the complete interview with Prof. Manoli in Annex 3 below

⁵¹ De Lombarde, Philippe, Fredrik Soderbaum, Luke Van Langenhove, and Francis Baert. “Problems and Divides in Comparative Regionalism.” In *Comparative Regional Integration Europe and beyond*, edited by Finn Laursen. Farnham, Surrey [England]: Ashgate, 2010. 22

⁵² Väyrynen, Raimo. (2003), “Regionalism: Old and New”. *International Studies Review*, 5: 25–51. 25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

views and perceptions. Some political scientists and historians wait for the region to be institutionalized to be able to define it, describe and examine its features. Others, among them many economists, focus on the assumption that the region is based on trade agreements, treating these as sufficient criteria for a region to exist. The main weakness of such approaches is that it becomes very difficult to understand why regions appear in certain geopolitical contexts more often than in others, how and why do the internal dynamics change, or who plays the key role in the integration process, and what inside and outside factors are the key determinates of a poor or strong regional integration.

Certain discussions and analyses of the process of region building often focus *not* so much on the processes *within* a pre-defined region, but rather on the *process of regions coming into existence*. While such an approach is more characteristic of the constructivists' approach (as they regard the regions as social constructs, which are constantly changing and transforming), (neo-)functionalists also discuss how the supply and demand of the regional integration contribute to the region formation.⁵⁴ This discourse somewhat paved the way to an approach that tries to explain the phenomenon of regions by regarding regional integration as a process, as well as a product.⁵⁵ However, integration itself is a concept that requires additional clarifications. While Deutsch's definition is the prevalent view in International Relations scholarship in the context of integration within security communities,⁵⁶ when it comes to regional integration, different scholars have different and sometimes even contradictory perceptions of this concept.⁵⁷ And without a commonly agreed understanding of integration, the already obscure phenomena of region and regionalism become even vaguer.

A part of the regionalist literature is focused on differentiating between different types of regions.⁵⁸ Creating a typology of regions (micro, macro, cross-border, sub-regions, etc.) is one of the approaches to not only group regions on the basis of some common characteristics (mainly their location), but also to define and describe them depending on the core criteria based on which they are grouped. However it is still very hard to identify rules, according to

⁵⁴ Nye, Joseph S. *Peace in Parts; Integration and Conflict in Regional Organization*. Boston: Little, Brown &, 1971.

⁵⁵ For more details please see *Comparative Regional Integration Europe and beyond*, edited by Finn Laursen. Farnham, Surrey [England]: Ashgate, 2010.

Also, Lawson, Fred H. *Comparative Regionalism*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009.

⁵⁶ Deutsch, Karl W. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*,. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957. 5-6.

⁵⁷ Nye, Joseph. Comparative regional integration. *International organization* 22, no. 4 (1968). 855-880. 855

⁵⁸ <http://ocw.unu.edu/programme-for-comparative-regional-integrationstudies/introducing-regional-integration>. Accessed on November 17, 2014.

which the boundaries of the regions could be set. This issue is closely linked to the concept of regional identity which is indicated to be the strongest in the core of a given region and relatively weaker towards the periphery.⁵⁹ In addition, depending on the variable used to define regional identity is defined, the same group of states may belong to one region culturally and to another — politically.⁶⁰ All this adds to the list of difficulties in the study of regional arrangements and regional transformation.

When talking about the typology, it is still important to pay attention to some existing groups of regions. In the scholarly literature about regionalism, there is a physical-functional distinction which helps to differentiate between **physical regions** from the **functional** ones. In the case of physical regions, the key aspect is territoriality and the primary players are states, whereas in the case of the functional regions, non-territorial factors become much more important. In order to better understand the difference between those two types of regions one might consider it helpful to recall Manuel Castell's distinction between a space of places and a space of flows.⁶¹ For Castell, a place, while it is considered to be historically rooted, is still believed to be reshaped and influenced by various information flows and people. In contrast, the space of flow is an organization of social practices taking place in time via networks, which have their own hub of power, as well as the managerial elite. The management of the space of flows happens independently of physical proximity.⁶² Considering the aforementioned, physical regions are studied and analyzed as spatial clusters of states which have been hugely influenced by anarchy (either positively or negatively). Examination of the functional regions, however, does not require the assumption of an anarchical international system. Economy (e.g. in the form of networks), environment (e.g. in the form of deforestation) and culture (e.g. in the form of identity communities) are considered to be main triggers of the functional regions. All this shows us clearly that depending on which definition of the region we use, different ideas and approaches are supposed to be applied for the analysis of the physical versus functional regions. However, instead of simplification, this makes the examination of the regional dynamics even more difficult due to its further contribution to the complexity and lack of enough specificity of definitions.

⁵⁹ MacFarlane, S. Neil, and Ont Kingston. *Coming Together or Falling Apart? Regionalism in the Former Soviet Union*. Kingston, Ont.: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University, 1997. 4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶¹ For more details see Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Vol. 1. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 412-413.

In order to fully present the ambiguity and complexity around the phenomenon of region, apart from physical and functional types of regions, we should also have a quick glance at some widespread and widely discussed classifications of it. Russett classifies regions into five major categories:⁶³

- Regions, which are composed of states that share many commonalities and possess lots of similar *internal characteristics*, are unified under the group of *regions of social and cultural homogeneity*
- By looking at how different countries' government vote at the United Nations and how they behave internationally, another group unifies *states of similar political and/or external behavior*
- Another group represents states that are interlinked under the *supranational and/or inter-governmental institutions* — *political interdependence regions*
- When intra-regional trade becomes the significant portion of the national economy *regions of economic interdependence* occur
- *Regions of geographic proximity*

Unfortunately, the above classification of regions lacks clarity and focus. While the analysis of the presented list is not our duty as part of the given research, it's still worth mentioning that the given classification does not provide us with criteria which would help to differentiate between existing regions. Many states that have similar internal features might also convey similar external politics and thus behave in such a way in international arena that their voting trends could be parallel. Also, economically dependent countries might also be finding themselves more and more politically interlinked. With such a complexity of relationships in mind, how does the given classification help us to see what are the unique features of a particular type of region? And if it is natural for states to be grouped into such entities which will simultaneously contain several classes of regions, then is this an issue of the classification or the regions? Either way, the already existing ambiguity around this topic increases further.

⁶³ For a more detailed and in-depth analysis, see Russett, Bruce. *International Regions and the International System: A Study in Political Ecology*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967.

Discourse about the conceptual pluralism around the phenomenon of the region would not be complete without paying a special attention to two widely and often interchangeably used terms, which in reality mean different, but interlinked things. These are **regionalization** and **regionness**. The former describes the *process of the intraregional change*, which is simultaneously taking place in various areas like economy, security, culture etc. Institutional links, sense of cultural belonging, interdependence in different sectors are only few among those aspects of intraregional processes that the regionalization studies.⁶⁴ As for the notion of regionness, it describes *the stage of the regionalization process* when the intraregional dynamics have developed so far that the given region has already gained some important regional characteristics. One can also say that regionness is the degree, the metric of regionalization.⁶⁵ Some scholars studying region building and regional integration even differentiate between several *levels of regionness* as different developmental stages of any region:⁶⁶

- Region as a *geographical unit* with its somewhat natural boundaries and ecological features;
- Region as a *social system* within which the trans-local relations between different groups of people are growing and expanding;
- Institutionalized and/or informal *transnational cooperation* as another step or level of regionness;
- *Region as a civil society* __ in this particular case there might be formal or informal organizational framework which promotes social communication and fosters the converges of values;
- Region as a *subject taking actions* with its own identity, capability to take steps and respective legitimacy to take decisions.

While the stages presented above show us how geographic entity can transform into a unit with its own decision making power and identity, this information is more descriptive. What is truly important is to know what contributes to such transformation and what leads to such deep coalescence among states that are initially bounded mainly by geographic proximity. In order to study any particular region from the perspective of regionness and/or regionalization,

⁶⁴ For more details see Hettne Bjorn (1999) *Subregionalism and World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Teunissen, Jan J. *Regional Integration and Multilateral Cooperation in the Global Economy*. The Hague: FONDAD, 1998. 204-205.

it is of crucial importance to know what the driving forces of the intra-regional dynamics are and thus based on those forces how and when is the stage of the high level regionness achieved.

While traditionally national political leaders and/or political elites were thought to be the initiators of regionalization,⁶⁷ nowadays more and more scholars disagree with this idea. Regardless of the fact that certain studies and analysis of regional dynamics present reliable evidence that the interests of the political elites remain primarily in cooperating within the regional organization, many others believe that the regionalization takes place as a result of or in response to the pressure coming from the economic globalization.⁶⁸ Some even argue that the interests of the business leaders are much more influential than those of the political leaders or/and elites.⁶⁹ When discussing regionalization and regionness as two different, yet interlinked processes, one must also emphasize that regional organizations, as normative and/or institutional foundations of various regions, expand their norms and values outside their territorial boundaries. This creates some sort of **zones of conformity outside particular regions**, especially when those outside states try to comply with the regional norms as a precondition for future admittance in those regions as members.⁷⁰ As a result we often get thicker regions nested within the thinner regions, with the latter being more volatile and thus challenging the stability of the core region.⁷¹ Different viewpoints about the triggers of the regionalization and the ways to reach regionness as a particular level of regionalization, as well as aforementioned expansion of regional norms across the so called zones of conformity, make it complicated to conduct a case study of any single region, as it is very hard to pinpoint the concrete list of features, based on which one could assess which degree of regionalization (as regionness) has been achieved in a given context and how.

Due to all those different visions and approaches it is often acknowledged by many scholars that the application of the term region to the particular piece of land is mainly a discursive tool, serving a particular goal. Consequently, depending on the goals and the created

⁶⁷ For examples, see Wriggins, W. Howard. *Dynamics of Regional Politics: Four Systems on the Indian Ocean Rim*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

and Taylor, Paul. (1990) Regionalism: "The Thought and the Deed" In *Frameworks for International Cooperation* edited by A.J. R. Groom and Oayk Taylor, London: Pinter

⁶⁸ For more details see Hettne, Bjo. *Globalism and the New Regionalism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

⁶⁹ Mattli, Walter. *The Logic of Regional Integration Europe and beyond*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

⁷⁰ Väyrynen, Raimo. (2003), Regionalism: Old and New. *International Studies Review*, 5: 25–51/40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

understandings of particular regions, one can argue that various regions may overlap in terms of territory.⁷² In other words, different “interpretations of the region struggle, clash, deconstruct and displace one another.”⁷³

1.3. Subregionalism

Discussion about the conceptual richness and complexity of the phenomenon of the region would never be complete without at least a brief examination of the idea of **subregionalism**. Regionalism literature identifies four key features of all types of sub regional groupings: 1. Firstly all the subregional initiatives are multidimensional addressing various areas through their activities; 2. Secondly, liberal economic ideas like trade liberalization and export promotion are the major drivers of the subregional projects; 3. Subregional projects are elite driven; also they do NOT create any region specific identity; 4. When it comes to addressing various security issues, the subregional projects are focused only on soft security.⁷⁴ Many of these features can fit into different definitions of regions and regionalism. So what makes subregionalism so special and different from the existing examination of regions? The response to this question lies in the specific characteristic of the subregional projects according to which subregionalism is NOT an independent process pursuing its own agenda. Rather subregions are supposed to be analyzed as *part of the wider region* building and/or regional integration process. The key goal of subregionalism is to help the outsider states, taking active part in the subregionalism process, become the members of the wider region to which the given subregion is subordinated to.⁷⁵ While writing about the collaboration between subregional organizations (managed by two pivotal states Germany and Ukraine), Kupchan, one of the biggest proponents of the idea of Pan European collective security system, also indicates that the subregional initiatives and/or organizations function to reintegrate the subregional group of countries back to the wider area (in the case of the Pan European system back to Europe) from which they were separated from. Subregional organizations do not represent the alternatives to the NATO and/or European Union enlargement. Rather they help the countries left outside of those (or some other) organizations

⁷² De Lombarde, Philippe, Fredrik Soderbaum, Luke Van Langenhove, and Francis Baert. “Problems and Divides in Comparative Regionalism.” In *Comparative Regional Integration Europe and beyond*, edited by Finn Laursen. Farnham, Surrey [England]: Ashgate, 2010. 25

⁷³ Neumann, I. B. "The Region-building Approach." In *Theories of New Regionalism a Palgrave Reader*, edited by Soderbaum and Shaw. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 176.

⁷⁴ Manoli, Panagiota. *The Dynamics of Black Sea Subregionalism*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012. 17.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 9

to be re-integrated with them via subregional processes. In many cases those subregional organizations would no longer be needed once the re-integration mission is achieved.⁷⁶

While at the first glance the idea of the subregionalism as a transitional platform for groups of states towards a particular regional integration makes sense, more in depth thinking unpacks further questions. How can we know for sure that any group of states labeled as a sub-region or a region does in reality constitute such an entity? When does the group of states start aspiring to the membership of the wider group of other states and thus stop being an independent, standalone entity labeled as a region? Do the states grouped under the subregionalism project realize that they are not united under a common goal, but rather they are just jointly knocking on the door of another region, and this is precisely what unifies them? Why or under what circumstances would the collaboration of the so called sub-regional states with the members of the wider region be perceived as the subordination of the former to the latter (or as an attempt of doing so)? Should the officially stated purpose of helping the smaller group in becoming a part of the wider group be taken as a proof of subordination? What could be the other signs of subordination? The specialists of international relations who are focused on regionalism studies often state that the region building process passes through different stages and the level of coalescence among the grouped states might not be as strong in the beginning, as it is at later stages, when countries already become more integrated. Therefore, at the initial steps of the process of regionalization, intraregional dynamics are not strong and countries within the region might be requesting support from (or nurturing the relationships with) the players/states outside the region more. With that in mind, how can we be sure that any region at its early stages of regionalization is not mistakenly labeled as a subregion? How can we guarantee that strong collaboration ties with different organizations and their members are not misguidedly taken as subordination?

If we take the example of the European Union and try to further build on it, how would we label this regional entity? Can the EU in itself be perceived as a subregion of the wider region like NATO (once called the *superregion* during Cold War period)? Why would we see the signs of subordination in the case of the Black Sea subregion to the European Union (with states like Romania and Bulgaria belonging to both entities) and would not see the similar

⁷⁶ For more detailed information about the subregionalism and the Pan European Security System please see Kupchan, Charles A. (1997) *Regionalizing Europe's Security: The Case For A New Mitteleuropa*. In the *Political Economy of Regionalism* edited by Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner. New York: Columbia University Press

dynamics between the EU and NATO (considering that those two organizations have many members in common)? There is no agreement among the regionalism scholars about how should the European Union be perceived and why. Some believe that this organization does represent the highest level of regional structure,⁷⁷ while others argue the opposite, stating that the European Union is, in reality, only a sub-regional entity.⁷⁸ Unfortunately it is very hard to find comprehensive responses to these questions. Existing theoretical descriptions and definitions in this particular case, as in many other cases, do not provide us with good enough [tools/analysis/guidelines] to clearly see the differences, and thus conduct a study of Black Sea regionalism on the basis of clearly defined foundations. The boundary between regionalism and sub-regionalism is so thin, so subtle that it is hard to pinpoint a set of criteria, which would make it clear that we are dealing with, say, a subregion as opposed to a region, and vice versa. Manoli still considers the Black Sea area as a sub-region and shares the analysis and findings about it in her most recent publication about the Black Sea subregionalism, putting emphasis on the subordination of the subregion to the wider regional project of the European Union and its membership (criticized by us above). However, she still acknowledges the ambiguity between regions and subregions, indicating that those terms are often used interchangeably referring to the cross border cooperation among states.⁷⁹ In certain cases, instead of ‘subregion’, some scholars use the term “**infraregion**” in order to refer to those regional entities, which are characterized by a limited cooperation among states and a poor integration process.⁸⁰ However this would not (and did not) solve the issue of conceptual pluralism; rather it further contributes to the related ambiguity.

Because of this diversity and complexity, some of the scholars of regionalism were driven to label the processes taking place in the basin of the Black Sea as **spaghetti regionalism**.⁸¹ The term refers to the two-wave process, with the first one being the response to the “back to Europe” call and the second one being directly linked to the European Union’s neighborhood policies, dubbed as neighborhood regionalism by Manoli.⁸² Interestingly enough, the creation and development of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation came with the

⁷⁷ For more details please see Hook G. and Kearns I. (eds.) (1999) *Subregionalism and World Order*, London: Macmillan

⁷⁸ For further analysis of this aspect please see Wallace W. *Regionalism in Europe: Model or Exception?* In *Regionalism in World Politics, Regional Organizational Order*, Fawcett L. and Hurrell A.(eds.) (1997) New York: Oxford University Press, 201-227

⁷⁹ Manoli, Panagiota. *The Dynamics of Black Sea Subregionalism*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012. 16

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ The term borrowed from Panagiota Manoli in *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*

first wave, as we believe, mainly due to the time period when the whole process started in early 1990s. For many states that are currently in the process of implementing the European Neighborhood development plans (and some also pursuing the Eastern Partnership agenda), this whole issue is also about the realization of the dream of reintegrating into Europe – getting back to one’s origins (e.g. the cases of Georgia, and Ukraine). If so, then how do those two waves differ?

For a number of reasons, including the diversity of the definitions, and especially due to the obscurity around them, we decided to not adopt any of the fixed definitions. Neither Nye, nor Buzan (or any other regionalist scholar) suggests a threshold of the indicators or criteria could prove to be helpful in the study of the region. One also needs to remember that the purpose of this study is NOT to analyze the Black Sea Region vis-à-vis any of the standard definitions and decide whether the Black Sea area satisfies the criteria to be called a region according to this or that definition. Our goal is to analyze intra-regional processes in order to check the depth of the coalescence. Thus there is no need to adopt any particular definition of the region or to produce one for that matter.

1.4. Theoretical Eclecticism

Conceptual pluralism of the scholarly literature around the phenomenon of region formation somewhat preconditioned the multiplicity and eclecticism of the theoretical frameworks within which regions are defined and analyzed. Depending on the key question or the core of the theoretical perspectives, various groupings of regionalism theories exist. One of the ways to group these theories is to look at preconditions that support or impede the process of regional integration, study the processes of economic cooperation and peace building, and observe the trends and changes in intra-regional dynamics. Some scholars consider the role of actors (e.g. states, intra-state interest groups etc.) to be the key in grouping the theories of region building and their development. In other cases, the determinant is the level of analysis. While all those approaches have their own strengths, more often than not, the theories of regionalization and region development are presented under three major groups of frameworks: a) *systemic theories* analyze regions as parts of the international political-economic structure; under this group the attention is mainly devoted to the role of the hegemon, which might become the trigger or the initiator of the region building process. Mercantilism and structural interdependence, as well as the impact of globalization are also

emphasized in this theory b) *liberal theories of interdependence* mainly focus on intra-regional processes, underlining the importance of the economic well-being, etc. c) *domestic theories* mainly deal with convergence, the type of regimes – i.e. the level of democracy in those states that represent a particular region, the degree of unity inside of those state, etc.⁸³ We will try to examine them individually in our discourse below.

Another widespread approach to regionalism is to assess where the driving force for the region formation comes from – from within the region or from the outside – and split the theories into those two groups accordingly. In this regard, we have two major clusters: the *outside-in theories* and the *inside-out theories*. *Outside-in theories* (e.g. *neo-realism and structural interdependence*) try to analyze the phenomenon of the region from the perspective of the international system, looking at various triggers and drivers outside of any given region and their impact on the respective regional dynamics. The *inside-out theories* (e.g. *constructivism, neo-functionalism, intergovernmental institutionalism*), on the other hand, are interested in better understanding the delicate interplay between the region building and regional interdependence, paying a special attention to institutions (in case of the neo-functionalism and intergovernmental institutionalism) and regional identity (in case of the constructivism). Here the drivers from within the region are triggering the integration and coalescence among the states belonging to the given region. Below we will present the key principles and core points of each of those theories and/or presented clusters in order to, once again, demonstrate the complexity of the mosaic of the scholarly work on regionalism and the accompanying ambiguity.

Some scholars prefer to differentiate between the *New and the Old Regionalisms*. The perspective of New vs Old Regionalism is very similar to the outside-in and the inside-out clusters. The difference is that in the former case the focus is on timing and its characteristics (the difference between the Cold War era and the post-Cold War period), whereas in the latter case, the emphasis is put on the driving force of region building and its origins. In order to get a better understanding of the complexity of the theoretical work around regions, we would like to present the vision of Hettne and Innotai, which beautifully describes the eclectic discourse on regions and theoretical perspectives around it. While touching on the changes of

⁸³ For more details around this way grouped theories of the region building and regionalism please see Fawcett, Louise L, and Andrew Hurrell, eds. *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

the content and the context of regionalization – a topic that draws the interest of numerous scholars – Hettne and Innotai write:

1. “Whereas old regionalism was formed in a bipolar Cold War context, the new is taking shape in a more multipolar World order;
2. Whereas old regionalism was created *from outside and from above* (i.e. the Superpowers sphere of influence) new regionalism is a more spontaneous process *from within and from below*;
3. Whereas old regionalism was specific with regards to objectives (maintaining the blocs of the Superpowers) new regionalism is more comprehensive and multidimensional”⁸⁴

Inside out approach of regional studies is also called the *cultural approach*. It takes commonalities within any given region as natural delineation factors differentiate any given region from the neighboring areas. The key assumption in this approach is that the cultural criteria are considered to be natural. Outside in approach is otherwise known as the *geopolitical approach*. Systemic factors, states and geography play the key role in this approach and the region represents an arena for great power politics and reactions to one another’s decisions.⁸⁵ This overall vision of the region formation from outside in vis-à-vis the inside out approach clearly resonates with Neumann’s *Region Building Approach* (RBA).⁸⁶ Through the investigation of the internal and external factors driving the region building, RBA somehow unifies the two aforementioned approaches; they both take part in the overall process of building a region. However there are key differences between the Region Building Approach and the other approaches. The cultural and geopolitical perspectives of region formation take the existence of any given region *as granted* and proceed to examine it as an entity whose borders and content are permanently changing. Accordingly, the main emphasis is placed on the analysis of regional changes, trying to respond to the question of how do they occur. On the other hand, Region Building Approach

⁸⁴ Hettne B and Inotai A. (1994) The New Regionalism Implications for Global Development and International Security, The United Nations University, WIDER Research for Action pp. 1-2

⁸⁵ For more details about approaches to regional studies please see Neumann Iver B. A Nordin and/or Baltic Sea Region? The Discursive Structure of Region Building in Wellmann Christian (ed.) (1992) Baltic Sea Region: Conflict Or Cooperation? Munster; also Neumann Iver B Making Regions: Northern Europe in Neumann Iver B. (1999) Uses of the Other: The East in European Identity, Manchester University Press; as well as Waever Ole Joenniemi Pertti Region in the Making A Blueprint for Baltic Sea Politics in Wellmann Christian (ed.) (1992) Baltic Sea Region: Conflict Or Cooperation? Munster

⁸⁶ Ibid.

does not take the existence of any region for granted; rather its key purpose is to examine the *genesis of a region*.⁸⁷

Along with the above-mentioned approaches, Waever and Joenniemi propose a fourth approach – the *Network Approach*. The idea is that regions occur as a consequence of various important changes in the areas of technology, communication, and transport. Mapping and studying the patterns and traits of various interactions would help a great deal in explaining region building and its transformation.⁸⁸

As mentioned several times before, due to the complexity and diversity in the approaches to regions, it is impossible to come up with a distinctive and clear set of criteria for [what?]; rather the factors are further blended into each other, and depending on how they are defined or interpreted, different approaches (often overlapping with one another) ensue. Such theoretical eclecticism is further revealed through the exploration of individual theories and their proposition of how to investigate and/or explain regions.

1.4.1. The Cluster of the Outside-in Theories

One of the first theories under this outside in cluster of the regionalism theories that we would like to describe is *neo-realism*. It focuses on the confrontations of power politics, seeing the whole international system as a battlefield of great powers. Unlike neo-realists, realists considered the emergence of regions as an anomaly that they did not consider to be important enough to account for or analyze.⁸⁹ According to this theory, the constraints of the anarchical international system and the role of the competition for power are among the key factors to be stressed.⁹⁰ For the neo-realists, the emergence of regions, as well as their development and/or transformation, is very much linked to whatever Stephen Walt calls the politics of alliances. From this perspective, the region can be formed in response to some outside challenges. Therefore, there is no crucial difference between the political and economic processes going on within the context of the region. .⁹¹ The analysis of alliance formation within the neo-

⁸⁷ Neumann Iver B. (1992) p. 69

⁸⁸ Ibid. Waever Ole & Joenniemi Pertti (1992)

⁸⁹ Hurrell A. Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics Review of International Studies Vol. 21. #4 Oct. 1995, 331-358. P.346

⁹⁰ Waltz Kenneth (1979) **Theory of International Politics**, McGraw Hill Inc.

⁹¹ Walt Stephen M. (1987) **Origins of Alliances**, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY

realist framework suggests four different ways of how and why the regional groupings may emerge:

- A. As a response to the existence of the actual and/or potential hegemonic power, with the aim to counter balance it;
- B. As a resistance to the unlimited use of hegemonic power through the establishment of regional institution(s) and/or regional entities;
- C. Small states seeking for more systemic and consistent regional cooperation *with* the hegemon (or in the other scenario, when the states are very weak, their goal becomes to bandwagon instead);
- D. And finally through the hegemon itself being interested in the formation of a regional entity and/or institution, in order to run the regional affairs in a more consistent way (creating some normative foundation);⁹²

Another important feature of neo-realism which links the states' interests and region building to each other is the unwavering rationality of states. Neo-realists believe that states are rational actors who are willing to maximize their benefits, while carefully balancing the possibilities of failures and gains. From the neo-realist point of view, maximization of benefits might also be done through regional structures. However, because of numerous gaps and inconsistencies, this theory lacks the necessary explanatory power required for the analysis of regional dynamics.

The theory of neo-realism and the concept of the politics of alliances speak very little about the character of the regional cooperation, once the regional entity is established and keeps operating. This pressing challenge can explain the commonly attributed weakness of the neo-realist theory to explain certain regional dynamics. As for the aspect of rationality, neo-realism practically considers no other forces, other than the rational states. Even if we agree with the assumption that the states are rational actors, willing to get benefits through various means, including region building, it is equally important to account for what drives those decisions of the states? Unfortunately neo-realism is not interested in providing answers to those questions, thus leaving us with huge gaps that we have to fill in with the support of other theories described below.

⁹² Walt Stephen M. (1987) *Ibid.* pp. 40-49

Another theoretical perspective that also looks at regional dynamics from outside in, considering any region to be a by-product of systemic changes, is globalization. However there is no single agreed vision about how regionalism and globalization are interrelated to each other. On one hand, examination of regions from the perspective of *structural interdependence and globalization* is in a certain way contradictory. There is no consensus on whether regionalism and globalization are friends or foes to one another. On the other hand, increasing economic interdependence, along with the rising global challenges, requires non-regional, issue specific international institutions. Cooperation in the areas of economy, politics, and security across the OECD gave way to a Western, rather than a regional, cohesion. All this contradict region formation and regionalism per se.⁹³ Considering that regions are linked to the modernist idea of territorial sovereignty, whereas globalization refutes this concept completely, then globalization can be perceived to be opposing the process of regionalism.⁹⁴ In addition to this, regionalism has often been accused of becoming a stumbling block towards multilateralism. This is because regionalism often generates protectionism, confining participants to closed economic units. Moreover, the weak states and their interests are sidelined within the regional blocs, as the strong parties play the key decision-making roles.⁹⁵ However there is another perspective, which sees regionalism and globalization more positively interlinked without any opposition.

According to this point of view, global integration created a strong incentive for economic regionalism. Gradually deepening integration is often accompanied by problems which need to be solved at the regional level. Also, region is often considered to be one of the most viable levels, at which it is possible to “reconcile the integrative market and technological pressure towards globalization and integration on the one hand” and have “fission and fragmentation” on the other.⁹⁶ The proponents of friendship between regionalism and globalization believe that the existence of regional preferences might be a good back up plan in case of failure. In addition, it might also encourage competitive liberalization, as big industries within the regions try to reap the benefits of economies of scale and thus promote trade liberalization.⁹⁷

⁹³ Hurrell Andrew (1995) “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in the World Politics” Review of International Studies. 21, pp. 331-358, p. 345

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 55

⁹⁵ For more details on the regionalism suspending impact on globalization please see Pelagidis Theodore and Papatotiriou Harry Globalization or Regionalism? States, markets and the Structure of International Trade Review of International Studies, 2002 (28) 519-535

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 346

⁹⁷ For more details please see Milner Helen V. Industries, Governments and Regional Trade Blocs in Mansfield Edward D. and Milner Helen V. (eds.) (1997) Political Economy of Regionalism New York: Columbia University Press

Some of the scholars, who also believe that regionalism and globalization are not mutually exclusive phenomena, build their arguments on the notion of *reterritorialization*. After the end of the Cold War, the idea of *detrterritorialization* was linked to the weakening of the Westphalian vision of space, where states had been the primary holders of sovereignty. Accordingly, the period of post-sovereignty was associated with redistribution of power vis-à-vis the post-statist territory. This process was perceived as reterritorialization and was considered to be an important stage, when the actors are inspired to re-territorialize the global space through framing regions.⁹⁸

On top of all the above-mentioned arguments around regionalism versus globalization, another direction of thinking does not adopt the dichotomous vision, but rather sees those two processes as ‘two points [along] a continuum and not [really] opposed.’⁹⁹

The different approaches to the interplay of globalization and regionalization presented above clearly show how vast and diverse the perspectives of regional analysis are. At the same time, the multitude of perspectives and their contradictions about how globalization can help (or not) with the understanding of regionalization in the globalized world does not allow us to provide distinct criteria or tools, which would provide more clarity around already ambiguous phenomenon.

The Regional Security Complex Theory is another way of looking at regionalism and region formation. This theory envisages the transformation of the global structure after the Cold War from bi-polar (2 (USA and USSR) + 3 (China, Germany, Japan)) to something along the lines of uni-multi-polar (1 (USA) + 4 + regions).¹⁰⁰ Distinguishing among *superpowers* (have the ability to utilize their global military reach), *great powers* (do not possess great capabilities in all military-security sectors, but still is treated as a potential superpower) and *regional powers* (have the capabilities to lead within a region, but are not considered into power calculations by higher level powers on the global level), it sets a new framework for the analysis of developments within a region, focusing on the region as a separate level of analysis.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ For more details on how globalization encourages framing regions from post sovereign space please see Katzenstein Peter J. (1996) *The Culture of National Security Norms and Identity in World Politics* Columbia University Press

⁹⁹ Pettman Ralph *Globalization and Regionalism: The Costs of Dichotomy* in Hettne Bjorn, Inotai Andras and Sunkel Osvaldo (eds.) (1999) *Globalization and The New Regionalism*, New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 199

¹⁰⁰ Buzan Barry and Waever Ole (2003), *Regions and Powers The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 37-39

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p. 34-40

For the Regional Security Complex (RSC) theorists, RSC is a purely analytical concept. Therefore, in order to qualify for the RSC, a group of states or other entities must satisfy an objectively existing set of criteria. “RSC is a very specific, functionally defined type of region, which may or may not coincide with more general understanding of a region.”¹⁰² Power relations and patterns of amity and enmity are two types of features that define the structure and character of the RSC.¹⁰³ The following four variables are used for the analysis of the security structure within any given region:

- boundaries differentiating one RSC from another
- composition of two or more autonomous units
- distribution of power among those units
- social construction of the RSC reflecting patterns of amity and enmity¹⁰⁴

One of the challenges of the given theory is related to the fact that while their creators and proponents do not perceive themselves to be constructivists (that’s why we still put this theory under the outside in cluster), social construction of the RSC, with the reflected trends of amity/enmity, is nonetheless very similar to the constructivist perception that regions are social constructs and not pre-determined spaces. Identifying those trends would also be difficult. On the other hand, we have to admit that this theory provides us with more clarity as to how the Regional Security Complex can occur within a particular environment. But again, as indicated in the fourth criteria presented above, tracing the patterns of amity and enmity is a very difficult task, because the perception of a certain behavior as friendly or hostile is based on subjective reasoning. Thus, it is very hard to analyze such patterns.

Regions do not only occur around the security issues that need to be addressed collectively. Therefore, when it comes to other areas of regional cooperation, being it culture, economy or something else, the Regional Security Complex perspective becomes inapplicable. This is a huge limitation for a theoretical perspective, as it outliers many entities created on the basis of non-security interests. Understanding the limitations and willing to make this theory applicable to a wider spectrum of contexts, authors of this theoretical approach tried expand its applicability to non-military areas as well. However it turned out to be a very difficult task.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 48

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 49

¹⁰⁴ Buzan Barry and Waever Ole (2003), Ibid. p. 53

A new concept of ‘*security constellation*’ became necessary for successfully enhancing the security complex perspective to non-military areas. This concept could give us an opportunity to study the spatial aspects of non-military security. But unfortunately, of the successful implementation of this idea does not seem to be feasible at this stage. The major impediment is that non-military security is an extremely broad concept that includes security relationships at all possible levels. Consequently, defining and studying the phenomenon of security becomes very difficult.¹⁰⁵

1.4.2. The Cluster of the Inside-Out Regionalism Theories

The Second cluster of theories of regionalism can easily be divided into two main groups. On one hand we have the rationalist approach and on the other, the reflectionist view. Generally speaking, regionalist scholars in the discipline of international relations are also divided into two main groups, which can also be considered as some sort of a neoliberal-neorealist debate. A group of (*neo*)-*functionalists* believe in the idea of region formation with the aim of sectoral cooperation in various areas of economy. This increases the interdependence among states, which at the end of the day, leads to the natural legitimization of the formation of supranational structures, limiting the sovereignty of states that are interlinked and interdependent - this process is called the spillover effect.¹⁰⁶ While discussing various theories of regional integration, we need to emphasize the difference between neo-functionalism and classical functionalism. The major political strategy of the latter is that *form follows function* - an aspect that has often been criticized by neo-functionalists and not only. In contrast, *neo-functionalists* believe that *function follows interest*. They aim at investigating and explaining ‘‘how and why [do the states] voluntarily mingle, merge and mix with their neighbors so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflict between themselves.’’¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, one of the weaker sides of the functionalists is their poor record of predictions, as well as the scarcity of scholarly rigor. As for neo-functionalism, it also looks very implausible. Even Haas would recommend perceiving this theory more as a pre-theory, without expecting it to make any predictions. The fact that the theory of neo-functionalism is based on empirical grounds

¹⁰⁵ For more details about the expansion of the security complex idea to the security constellation please see Buzan Barry Waever Ole De Wilde Jaap (1998) *Security: A New Framework of Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner

¹⁰⁶ Rosamond Ben (2000) **Theories of European Integration** New York: St. Martin's Press pp. 58-59

¹⁰⁷ For more details about neo-functionalism and its major focus please see Haas Ernst B. *The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pre-theorizing*, International Organization, Vol. 24. Issue 4. Autumn 1970, pp.606-646, p. 610

represents, at the same time, the strength and the weakness of this theory,. The reason is that the empirical results are likely to differ from time to time, context to context, and thus rendering the given theoretical framework inapplicable to certain cases.¹⁰⁸

Despite all the differences and disagreements between the functionalist and neo-functionalist scholars, they are both criticized by *inter-governmentalists*. This criticism comes from the rationalists' negligence of the state interests and building their perceptions on the automatic process of a spillover. For inter-governmentalists, regional entities are created because this represents the rational interest of respective countries, acknowledged and pursued by the respective governments at the time being. Such decisions are made on the basis of calculations of costs and benefits related to the respective integration process.¹⁰⁹ Two of the most famous inter-governmentalists Moravcsik and Mattli focus on the framework of demand and supply of the region building process, where demand comes from the market actors and supply from the political ones; the success of the region formation and regional integration depends on the political willingness to supply the integration, which in itself depends on the payoff of integration to political leaders.¹¹⁰ While the dependence of the integration outcomes on the payoffs to political leaders makes sense (more you get, more you are willing to integrate), still it is not completely clear what might be regarded as a demand and supply of integration or how (if at all) this approach differs from the demand-supply focus in the revised neo-functionalists perceptions.¹¹¹

Our attempt to present the richness and complexity of the theoretical approaches to regions and their analysis would not be complete without unpacking one more theory – *liberal institutionalism*. Strongly focused on states, its primary purpose is to understand the rationale of the formation of the states' interests. Liberal institutionalists argue that states foster interdependence with other states with which they share the common interests. This in itself pursues cooperation and thus regionalization. Creation of formal and/or informal institutions by countries is an attempt to find solutions to common problems. For that states create functionalized and issue specific regimes. The more problems are solved through such partnership and collaboration, the more structured those collaborations become, thus

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.628

¹⁰⁹ Ibid Rosamond Ben (2000). pp. 74-81

¹¹⁰ Mattli W. (1999) *The logic of Regional Integration Europe and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,) p. 13-14

¹¹¹ For more details please see Nye (1971) p. 64-75

supporting their respective countries with in the maximization of their benefits.¹¹² All this sounds very promising, however how often do states efficiently stick to such cooperation ties once they are made? What happens when some states' specific interests contradict with those commonly identified interests of the wider group of states? As in many other cases discussed above, we can find it challenging to come up with comprehensive and clear answers to all those questions.

The last theory presented in this paper that also tries to explain the regional dynamics is *constructivism*. Formation of regions requires certain commonalities in the interests of the states belonging to a particular region. As identities are the bases of interests,¹¹³ which contribute to the integration of some states under a region, while leaving others outside of it, the Constructivist explanation of regionalization in general and in the context of the Black Sea region in particular will also be interesting.

From the constructivists' point of view, any structure and/or institution is a social construct which can be presented as a relatively stable set of identities and interests, resulting from reciprocal interactions. In other words, what is extremely important is the process of interactions between states, during which actors define their interests while defining situations.¹¹⁴ Another important factor here is that identities are not only self-defined, but they are also inter-subjective. This means that during the process of interaction, socially created "knowledge" is distributed among actors, which in turn creates a collective identity.¹¹⁵

The Constructivist approach opened the door to a new wave of regionalism __ the so called *new regionalism*, which differentiates between regionalism, described as a region formation on the basis of government policies and regionalization; the latter is defined as the emergence of regional formations propelled by the market forces. The different perceptions of the concepts of regionness and regional identity once again make it extremely hard to come up with robust theories that can be applied to different context or specific regions.

¹¹² For details about how interdependence and collaboration leads to the creation of some common platforms (e.g. regimes and/or institutions) please see Robert Keohane Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War pp. 269-300 in Baldwin David A (ed.) (1993), Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate . New York: Columbia University Press

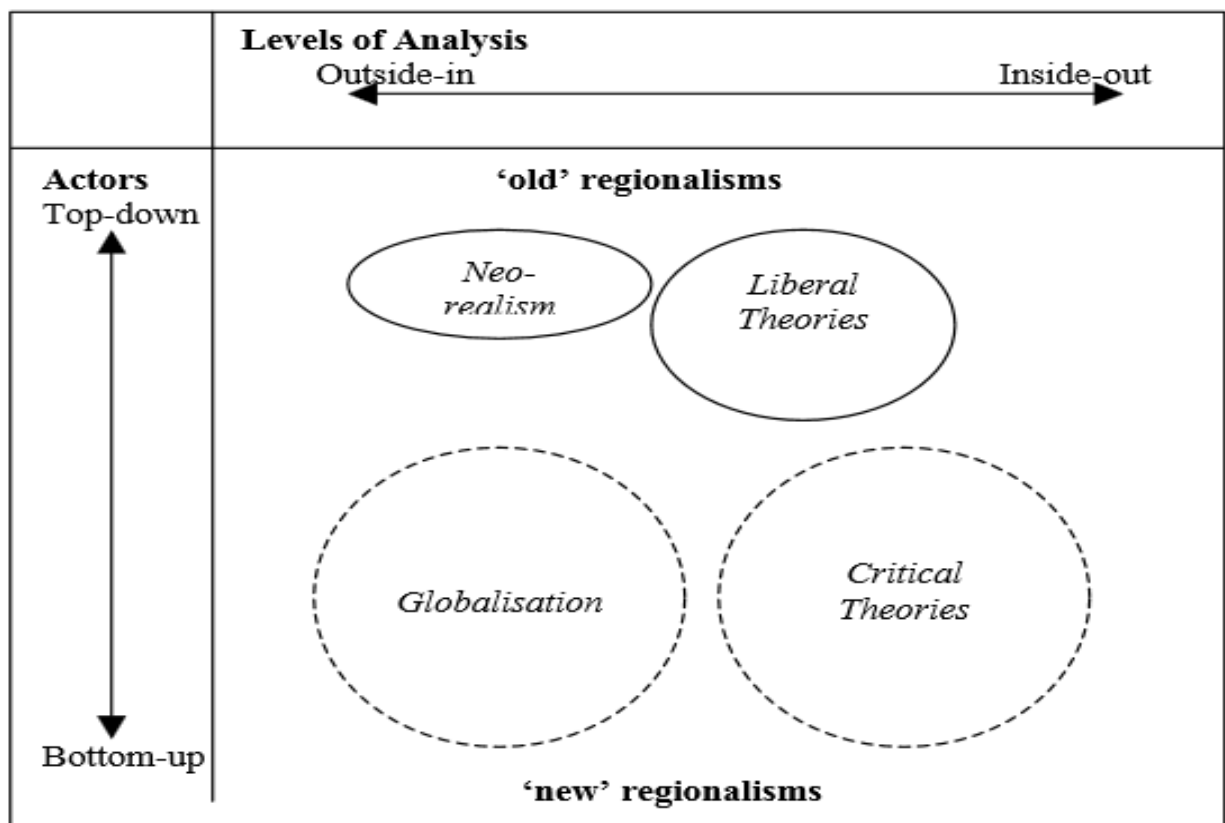
¹¹³ Wendt Alexander Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics, *International Organizations*, Vol. 46, No 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391-425, p. 398

¹¹⁴ Ibid

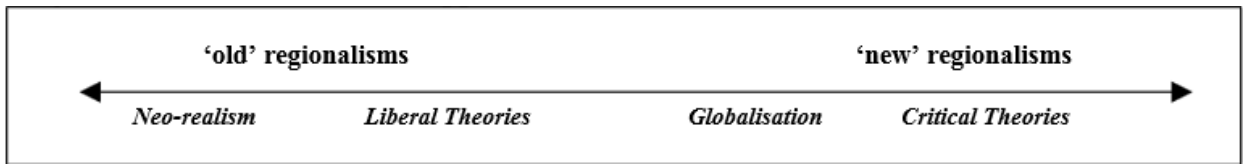
¹¹⁵ Wendt Alexander *ibid*.

As we can see from the multitude of the presented theoretical perspectives in this chapter, numerous/countless attempts have been made to examine and explain regional dynamics. Of course, not all these theories were created solely for the purpose of investigating regions, but their principles and core visions do try to address this phenomenon as well. Some scholars focus on the states, whereas others disregard them, mainly considering systemic perspectives instead. Obviously these theories look at regions from different angles. However one can still find some commonalities as well. In particular, some theories the actors to be the main determinants, while others regard the level of analysis as the main determining factor. With that in mind, Fabrizio Tassinari first created the bi-dimensional matrix presented below in Figure 1, and then adjusted it as presented in Figure 2.¹¹⁶

Figure 1. Bi-Dimensional Matrix of Regionalisms



¹¹⁶Fabrizio Tassinari: *Mare Europaeum: Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to Post-Enlargement Europe*, Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen, 2004 (PhD Dissertation)
<http://www.publications.fabriziotassinari.net> (last accessed on September 12, 2014 at 6:54 pm Georgia time)
 pp.32-33

Figure 2. *The Continuum of Approaches Revised*

The first matrix (Figure 1.) is a more enriched version of Neumann's matrix of levels of analysis, adding the aspect of actors and placing the theories examining regions in the respective corners of the matrix. As the matrix shows, theories on the left are more focused on systems and their role in the regional dynamics, while moving to the right, theories get more concerned with internal factors, as the driving forces of region building and respective changes. In addition, depending on whether the emphasis is made on the role of states and/or political elites versus individuals and informal groups, theories are placed either in the upper or lower side of the matrix.

While considering the bi-dimensional matrix helpful in picturing different theories of regionalism from both levels of analysis and actors perspectives, Tassinari nonetheless proposes revisions, which are reflected in the second matrix (Figure 2.). From his point of view, one dimensional continuum is necessary in order to better present the security analysis of regions. However, in this case, the emphasis is not placed on outside-in/inside-out aspects, but rather on *actorness* — the role of different players and their influence on region building.¹¹⁷

While many of the theories described so far are general theories of international relations also trying to explain regional dynamics (except the ones aiming at explanations of European integration e.g. intergovernmentalism etc.), only a few of them tried to develop visions that would be purely focused on regions. One of the few scholars who tried to set a concrete baseline for further analysis of the region development is Paasi, the author of the theory of *Regional Institutionalization*. According to this theory, regional institutionalization is defined as a process through which a territorial unit becomes an established entity and is identified in political, economic, social, security and administrative practices and social consciousness..¹¹⁸ Under this process, the construction of regions is considered to be a permanent transformation of the spatial system within which regions emerge, exist and either

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Tassinari (2004) p. 33

¹¹⁸ Paasi Ansi (1991) Deconstructing Regions: Notes on the Scales of Spatial Life, *Environment and Planning* vol. 23, issue 2, pp. 239-256, p. 244-245

disappear or transform.¹¹⁹ Paasi's theory provides us with four evident stages of a territorial unit getting established as a region. Those stages are briefly presented below:¹²⁰

- Stage 1: Construction of Territorial Shape __ at this stage, regional boundaries are identified and expectations are developed for the respective social practices within the given region. Power relations within and outside the region is of key importance at this stage;
- Stage 2: Formation of the Symbolic Shape __ the name of the region emerges during this stage. Given region becomes established as a socio-cultural unit, the image of which is linked to the collective practices of the region;
- Stage 3: Emergence of Institutions __ thanks to political elite, mass media and other factors, both formal and non-formal institutions are established, in accordance with other political, economic, security, and social practices. The creation of a regional culture depends on the involvement of the inhabitants of the region into the regional community; Stage 4 Establishment of a Region __ this stage is essentially the continuation of the region formation, as this is a never ending process for Paasi. At this level of development, the given region may even be involved in power and resource struggles at the higher level;

Paasi's theory of regional institutionalization is further complemented by the conceptualization of a *Regional Identity Framework*,¹²¹ within which the following components are identified:

- Regional Identity of Inhabitants __ this term refers to having understanding of ones' *own* regional group as well as having a sense of belonging to this particular group;
- Identity of a Region __ this is the same as an image of a region, this can be both subjective (what is the image of a region among inhabitants within and outside of the given region), as well as objective (scientific classification of a region on the basis of its culture, environment, architecture etc.);
- Spatial Image (Raumbilder) __ this image is created on the basis of contour (demarcation between inside and outside a region), complexity (number and quality of such spatial places like historic centers, architecture, landscape etc.) and coherence (regional cohesion and

¹¹⁹ Paasi Ansi, Reconstructing Regions and Regional Identity, Nether lecture, 7.11.2000, Nijmegen, The Netherlands p. 6

¹²⁰ Paasi Ansi (1986) The Institutionalization of Regions: Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity, *Fennia* vol. 164, issue 1, pp. 105-146

¹²¹ Knapp Wolfgang (2003) Regional Identity __ A Conceptual Framework, ILS NRW, p 5-6

solidarity). It creates a mental product, which serves as the basis for the development of regional consciousness.

While those two perspectives are very interesting, from the practical point of view it's very hard to apply to them, especially the principles of the Regional Identity Framework. The difficulty lies in the blend of subjective versus objective realities based on which the identity develops and re-shapes over time. Differentiating the identity of a region from the regional identity of its inhabitants is also a challenging task. While looking at Paasi' stages of the institutionalization of a region, we face another challenge related to the fourth step. If institutionalization is a never ending process, how can we academically study something that never represents a final product? Furthermore, there is no clear vision of how final product should look like or what features it might have at the highest institutionalized stage. As it seems from Paasi's theory, any region is a process in itself with only interim (at any given time) results; The developments of a region can be progressive in character (leading to more integration), as well as regressive (in some challenging cases even leading to disintegration).

By showing such a complexity, we simply want to explain why, within the framework of the given research, we do not either select any of the definitions of a region or even suggest ours. In addition, we decided not to apply any of the existing theoretical perspectives to analyze the dynamics of the Black Sea area. However this does not mean that we do not have any clear vision, or that our research will lack reliability because of this decision. We will be pursuing empirical research, unpacking the current reality and trying to make sense of it. Without giving any preference to either outside-in or inside-out approaches, both interests and priorities of the players inside the so called region and beyond its boundaries will be assessed. We will also try to let the numbers speak (being it trade, human flows or investments). While we are aware of the multifaceted discourse around regions, conducting the empirical study without basing it on any of the existing conceptual or theoretical frameworks will give us more freedom and flexibility for analysis. Doing otherwise would only limit us to the anyway incomplete perspective of understanding or studying a region.

Chapter 2. The Multiplicity of External Initiatives: The Black Sea Conceptions of the United States and European Union¹²²

2.1. Introduction

The analysis of the dynamics of the Black Sea area need to be conducted with a consideration of interests and priorities of different players, both within and outside the so-called region. While this research does not apply either outside-in or inside-out approaches of regional studies (details discussed in Chapter 1 on Regionalism), we still believe that it is of crucial importance to understand the existing perceptions and strategic viewpoints of different international and regional players. Equally important is to track patterns in their approaches and examine their impact (if any) on the regional dynamics. Regardless of how regions (including the Black Sea area) might be perceived considering their typology, classification, definition and so on, they exist and operate as a part of the wider circle of states, organizations and interest groups. Therefore partnerships, collaborations and strategic interests of various players do matter in – and have an influence on – the formation and transformation of dynamics among states, including the ones within any particular region.

This chapter aims to investigate a role and influence of external parties which are often perceived as main drivers of or contributors to the Black Sea region-building process. While the Black Sea littoral states, individually or in groups, deal with many states outside their borders, our analysis will be focused on the two major players: the United States of America and European Union. Needless to say, we do not focus on these two stakeholders by chance. The EU, as part of the preparation program for 2004 enlargement and afterwards, has been trying to develop a more coherent approach to its eastern neighbors, than the one it previously employed. After 9/11 Washington has increased its efforts for enhancing security, paying more and more attention to the Black Sea littoral states and their neighbors. Furthermore, Romania and Bulgaria – two Black Sea coastal countries – became NATO members. Hence, the transatlantic family, with the US still playing the leading role, faced a new reality and a fresh need to address and reevaluate their policies towards the eastern neighborhood. We do not consider it expedient to examine/consider NATO as an independent player whose

¹²² While the given research is focused on the analysis of dynamics of the Black Sea littoral states, this particular chapter will expand its original boundaries with an emphasis on the interests of key outside players. This is because the major external parties like the European Union, United States of America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in their strategic visions do not limit themselves only to the coastal countries; consequently the analysis of their roles and influence on the Black Sea Region would be otherwise impossible.

interests in and impact on the Black Sea region might be studied separately. The reason is that in many cases the US and NATO interests towards the Black Sea region (and not necessarily towards individual states) are similar. Therefore, we will be keeping in mind the similarity of their interests for our discussions of the US and NATO approaches towards this area.

If we compare the analysis of the EU and US conceptions of the Black Sea region presented below, we will see that the EU discussions are bigger. This is because this organization has developed more initiatives related to the Black Sea basin countries and their eastern neighbors. Romania and Bulgaria EU membership preparation and processes after the 2007 enlargement (leading to the creation of the Black Sea Synergy for example) further enriched the EU work vis a vis the Black Sea region. Areas of intervention of the Union were also diverse starting from the economy and ending up with cultural exchange programs and tourism. The official Washington was mainly interested in securitization of the Black Sea region.

2.2. Overview of the European Union's Road towards the Black Sea Region and Analysis of Its Impact on the Coalescence of the Black Sea Littoral States

While discussing why the European Union would pay attention to the Black Sea area and decide to develop its strategic vision towards this entity (in the format of the Black Sea Synergy), thus shifting from the previously mainstreamed organizational approach and the preference to deal with the countries outside of the EU individually, mainly in the form of bilateral relationships, one needs to stop for a moment to look backwards to analyze past experiences and historical context. In order to gain a better insight on this issue, it might be helpful to consider the historical context/setting of events and processes in the Black Sea area that took place after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. That way we would be able to develop a clearer understanding of the processes that happened inside the EU and its neighborhood, which pushed the organizational leadership to develop an official strategic vision of the Black Sea region. We will also try to see how the European Union reacted to the wave of societal and political changes internally and in its surroundings.

First of all, we need to be reminded that during the Cold War period, the Black Sea area constituted/was the frontier of the East-West rivalry. Its location between Europe and Asia transformed it into a zone of confrontation. However, the superpowers of that period (USSR

and the US) managed to keep the pressure and tensions under control, providing some sort of stability veiled in different ways. But the situation changed after the end of the Cold War. Since then, many countries from the Black Sea area have been thrown into conflicts, experiencing clashes on the grounds of ethnic and religious disagreements, as well as political arguments. Economic challenges in the form of unemployment, inflation, corruption and poverty were not rare either. Unfortunately the efforts of different governmental and non-governmental organizations to settle the disputes and help the nations with findings efficient solutions to their problems were not often successful.¹²³ Consequently the existence of such a **turbulent space** in the vicinity of EU definitely did have a big influence on the European Union and its member states.

The end of the Cold War was followed by the disappearance of the superpowers from the region, (previously balancing each other and keeping their spheres of influence relatively stable) thus leaving the area in perpetual turmoil and subject to constant disagreements. Some positive changes also happened, as the Black Sea area states, which finally had an opportunity to be transformed into the space where multiple powers, would coordinate their efforts to contribute to its overall development. Never before had this part of the world had an opportunity to enjoy what Mustafa Aydin calls “**a truly pluralist international future.**”¹²⁴ Throughout its history, the Black Sea area was under the domination of the singular power of either the Byzantine, the Ottoman or the Russian empires. Only the post-Cold War geopolitical changes opened up this part of the world to multiple players and different options of problem solving and stability building mingled together. Consequently these circumstances can be considered as the **second** important factor showing the EU historic route towards developing the Black Sea region conception.

Increase in the **interest of western companies in the Caspian oil and gas** and their strong desire to access those energy resources via the Black Sea region is the **third** aspect related to the geopolitical changes in the post-Cold War era. This also needs to be considered in relation to the European Union, as whatever happens in regards to energy resources of the Caspian

¹²³ For more details and specifications about the problems within the Black Sea region and their influence on Europe please see Aydin Mustafa Sources of Insecurity and Conflict in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region, Turkey Insight, November 2001, pp. 125-147

¹²⁴ Aydin Mustafa Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After EU Enlargement ISS Occasional Paper #53, June 2004, p. 6

Sea and whoever gets the biggest stake in the proceeding decision making processes, will have a direct impact on the West especially on the European Union and its member states.¹²⁵

Fourth factor is linked to Russia – a country which was, is and will be one of the key influential players on the Black Sea regional dynamics that always needs a special attention. While for decades the Kremlin was the only ruler of what it called the “lower belly” and its surroundings (current Black Sea area), the post-Soviet dynamics **changed the role of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea space and its influence on it**. However the European Union will still need to consider Russia’s interests in this area. The way Russia will behave in the Black Sea area will influence the fates of many countries within and beyond this so-called region.¹²⁶

All those factors had been present since almost the early 1990s, however, for quite a while, they did not drive the European Union to envisage and approach the Black Sea area as a single entity. On the one hand, it was supposed to be clear that clashes and tensions, as well as economic and social hardships happening not so far from the EU boundaries, one way or the other, would have an impact on European nations as well (e.g. via trafficking, illegal migration to the EU states, smuggling, etc.). Thus the EU supposedly should have been more proactive in terms of not only developing the common approaches towards its neighboring countries, but also in taking more active steps in ensuring security, stability and prosperity. However, there were several reasons, which kept the European Union disengaged from many of the regional initiatives, and impelled it to pullback from assuming the leading role in the region; some of the key reasons are presented below:

1. Since 1990s a number of regional initiatives had been developed in the European Union’s neighborhood (whatever it looked like at any given time), but the Union did not feel very enthusiastic to take active part in them. The main drawback was linked to the **skepticism of the actual project initiators and/or to the lack of a strong desire to push further the regional ideas**; and without demonstrated political commitment of the participant countries, the EU stayed reluctant to lead those regional initiatives;¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 7

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Manoli Panagiota (2012) *The Dynamics of the Black Sea Subregionalism*, Ashgate page 184

2. For decades the European Union had been overwhelmed by a plethora of simultaneous relationships of different types with multiple countries; while **the main driver of the relationships of the EU with external countries was the enlargement process on the basis of bi-lateral relationships** with individual states, complexity of statuses (accession, pre-accession, cooperation etc.) and multiplicity of partnerships led the organization to the development of country specific frameworks of cooperation. This in turn impeded the creation of some sort of a uniform regional policy or a conception;¹²⁸

3. The third reason is directly connected to the **tensions existing between the European Union's supra-nationality and its cooperation with various regional entities.** (Sub)regional cooperation is often perceived as a complementary process of European integration and as a result it is often overlooked..¹²⁹

Such a historical background makes it clear that for decades, in the majority of cases, the EU still preferred and actively practiced the individual, bi-lateral and/or multi-lateral relationships with its neighboring countries. Even shortly after its single largest enlargement of May 2004 (analyzed in more details below), which moved the European Union closer to the Black Sea area, its partnerships and agreements with different states of the Black Sea area (and not only) were still very diverse and complex. The list below shows diverse relationships the EU had with various countries by that time:

- Greece as the EU member state since 1981
- EU accession countries divided into sub-groups: a) by that time negotiating candidates (Bulgaria and Romania) and b) non-negotiating candidate Turkey (with Association Agreement since 1963 and Customs Union since 1995)
- Non-EU states with Partnership Cooperation Agreements (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)
- Non-European Union States being part of the Stabilization and Association Process (Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro)

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 185 here Manoly mainly refers to sub-regional entities and processes, however, we believe that the logic applies to the regional units and dynamics as well; in addition for more information about seeing (sub)regionalism as a complementary process of European integration you can see Inotai A Correlations Between European Integration and sub-regional cooperation, theoretical background, experience and policy impacts, Working Paper. Budapest: Institute for World Economics, 1997

➤ Stability Pact Countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro)¹³⁰

We believe that the years of practicing bi- and/or multilateralism with different countries (whether preparing for EU membership or not), especially to the Union's east, did not help with building any solid foundation for the EU to play an efficient and successful leading role in pursuing and deepening regional dynamics in the Black Sea area. Nor did it help with the gradual formation of the organization's *clear* conception of what this region was, how it could further develop and what the EU's role in this could be.

This is not to say that we perceive EU's bi- or multilateralism as a negative process. We do acknowledge the contribution of the European Union in the overall development of its eastern and southern neighborhoods through different means. The organization's support in the development of different sectors of the individual neighboring countries as well as neighborhood wide enhancements and achievements also deserve a huge appreciation. However bilateralism blended with the multilateral initiatives sent very confusing messages about EU's plans of enlargement to the countries outside the Union. The below list with implemented, ongoing or potential multilateral initiatives supported by the European Union is a good proof of the complexity described above. On the one hand it shows the organizational contribution to the development of various sectors in the neighboring areas of the Union. On the other hand, it reveals how stretched the EU is in its partnerships, especially when it comes to the countries engaged in projects of cooperation with the EU.

- EU plans to create a common energy market known as the energy map;¹³¹
- EU desire to construct a new trans-Caspian trans-Black Sea energy corridor
- Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA)
- Interstate Oil and GAs Transportation to Europe (INOGATE)
- Black Sea Environmental Program
- Pan-European Transport Areas
- Danube and Black Sea Region Task Force (DABLAS)
- Black Sea Cross Border Cooperation Program¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid. Mustafa Aydin, 2004, p. 17

¹³¹ Framework of the Baku initiative between the EU and Caspian and Black Sea countries unifying under its umbrella EU, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Russia

While these areas were and are truly important to be developed and fostered, they are more of an example of EU's self-care¹³³ rather than the organization's intentional approach to support its neighboring states in the integration and development processes. Certainly, it is not wrong for any institution to think about its developmental plans and pursue appropriate policies in that respect. When such policies are mutually beneficial for both the EU and the countries outside the Union, it's even better. And we admit that this is the case with the EU supported multilateral projects listed above. However, we also argue that such diversity, complexity and the wide range of partner countries engaged in those initiatives, blended with bi-lateral relations practiced by the institution, did not provide the EU with a clear understanding of its role in the neighboring region(s), and nor did it help with clarifying what those region(s) present and how to collaborate with them (more arguments about this will be provided below when describing and analyzing various EU strategic documents). Countries outside the EU could have faced some challenges with understanding the EU vision towards them.

Some could argue that the initiatives presented above were not the EU's regional (region building) initiatives, but rather their primary goal was (could have been) to address challenges of particular areas (e.g. environment, transport etc.). Consequently a simple conclusion could be reached that using those multilateral projects as the EU's shortfalls in the direction of the Black Sea region building would not be right. What we can say in response is that the aim of this study is not to analyze those multilateral projects (nor any other policy or initiative discussed in this chapter) as region building initiatives, because we understand that not all of those (if not all) are like this. However what we are trying to do within the framework of this research is to understand how various (if at all) strategies, policies and/or projects funded by the EU influenced the level of coalescence among the Black Sea countries (at least the littoral ones - this is the target of the study), whether those projects clearly presented EU's vision and how they affected the intra-regional dynamics and why. Even if the initiatives are not purely regional, their impact can be diverse (they can still have positive or/and negative influence on the region building) as they anyway address some or all of the Black Sea states. Accordingly, if we apply criticism to various EU initiatives, it does not mean that we regard them to be

¹³² Efeğil Ertan and Musaoglu Neziha The EU's Black Sea Policy pp. 219-233, p.225 in Bozkurt Giray Saynur (ed.) (2013) *Blue Black Sea New Dimensions of History, Security, Strategy, Energy and Economy* Cambridge Scholars Publishing; also please see Manoli (2012) p. 189

¹³³ being it energy, transportation or environment, they are all important areas first of all for the European Union to further ensure its own prosperity and if those developments are transferred to other neighboring countries, their successful fight with the poverty and reaching sustainability and stability would further contribute to the EU's security and prosperity

wholly inefficient, in case they did not successfully foster the intra-regional dynamics in the Black Sea.

If one looks at the financial sources of some of the aforementioned multilateral projects, it would become clear that those initiatives, while contributing to the development of respective sectors, did also contribute to the split of the Black Sea area. For example, the former Soviet Union republics were provided with financial support through TACIS. The finances of the accession countries' were channeled through PHARE, ISPA and SAPHARD.¹³⁴ In addition, the support provided to Romania and Bulgaria as well as to Turkey (all three are Black Sea littoral countries) further contributed to the division of the Black Sea area clustering states into EU club members and non-members.¹³⁵ Consequently we argue that those initiatives and multilateral projects (regardless of how successfully they achieved their primary goals) contributed to further splitting the Black Sea area, creating more dividing factors than the unifying ones. This line will further be explored and unpacked in the examination of the EU role and its interests vis-a-vis the Black Sea Region below.

2.2.1. The EU's European Neighborhood Policy and Its Impact on Regional Dynamics

While actively practicing multilateralism, in combination with the bilateral relationships, with neighboring countries, the European Union reached the point when the revision of its approaches towards its surrounding became inevitable. The year of 2004 was very important in terms of *attempts* of shifting from very eclectic partnerships to a more systematized and better structured *uniform approach* of the Union towards its neighboring states. Whether done successfully or not, the EU tried to re-evaluate its role in its affairs with its eastern neighborhood. To be more specific, it was a period of revising and transforming (if possible) the EU's perception of its purpose in the EU-neighborhood relationships. Of course those changes were not accidental. 2004 enlargement of the Union and getting closer to its possible final boundaries made this institution re-think its policies and approaches. European Neighborhood Policy was in many ways the result of those changes.

Generally speaking, all the enlargements were catalysts in leading to the transformation of internal and/or external organizational policies and conceptions. The enlargement of the year

¹³⁴ Ibid. Manoli (2012) p. 189

¹³⁵ Ibid.

2004, which was often labeled as a “big bang” enlargement put a totally new reality in front of the European Union. It became very clear that the organization was reaching its *almost final boundaries* and thus it needed some special approach, somewhat more strategic and ideally uniformal conception towards its direct neighborhood.¹³⁶ It is important to examine the transformation of the European Union’s understanding of its neighborhood. The year of 2004 played an important role in this regards as well.

Whatever was labeled as the European Union Neighborhood after 2004 enlargement, in 1990s was perceived as a space consisting of three groupings of countries: Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The European Union approached those groups of states in two ways: **1) either it tried to promote some sort of stabilization and cooperation** or **2) the goal of preparation of states for the real European (and/or organizational) integration** with the application of conditionality was pursued.¹³⁷

2004 Enlargement brought a new definition and/or understanding of the European Union’s so called new abroad. It became very clear that the organization and its members would face a wide range of security issues, from trafficking to terrorism and organized crime. Sealing of the instability behind the borders that were so tight to the European Union would no longer be possible. A growing interdependence in the area of security and a need of extension of the zone of stability and prosperity was acknowledged by the European Union when it declared that the “interdependence - political and economic – with the Union’s neighborhood is already a reality.”¹³⁸ And this reality was argued to be “a means to promote stability, security and sustainable development both within and without the EU.”¹³⁹ In a paper on European Security Strategy, presented at the Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003 by then High Representative Javier Solana, we read:

¹³⁶ Ibid. Black Sea Region as the final neighborhood of the European Union which cannot expand endlessly and reaches its final enlargement point is also discussed and analyzed by Mustafa Aydin

¹³⁷ Missiroli Antonio The EU And Its Changing Neighborhood: Stabilization, Integration and Partnership in Dannreuther Rann (ed.) (2004) European Union Foreign and Security Policy: Towards A Neighborhood Strategy, London and New York: Routledge, p. 9.

¹³⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament Wider Europe __ Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors, Brussels, 11.3.2003 COM(2003) 104 final, p. 3

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 3

*'It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well governed. ... Neighbors who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organized crimes flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe. The reunification of Europe and the integration of acceding states will increase our security but they also bring Europe closer to troubled areas. Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations.'*¹⁴⁰

However, a while before the development of action plans and taking concrete steps, the European Union had not been quite sure (before the actual 2004 enlargement), which countries were supposed to be the ones that had to be addressed as part of the EU neighborhood approach. Initially the key focus was on Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.¹⁴¹ Later on, the concerns raised by the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Lindh about such a limited list of states led to the broadening of the discussion, as well as the mental boundaries of the neighborhood. This discourse also coincided with the idea of the "ring of friends" suggested by Romano Prodi, who was leading the European Commission during that period.¹⁴² Consequently the umbrella of the European Neighborhood Policy, aiming at presenting the key principles and priority areas of the Union towards its neighborhood, was finally expanded from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to the overall list of 16 states ranging from Morocco to the Black Sea states.¹⁴³

How do those aforementioned aspects help us to understand the role and impact (if any) of the European Union (and in this particular case via the ENP) on the dynamics of the so called Black Sea Region? Examination of the depth and level of the coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states from the perspective of interests and influence of the outside players, one of which is the European Union, does imply understanding the regional and/or neighborhood

¹⁴⁰ European Council A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, Brussels 12 December, p.9

¹⁴¹ During the Spanish presidency a former UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw expressed his worries about the internal situation and environment of those three states and expressed a need of developing some special approach towards them considering that soon those three states would become the EU direct neighbors.

¹⁴² Prodi Romano (2002) A Wider Europe __ A proximity Policy as the Key to Stability: Peace, Security and Stability International Dialogue and the Role of the EU, Sixth ECSA-World Conference. Jean Monnet Project, Brussels, 5-6 December, 2002.

¹⁴³ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine (ENP East), Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territories, Syria and Tunisia (ENP South) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/european_neighbourhood_policy/introduction (last time accessed on September 30, 2014 6:54 pm Georgia time); NB! While Russia was also invited to become part of this initiative, it rejected the proposal and instead preferred the strategic partnership with the European Union.

perceptions of those players. Regardless of whether the impact (whatever it could be) on the Black Sea countries' relationships was intentional and envisaged within the framework of the ENP or it was more of a side effect of various policies and approaches pursued by the Union (including the ENP), the composition of the groupings addressed by those policies and the related conception of the EU matters a lot. While the organization acknowledged the importance of the convergence of its internal and external agendas, as well as the imperative of setting out clear principles of collaboration with its neighbors, it still struggled for a while with agreeing on **whom its neighbors were or what the neighborhood did or had to look like**. William Wallace once indicated that any effective European Union foreign policy had to originate from common policies towards its neighbors.¹⁴⁴ But how could such policies be developed, if there **was no clear understanding of the neighborhood composition? Or how could the commonality of the policy be ensured under such circumstances?** The latter issue becomes a more pressing challenge when the boundaries of the neighborhood are too wide, like in the case of the European Neighborhood Policy and the list of countries it addresses.

One might counter argue that analysis and criticism of the ENP (more presented in below discussions) as part of the discourse of the EU's role in the so called Black Sea regional development is not a fair approach, as the ENP did not primarily aim at building the intra-regional coalescence, as well as it did not focus only on the Black Sea littoral states or the wider Black Sea area. Consequently the fallacies or the shortfalls of the European Union's policy vis-à-vis the intra-integration of its neighborhood should not be used as arguments. While we can *partially* agree with this statement,¹⁴⁵ we would also like to recall that the same document indicates the importance of further encouragement of new initiatives contributing to the regional cooperation between Russia and the countries of the Western NIS (Black Sea littoral states on the eastern coast line become a part of it).¹⁴⁶ The Communication states that the dimension of the intra-regional dynamics and EU's contribution in them is clearly far more developed in the Mediterranean and not as much in the EU's eastern neighborhood (which is perceived as a challenge to be addressed) and thus further development in this

¹⁴⁴ Wallace William The Challenge of the Near Abroad, Halki International Seminars Forging regional Cooperation Working Paper, 04.5.3, 2004 p.2

¹⁴⁵ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 11.3.2003 COM(2003) 104 final does state that the on the eastern border, unlike the Mediterranean where intra-regional cooperation in the broad range of sectors is encouraged and happening, "encouragement for regional political cooperation and/or economic integration has not so far formed a strong component of the EU policy towards Russia and the WNIS." P. 8

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

direction would be welcomed.¹⁴⁷ In addition, looking at the scope of work of the **European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)** for the period of 2007-2013 (which is the financial instrument of ENP), one can find another proof that strengthening regional dynamics are among the top priorities of ENP (“regional and local development, and regional integration (Euro-Mediterranean regions and regions of Eastern Europe”)), definitely something that the institution planned to spend money on. Furthermore, the **Black Sea Basin Joint Operation Program 2007-2013** (Black Sea JOP) under the ENPI indicates that “it aims to contribute to a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin.”¹⁴⁸ All this makes it very vivid that the ENP did aim at strengthening the regional developments in its neighborhood. At least this was the declared goal. However there were many challenges with the achievement of this aim and we will try to unpack and analyze them in more details below.

Manoli tries to bring up some arguments which would explain (if not justify) the challenges and cycles of ambiguity that the European Union faced while developing its conception towards its neighboring east, calling it “historically *the very first attempt* for the European institutions to set the basic parameters of the European policy towards the newly independent states.”¹⁴⁹ The lack of homogeneity of the area covered by the Commonwealth of Independent States was also suggested as an explanation of the specific characteristics of the existing intra-regional dynamics (lower pace of collaboration etc.).¹⁵⁰¹⁵¹ There is also a scholarly argument that the **membership preparation or the aspiration** did not always have a positive impact on intra-regional dynamics. On one hand, countries willing to become members of the EU were approached by the Union as “training grounds” or/and “stepping

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ <http://81.12.208.42/index.php/eng/Programme> (last time accessed on October 14, 2014 at 10:32 pm Georgia time)

¹⁴⁹ Manoli Panagiota (2012) *The Dynamics of the Black Sea Subregionalism*, Ashgate page. 188

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Here we would like to acknowledge that Manoli, in her argumentation sees the Black Sea area as a sub-region and all her discourse, including the EU’s role in those dynamics, is done from the perspective of subregionalism. We do not agree with Manoli that the Black Sea is a sub-region. The idea of aspiration of the membership of the wider regional project (in this case EU) and subordination of the former to the latter does not seem to be applicable to this case due to several reasons. Even if we are focused on the smallest possible group of the Black Sea littoral states when talking about the Black Sea Region, we still cannot consider Russia as a country with the EU membership aspiration; even if it a single state, it is a case of the regional power and if so, then how the Black Sea can be a sub-region aiming at EU membership with Russia excluded? In addition, we do not see very clear and strong signs of the subordination. Association agreements of Turkey, Georgia and Ukraine, Turkey’s Customs’ Union do signal their willingness to become the members of the European Family, but we do not see the subordination and it is unclear where or how it could be revealed. Consequently, the Black Sea Region is not perceived as a sub-region under the framework of this study. However many arguments used by Mamoli do apply to this area regardless of whether it is seen as a region, sub-region or an infra-region. Thus we will be referring to them whenever we see a need.

stones.” This was supposed to be a way to make those countries ready for the future membership by raising their standards and moving them closer to the trans-Atlantic norms. The conditionality for the EU membership and key requirements to be satisfied were/are the same for all who are/were willing to become the members of the European family. Consequently the membership preparation or aspiration was believed to support the countries in the EU neighborhood in strengthening not only their partnership ties with the institution, but with one another as well (which could make intra-regional links stronger). Improved sectoral cooperation and raised standards and norms (even if done for the satisfaction of the EU requirements) could contribute to this by creating a *common ground* (good enough foundation for a region to develop further). However, the same possibility or a desire of the EU membership also led to the **commitment away** from the regional groupings.

States, being **interested in the successful European integration**, could become less enthusiastic to seriously invest their time and resources into intra-regional cooperation and partnership building outside the EU arrangements, especially if those efforts were perceived to be parallel (rightly or not), and not so much intertwined. Therefore, a good number of/some/many/a few scholars believe that the EU could, intentionally or unintentionally, play a **disintegrating role** in the Black Sea area in this regard. The European Integration Index (EII)¹⁵²¹⁵³ for six countries from the EU neighborhood presented in Figure 1. reveals a very interesting picture in this regards.

¹⁵² European Integration is assessed in three dimensions: linkage (growing political, economic and social ties between the EaP countries and the EU), approximation (structures and institutions in the EaP countries converging towards EU standards and in line with EU requirements), management (evolving management structures for European Integration in EaP countries)

¹⁵³ Source: http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2013_0.pdf (last time accessed on October 2, 2014 at 3:44 am Georgia time)

Figure 1.

	Linkage		Approximation		Management	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
<i>Armenia</i>	0.48	0.49	0.56	0.59	0.43	0.51
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	0.38	0.41	0.42	0.42	0.34	0.33▼
<i>Belarus</i>	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.33	0.19	0.24
<i>Georgia</i>	0.54	0.57	0.58	0.63	0.58	0.58
<i>Republic of Moldova</i>	0.70	0.70	0.65	0.67	0.57	0.59
<i>Ukraine</i>	0.67	0.65▼	0.55	0.58	0.52	0.52

*The Index does not cover the situation in the break-away territories of Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia

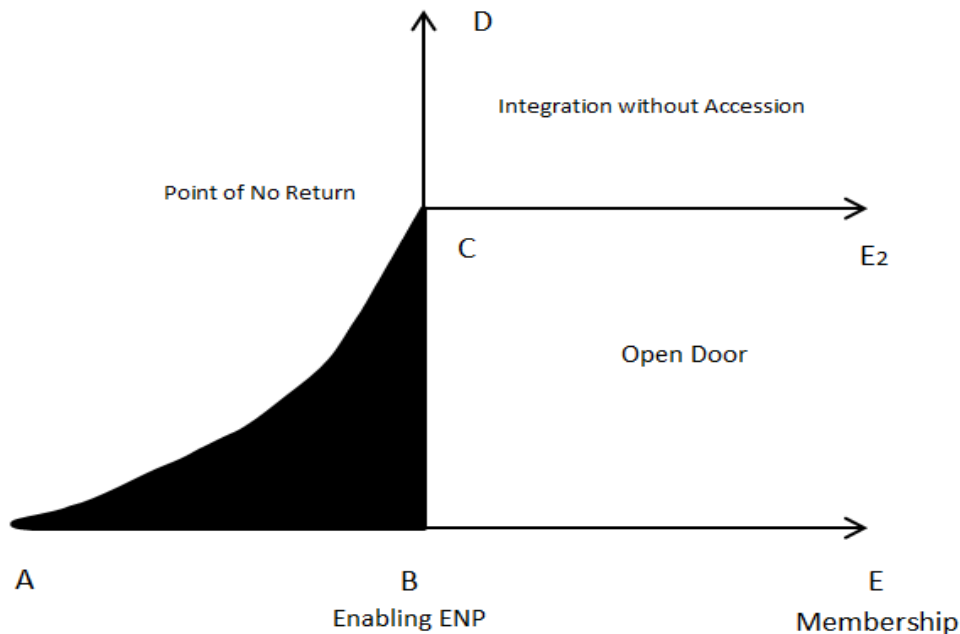
While the interests and policies of the Black Sea littoral states are discussed in another chapter of this research, here we would like to quickly refer to the pretty high indexes of two littoral states (Georgia and Ukraine are rated above 50% vis-a-vis all three key dimensions of the integration). For sure it would be misinterpretation to say that those numbers mean that Ukraine and Georgia are not interested in the intra-regional dynamics. High European Integration Index in both cases shows the commitment and motivation of those countries to become the members of the European family. While this in itself could not be a problem for the intra-regional cooperation (as mentioned already, if managed properly, the satisfaction of the EU conditionality could hypothetically help with the creation of common ground and thus strengthening ties among the states in the Black Sea basin), a poor EU neighborhood policy, which does not provide states with a clear understanding of the ‘concrete carrots’ they can/will receive upon compliance, would logically commit them away from it.

When discussing the impact of the European Neighborhood Policy, some scholars also touch on the concept of **de facto integration** without a formal EU membership. Often the ENP is perceived as the ‘**carrots below the threshold of membership**’¹⁵⁴ that the Union has been trying to provide to those countries, which eagerly push for a formal integration with this

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 73

institution. Others also discuss a **hidden agenda** (closely linked to the de facto integration idea) of the European Neighborhood Policy reflected in the graph presented below.¹⁵⁵

Figure 2.



As the Figure 2 above shows us, if a state goes beyond point C, there are two possible ways to get closer to the EU, each resulting in different consequences. The route going from A to E via B represents a successful membership strategy. The second scenario from A to D via C refers to the case of integration without membership. Some believe that the ENP was triggered by the second scenario. Authors argue that two areas — from E to E2 and the black area from A to C — are the areas of the ENP strengthening. The difference between the two is that the black area represents no membership exclusion, and the area between E and E2 depicts the “keeping the door open” approach. Retrospective analysis of the ENP development and the study of the current state of being make some believe that the approach of “integration without membership” has become more and more popular over time/lately.

How does this help us with our understanding of the EU role in the Black Sea regional dynamics? The point is that the European Neighborhood Policy was truly the first attempt to

¹⁵⁵ Cichocki Marek European Neighborhood Policy or Neighborhood Policies? pp. 9-28 in Henderson Kareb and Weaver Carol (eds.) (2010) *The Black Sea Region and EU Policy The Challenge of Divergent Agendas*. Ashgate, p. 22-23

develop and apply a uniform approach to the countries to the Union's east and south. Such effort to create some common ground could contribute to strengthening the ties among states, encouraging their cooperation in various areas in order to get closer to the institution. It could also help in drawing these states closer to one another as well. Even if it did not enhance the process of regionalization, it would have deepened the collaboration at least. But sending mixed messages, having hidden versus declared goals could be (and most probably were) confusing to the outsiders. Such ambiguity did also influence the consistency (or its absence) and efficiency of the steps taken in the framework of the ENP. As some scholars say, this strategic document produced mixed feelings in many of the countries of the EU's eastern neighborhood. States like Ukraine and Moldova, as well as the Caucasian states to some extent, could not fully understand whether the EU's door was left open for them or was it closed after them. This document, or to be more exact, the organizational conception towards the eastern and southern neighboring states, brought one more big challenge to the EU and the Black Sea region. Whereas, countries outside the Union needed clarity, while on the other, ambiguity was preferred inside the institution, because it provided more room for flexibility,. Finding the much-needed balance between those two proved to be very problematic.

One of the best ways to analyze the EU's role in the Black Sea regionalism via the ENP is to look at some statistics. As the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) was the financial means of the ENP to reach its goals, among which were regional development and regional integration, = we would like to first look at the ENPI Cross Border Cooperation Program (CBCP) expenditures. The reason why we would like to start from this is that the Cross Border Cooperation Program is one of the key priorities of the ENPI and also has a special Black Sea Program under the Sea-Basin Programs. Overall the CBC program runs 15 programs out of which 9 are land borders, 3 are sea crossing and other 3 are sea basin programmes.¹⁵⁶ In addition, our assumption is that the amount of money allocated per program/area can be considered as some sort of an indicator of the EU's interest in this area.

If we look at the amount of money allocated by the EU for different initiatives (see Figure # below) and try to compare them, we will see that the Black Sea program under the Sea Basin programs, unifying 8 different countries with different capacity and needs, received much less funding, compared to the amounts allocated to the any of the land border programmes (the

¹⁵⁶ http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=322&id_type=10 (last time accessed on October 1, 2014 at 6:55 pm Georgia time)

only exception is Karelia-Russia: Finland, Russia amount of which was very close to the amount provided to the BS region). What is even more important, none of the land border programs unified more than 4 countries (unlike the BS) and yet, the average financial support provided per program was much higher than that provided for the 8 country initiative of the Black Sea. Of course, there can be different interesting and rational explanations, as to why the funds were allocated that way under the CBC program. However we still think on the basis of the current allocation of funds that there is room for an assumption to be made, that the Black Sea Region certainly did not top priority list of the European Union. Otherwise, the organization would not provide a grouping of 8 countries with roughly 20 million to be used during a period of 7 years, whereas 18 million Euros were granted to Italy and Tunisia under the sea crossing partnership program for the same period of time. One can argue that the specificity of the country context (within which the issues need to be solved) should also be considered and we can definitely agree with this approach. Actually it would further strengthen our above assumptions. While the cross sea collaboration and problem solving could require the allocated amount of money, the Black Sea region, in which 4 out of 8 states are outside the EU and still struggle with lots of geopolitical, social, economic and other types of challenges, would require a lot more. In other words, while problems could be different, if strengthening the coalescence among those states was truly among the priorities of the EU, the contexts of Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia suggest that these states can be considered as financially needier – not necessarily in comparison to other group of states but in comparison to what they actually got).

Figure 3¹⁵⁷

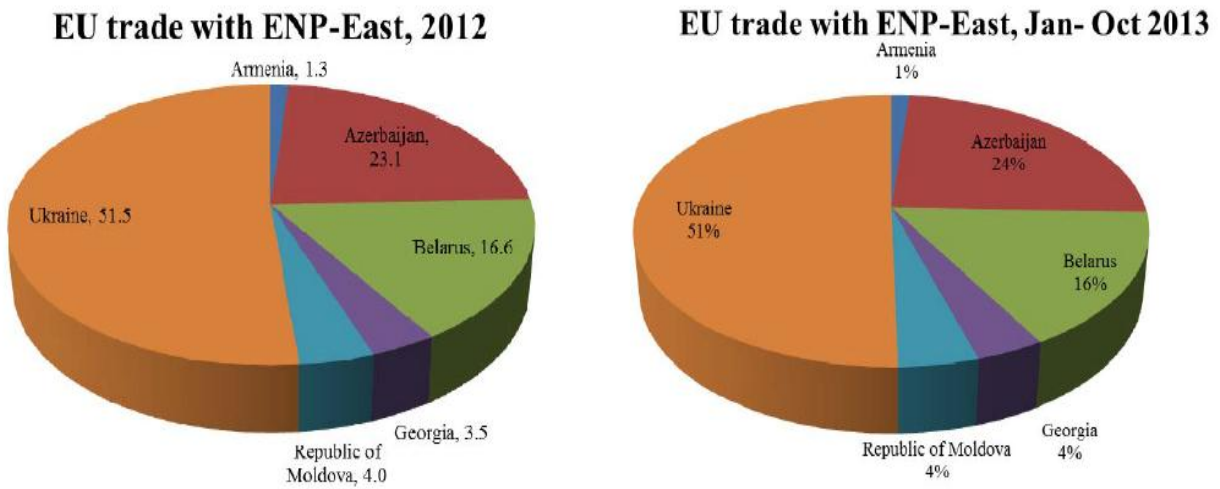
CBC programmes	Commitments (2007-2013)	Disbursements (end 2013)
<i>Land Border Programmes</i>		
Kolarctic/Russia (Finland, Sweden, Russia, Norway)	30,471,018	20,121,835
Karelia/Russia (Finland, Russia)	23,202,507	18,071,149
SE Finland/Russia (Finland, Russia)	36,185,361	23,324,933
Estonia/Latvia/Russia	47,774,729	30,169,542
Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus	41,736,666	21,631,189
Lithuania/ Poland /Russia	124,212,272	78,213,772
Poland/Belarus/Ukraine	186,201,367	109,335,338
Hungary/Slovakia/Romania/Ukraine	68,638,283	49,455,275
Romania/ Ukraine/Rep. of Moldova	126,718,066	77,563,018
<i>Sea-Crossing Programmes</i>		
Italy/Tunisia	25,191,423	18,065,500
<i>Sea-Basin Programmes</i>		
Black Sea (Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Ukraine, Rep. of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia)	28,118,954	19,771,382
Baltic Sea Region (Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden)	8,800,000	8,800,000
Mediterranean (Cyprus Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Spain, Syria, Tunisia)	200,000,000	92,147,421
TOTAL	947,250,646	566,670,354

Source: European Commission

The figure for the 'Baltic Sea Region' CBC programme is adjusted to de-commitment following Russia's non signature of the Financing Agreement

Another interesting point about the EU's role and interest in the Black Sea area can be revealed through its trade dynamics with the ENP east, which are presented in the below pie charts (The numbers represent ENP East trade as a fraction of the total trade in terms of percentage).

¹⁵⁷ Joint Staff Working Document, Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy Statistical Annex, Brussels, 27.3.2017, SWD (2014) 98 final, p. 42

Figure 4.¹⁵⁸

Source: Eurostat (COMEXT database)

37

So, what do the numbers in the above pie charts tell us about the role of EU and its interest in the BS region building? As we can see, Ukraine has the biggest share of the overall trade. This can be explained by its size and importance (both economic and political). However, the second highest share of the total trade goes to Azerbaijan and the third to Belarus. While Azerbaijan is often included in the wider Black Sea Region (our research excludes this because we are interested in the littoral states only), Belarus has never been part of any definition of this region and yet, it still overrides both Georgia (as a littoral state) and Moldova. This drives us to the conclusion that the EU builds its relationships more on the basis of individual country interests. Such approach (Belarus being the 3rd in the ENP East trade) might not truly contribute to the Black Sea regionalism, at least through the ENP.

Very interesting findings can be revealed by the analysis of the Joint Operational Program Black Sea Basin 2007-2013 and the projects that were financed through it. Overall, during the period of 2007-2013 this initiative funded 62 projects under two different calls for proposals. While all the Black Sea littoral states (except Russia) were eligible to submit proposals (the limitations were only about the regions inside each state in certain cases like Turkey and Ukraine),¹⁵⁹ Ukraine has only submitted one successful project proposals (contract number is 1875) and only 3 Georgian project proposals (contract numbers 2632, 1638, 2658) have been

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Joint Staff Working Document p. 37

¹⁵⁹

<http://81.12.208.42/index.php/eng/content/download/7148/169224/file/0%20Guidelines%20for%20Grant%20Applicants.pdf> p. 13 (last time accessed on October 14, 2014 at 5:56 am Georgia time)

funded by the EU through this program. Of all the 62 proposals that got funded, none of them were submitted by Turkey. More than 30% of the successful proposals are submitted by Romania, more than 25% by Greece. Third most successful proposals come from Bulgaria, accounting for 19% of the funded projects. However when it comes to the implementation of the financed projects, Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey become very important partners, as they have participated in 41, 40 and 37 projects respectively.¹⁶⁰ Of course, without knowing the actual number of submitted projects out of which aforementioned number was selected and financed, it is hard to make sound conclusions. However, the fact that only a single proposal from Ukraine and none from Turkey received funding, still speaks for itself, as those two countries (even with limited in their respective countries' geographical eligibility) are supposed to be very important players. If the EU is truly interested in partnership with these countries, their engagement (or encouragement to engage) in various Black Sea regional initiatives by actively taking steps in this direction should at least be among the priorities of the EU

2.2.2. Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership

When talking about the role of the EU role and its interest in the Black Sea regionalism, some consider several major events that had occurred leading up to the year 2007:

- Accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on January 1st, 2007 __ this EU enlargement brought the Union ever more closer to its Eastern neighborhood, which had been struggling with security and stability issues; this volatile part of the world could have a big influence both on EU's and continental stability;
- 2006 Russia-Ukraine gas dispute made the EU get engaged into the very area where it had been trying to keep a low profile; for years of keeping the Black Sea in its backyard and limiting itself to bi-lateral relationships, European Union realized that it had a partial picture of this region. What was missing was the holistic approach towards it;¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ All the details described in this paragraph can further be tracked here <http://81.12.208.42/index.php/eng/content/download/19262/511087/file/Grants%20awarded%20until%2031%20of%20December%202013.pdf> (last time accessed on October 14, 2014 at 5:56 am Georgia time) as well as in Annex 1.

¹⁶¹ Tassinari Fabrizio 2006 A Synergy for the Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Guidelines for an EU Initiatives, CEPS Policy Brief #105, Brussels p. 2

- Several issues need to be considered concerning the context of the European Neighborhood Policy and its implementation. European Commissions issued a lukewarm assessment of the ENP's progress vis-a-vis conflict resolutions in 2006.¹⁶² Findings made it clearer that the organization had to change its policy towards its neighbors to the east as the widely practiced bilateralism turned out to be largely unsuccessful.¹⁶³

Some would argue that with the **development of the Black Sea Synergy** in 2007, the European Union __already being a **de-facto Black Sea power** __ simply made its position and intentions of engaging with the region more official..¹⁶⁴ Partnering with this region was not even perceived as a choice; it was some sort of a destiny as it was widely believed that the EU had no other choice.¹⁶⁵ Others would argue that it just accounted to filling obvious gaps in the EU's conception of the regions in its periphery.¹⁶⁶ Certain scholars would see a direct link between the development of more regional approach towards the Black Sea (unlike the ENP which was still based on bi-lateral relationships between the EU and its neighbors) and whatever they call a **renaissance of political realism**, which, according to them, was preconditioned by the following four key factors: a) skepticism towards the idealist approach to security issues, b) acceptance of political strategy fragmentation, c) silent approval of the creation of new spheres of influence and d) acknowledgement of the domination by certain powers in political leadership.¹⁶⁷ These prerequisites, along with increasing interests of various parties (internal and external) in this area, led to the regionalization of the ENP east.¹⁶⁸ This shift towards multilateralism is also labeled as **a compensate policy** in the absence of an immediate accession perspective for the eastern neighbors.¹⁶⁹

Whether it was an attempt to fill the gap, a compensation for the non-accession or a reaction to the changes in security, Black Sea Synergy document truly started a new phase in the EU's

¹⁶² European Commission 2006. Strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy. Communication to the Council and the European Parliament, COM 2006 (726) final, 4 December 2006

¹⁶³ Delcour Laure & Manoli Panagiota 2010 The EU's Black Sea Synergy: Results and Possible Ways Forward, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, p. 6

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Efeğil Ertan and Musaoglu Nezih p. 220

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Emerson Michael The EU's New Black Sea Policy What Kind of Regionalism Is This? CEPS Working Document #297/July 2008, p. 1

¹⁶⁷ Ibid Cichocki Marek p. 14

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Manoli p. 189

approach towards its eastern neighbors. However, shortly after its launching in 2008,¹⁷⁰ all sorts of challenges started to appear.

Before we go on to discuss the content of this document, firstly we would like to address the peculiar name of the policy. While it was considered to be a bit unusual on the part of the Commission to opt for a word like “synergy” for the title of a policy, this word was chosen to serve two major purposes: a) to emphasize the importance of coordination of various EU programs in the Black Sea region and b) to underline the facilitation of intra-regional cooperation, along with the cooperation between the region and the EU, as a priority.¹⁷¹ In theory, this was supposed to signal a willingness of the Union to enhance its presence and its role in the Black Sea Region and contribute to its further development. However in reality the processes went on at a very slow pace, actually reducing the efficiency of the program. The communication on the Black Sea Synergy was published in April 2007, but only 10 months later, in February 2008 in Kiev, did it become possible to hold a large ministerial meeting as an inauguration of the policy.¹⁷² This would not play a role in our analysis, if it were the only (or a rare) example of reluctance of parties to take some active steps. But unfortunately there were many more challenges and one of the biggest issues was related to the inability of the European Union to make important financial stakeholders and banks to be interested in the Synergy partnership and invest in it.

The initial idea was to replicate the successful experience of the EU’s Northern Dimension (ND) partnerships into the Black Sea regionalism. However, unlike the case of the ND, where various investors were active and engaged, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB), were reluctant to commit funds and expertise to the Synergy partnership.¹⁷³ While discussing the financial shortfalls of Black Sea Synergy, which had its own influence on the Black Sea regional dynamics, one should also refer to the 2007 Communication and specifically to the way the aspect of financing the Black Sea Synergy is presented there.

By stating that the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) is not planned to be an independent strategy, rather it will be implemented under the umbrella of the wider EU policy towards this region

¹⁷⁰ Officially the Black Sea Synergy was launched at a Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Kiev on 14 February 2008

¹⁷¹ Fernando Garces de Los Fayos The EU’s Black Sea Policy: Where Do We Stand? Policy Briefing September 2013, DG EXPO/B/Pol/Dep/Note/2013_221 p. 5

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 6

¹⁷³ Ibid. p.9

through special agreements with Turkey and Russia¹⁷⁴ and European Neighborhood Policy¹⁷⁵, it practically made the ENPI a major financial source for the BSS. This in itself excluded the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), where the EU holds a minority stake, from playing a leading role in the Black Sea region, unlike the example of the Nordic Investment Bank in the case of the NDEP.¹⁷⁶ While it would be logical for the BSTDB, being a financial pillar of the BSEC with 3.0 billion portfolio,¹⁷⁷ to play a key role in the intra-regional dynamics of the Black Sea region, for whatever reasons this did not happen. On top of this, there was no special fund reserved under the ENPI for the Black Sea Synergy.

While the successful implementation of different policies and strategies does not solely depend on the secured funding, without appropriate financial resources even the most brilliant of ideas can fail. Putting the Black Sea Synergy under the ENPI umbrella without even specifying a stream of income, including the Black Sea direction under the Cross Border Cooperation (also under the ENPI) and practically disqualifying the BSEC's financial pillar to play a key role in this area (thus merging efforts and increasing the efficiency of foreseeable results), are very important indicators of the EU's role and interest (or its lack thereof) in the Black Sea region.

The Black Sea Synergy also faced some challenges in the task of building sectoral partnerships. Three major directions __ environment (led by Romania), transport (led by Greece) and energy (led by Bulgaria) __ were supposed to be further strengthened and developed. On March 16, 2010 at the conference on environmental partnership, only one of the aforementioned three directions was officially launched, however, the work progress in general was slow and no major achievements have been reached so far.

Shortfalls of the Black Sea Synergy were so vivid that they were also criticized by the European Parliament's Resolution of 2011 for its rather limited results and called for a Strategy for the Black Sea, which would be enhance the consistency of actions and the presence of the organization in the region.¹⁷⁸ Later in 2012, Members of the European Parliament further underlined the need of a Black Sea Strategy, while the prevailing progress

¹⁷⁴ Pre-accession in case of Turkey and Strategic Partnership in case of Russia

¹⁷⁵ Communication From The Commission To The Council And The European Parliament Black Sea Synergy – A new Regional Cooperation Initiative, Brussels, 11.4.2007 COM(2007) 160 final, p. 3

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Fernando Garces de Los Fayos p. 13

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.bstdb.org/about-us> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 6:43 pm Georgia time)

¹⁷⁸ European Parliament Resolution of 20 January, 2011 on an EU Black Sea Strategy

within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy was assessed negatively. Fragmentation of the financial resources and the lack of visibility were named as the most pressing challenges.¹⁷⁹

There are some arguments related to the contextual challenges at the international, regional and EU levels, which are presented as explanations of how difficult it was (or could be) for the Black Sea Synergy to be more successful within the given conditions/circumstances. Among the challenges and difficulties that could and did hinder a more successful implementation of the Black Sea Synergy are: International economic crisis negatively affecting the EU members and the institution itself; deterioration of the Russia-Transatlantic relations due to possible expansion of NATO, along with the issues of the deployment of ballistic anti-missile systems in Central Europe; The coming into force of Lisbon Treaty and the experimentation phase within the organization; conflicts in the Black Sea region, especially the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and low level of regional cooperation among the Black Sea countries; interests of Russia and Turkey in the region and outside.¹⁸⁰ While we believe that the context can play a big role in the implementation of any strategic conception – in both speeding it up or suspending it altogether, depending on the circumstances – the arguments concerning the lack of a strong interest¹⁸¹, the lack of speaking with the single voice or the lack of clarity as to how to deal with the Black Sea region, do still apply to the situation. Inconsistency in the organizational steps and fragmentation of the EU policy towards the Black Sea (driven by different interests of various groupings inside the institution) was further reflected in the development of the **Eastern Partnership** (EaP).

Only 20 months after the launching of the Black Sea Synergy, a Polish-Swedish proposal of a new policy towards the EU's eastern neighborhood was suggested and finally it was inaugurated in May 2009 in Prague. Unlike the Black Sea Synergy, it was characterized by a restrictive membership (it excluded Turkey and Russia from (---)). The primary focus of the EaP was to support six post-Soviet countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine) in dealing with the EU integration processes. Some even called this

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. Fernando Garces de Los Fayos p. 5

¹⁸⁰ Manoli and Delcour also address these issues in the paper Delcour Laure & Manoli Panagiota 2010 The EU's Black Sea Synergy: Results and Possible Ways Forward, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department pp10-11

¹⁸¹ After 2008 official launch of the Black Sea Synergy there was no other ministerial meeting which can further be used as a sign of a lack of an interest

document a **quasi-pre-accession policy**.¹⁸² Considering the focus of the EaP, the Partnership members favored it more and soon followed by an entire shift of interest from the Black Sea Synergy (which anyway was not very strong) to the Eastern Partnership.

This paper does not aim to apply a theory-testing approach, trying to assess if the Black Sea Region building was driven from outside with the EU being the main driver of this process. Our goal to analyze the influence of this organization on the Black Sea Regionalism, as it obviously displayed certain dynamics that could play a role in the region building process. Development of various not-that-much complementary policies (ENP, Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership each having its own specific goal) in the period of 2004-2009, addressing more or less the same group of countries on the east of the Union, signals nothing but a lack of a clear, coherent strategic conception towards this area. Elaboration of the EaP, which in a way opposes the Black Sea Synergy (especially if we consider that it excludes Russia and Turkey from its coverage) further proves that the EU does not have a single voice. Speaking with different voices only added to the existing complexity. We believe that the European Union, while actively working on the enlargement and development strategies to reach some positive results with individual states (bilateralism), never committed to seriously dedicate its resources – be it expertise, time or money – to thoroughly understand the nature of the neighborhood it will be bordering. It is extremely hard to develop well thought out policies and general strategies without an exhaustive comprehension of the dynamics and the various contexts of the region. . The Union was too busy with its own internal transformations (e.g. Lisbon Treaty) and at the same time anxious about international changes that it would need to deal with, one way or the other (energy security, Russia's interests etc.). An attempt to regionalize the ENP east seems to be the easiest way of addressing the eastern neighbors the organization. Why? Because the EU has an experience of previous successful regionalization approaches, such as the Northern Dimension, and its replication in the east could prove to be the shortest and safest way of implementing a successful strategy in the BS area. But such unsystematized, incoherent and multi-layered approach that the EU has been employing towards the Black Sea area, could not seriously contribute to region building, nor could it help with strengthening the coalescence at least among the littoral states, not to mention the wider Black Sea area.

¹⁸² Tsantoulis Y. 2009 Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centers of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals? Policy Brief #12 Athens: International Centre for Black Sea Studies

2.3. United States and Black Sea Region

For decades the Black Sea region has been the Bermuda Triangle for Western strategies.¹⁸³ Located at the crossroads of security spaces of Europe, Eurasia and Middle East, it has often been neglected by many policy makers and experts. Ronald Asmus proposes four key factors as explanations for this lack of interest:¹⁸⁴

a) for quite a while Europe was mainly interested in Baltics and Balkans; in the post-Soviet area the main goal had been establishing good relationships with the Kremlin and in the case of the western Middle East (if not counting Arab-Israeli conflict), usually the southern border of Turkey was at the center of attention;

b) After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Euro-Atlantic foreign policy agenda (including the one of America) was too overloaded already, leaving no space for any new bullet point to be added to the agenda list for the Black Sea region;

c) There was no strong internal push from the region, which would make the outside players pay more attention to the Black Sea area at an earlier stage.;

d) Black Sea area represented some sort of a civilizational black hole in the historical consciousness of the West. Not only was the West not familiar with the region, but there were signs of a widely spread historical amnesia. The common perception of Europe was limited only to Western Europe; some would extend its borders to the Baltics, and only a few (politicians, scholars, people?) regarded certain countries in the Black Sea basin, mainly the ones on its western coast, as Europe. Countries like Georgia and Ukraine were still considered to be too far from the West.

This historical overview can partly explain why there had not been a partnership between the US and the Black Sea Region for a while. In view of that, a legitimate follow-up question would be: after the decades of political neglect, what made the United States of America to finally become interested in the Black Sea? And what changes initiated/caused this shift? Answering this question will not only give us a clearer picture of what caused the

¹⁸³ Asmus Ronald D. Developing A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy For The Black Sea Region: Istanbul Paper #2

p.1

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

transformation of Washington's strategy towards the Black Sea region, but more importantly, it will help us in understanding how effective the US policy towards this area turned out to be.

If we try to group the responses to this question provided by different experts and policy makers, we end up with five major aspects. **Firstly**, 9/11 terrorist attacks caused the increased impetus for the US engagement in the Black Sea region, as the area was starting to be seen as a 'platform for influence and power projection for the War on Terror.'¹⁸⁵ **Another** historical change that moved the US closer to the Black Sea was the 2004 NATO enlargement, as a result of which two Black Sea littoral states — Romania and Bulgaria — became the members of this organization. The **third** driver of the changes was closely linked to the color revolutions, which on their part paved the way to enhanced democratic transformations in Ukraine and Georgia.¹⁸⁶ That period coincided with the Bush administration, during which democratization was one of the backbones of the US foreign policy.¹⁸⁷ In his analysis of the US policy towards the Black Sea, Felix Ciuta underlines the importance of a lobbying campaign¹⁸⁸ headed by the German Marshall Fund as the **fourth** factor, which finally compelled the US to officially use the term Black Sea region.¹⁸⁹ **Finally**, everybody talks about the importance of the energy resources which have always been one of the key drivers of the US foreign policy. Accordingly the Black Sea region started to be perceived as a main corridor to access and secure various energy resources including hydrocarbon.¹⁹⁰

Two more possible explanations of the shift in the Western strategy are popular among the critics/scholars. One of the views suggests that the West realized it could be better off if it contributed to the prosperity and stability of Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁹¹ Matthew Bryza also emphasizes this aspect, by stating that "the US interest in the Black Sea region proceeds from a belief that the United States and its friends benefit when peace, democracy and

¹⁸⁵ Konoplyov Sergei & Delanoe Igor Continuities and Ruptures: Tracking the US Interests In The Black Sea Area In the Context of the "Pivot to Asia" in 2013 Harvard Black Sea Security Journal p. 6

¹⁸⁶ Asmus talks about the same process calling it a push from the region from democratic leaders (for more details please see Istanbul Paper #2

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 7 also Konoplyov Sergei US Interests In The Wider Black Sea Region pp. 197-206 in Bozkurt Giray Saynur (ed.) (2013) Blue Black Sea New Dimensions of History, Security, Strategy, Energy and Economy Cambridge Scholars Publishing p. 199

¹⁸⁸ In regards to the factor of lobby, we might not fully agree with Ciuta as we see the activation of lobby more as a result of some previous changes listed in the main text as well as a means to increasing interest towards the Black Sea area simultaneously enhancing consequences of other four factors, but not that much as a stand-alone driver of the shift more or less equal to the other four

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Konoplyov Sergei

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Konoplyov Sergei & Delanoe Igor p. 5

¹⁹¹ Ibid. Asmus Istanbul Paper # 2 p. 6

prosperity are extended into Europe's East.’’¹⁹² Another view argues that the West re-adjusted its self-perception, realizing that due to the large number of post-Cold War transformations, limiting the perception of Europe to Western Europe was already artificial and outdated.¹⁹³

As we can see, some historical changes on the international arena, in combination with transformation in Western thinking, shifted the US position/approach/attitude towards the Black Sea region from “no interest” to “increasing interest”. However, what is important to be studied is how this increasing interest impacted the regional dynamics (if at all) and how it was reflected in concrete US foreign policy steps.

At first sight, one might be tempted to jump to the conclusion that a transformation of the Black Sea region into one of the US priorities was not only reflected in rhetoric, but rather some serious steps were also taken that confirmed this area an important platform for pursuing the US strategic interests:

- 2004 when the US Department of Defense *decided* to develop a **Black Sea Security Strategy**, the intention was to use military support as an incentive to encourage regional cooperation for enhancing security and stability.¹⁹⁴
- The concept, as well as the plan of implementation of the **Black Sea Initiative** was also drafted by the US European Command in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff.
- Pentagon contributed to the implementation of the **Black Sea Border Security Initiative (BSBSI)** and the **Black Sea Civil-Military Emergency Response Planning**¹⁹⁵ (both highly praised by Bryza).¹⁹⁶
- **Black Sea Strategy** was also developed by the **Defense Threat Reduction Agency**.
- US National Defense Intelligence College & Agency organized the **Black Sea and Caspian Sea Symposium**. **German Marshall Fund** arranged several/numerous rounds of

¹⁹² Bryza J. Matthew The Policy of the United States toward the Black Sea Region pp37-43 in Asmus Ronald J. (ed.) (2006) Next Steps in Forging a EuroAtlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea, GMF p. 37

¹⁹³ Ibid. Assmus Istanbul Paper #2

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. Konoplyov Sergei p. 201

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Konoplyov Sergei

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Bryza pp. 40-41

workshops and seminars on the Black Sea region and related US policy priorities to be enhanced and followed up.¹⁹⁷

- US was granted a status of the BSEC observer nation.
- The US government has been contributing to the Black Sea Trust, thus supporting the regional dynamics in the fields of security cooperation, democratization, media, etc.¹⁹⁸

The information provided in the above list looks very impressive. It does truly reveal a strong intention of the US (at least in the beginning of the process) to become a better partner of the Black Sea region. However the results of those actions were not as successful as it was hoped for.

One of the biggest shortfalls of the US attempts to develop some strategy towards the Black Sea region was related to the fact that the official US Department of Defense Black Sea Security Strategy **was never announced**.¹⁹⁹ The analysis of the US National Security Strategies also presents a very interesting picture: While the majority of steps taken by Washington vis-a-vis the Black Sea region were directly linked to the security and stability of the area, the US strategic security document of 2002 does not say anything about the Black Sea region and the US interests towards it. Only in one single case is the role of the Caspian region mentioned, in the context of underlining the importance of energy security and its enhancement.²⁰⁰ despite the number of frozen conflicts in this part of the world, the Black Sea area doesn't even feature in the section, which indicates strategic priorities in the regional conflicts around the world. One might say that in 2002 the US was not yet so clear about its goals in the Black Sea region and thus we should not be expecting to see references to it in the security strategy document from that time period. That would be a valid argument, if the content of the security strategy document of the year 2006 was changed. But unfortunately, even after the initiatives of 2004 (including the decision to develop the Black Sea Strategy) and despite the **hearing on the future of democracy in the Black Sea area** (hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Ninth Congress, first session, March 8, 2005),²⁰¹ we still do not find this region among the US areas of interest in the security strategy document of 2006. It's also

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. Konoplyov

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Bryza pp. 40

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Konoplyov p. 201

²⁰⁰ National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002, p. 24

²⁰¹ At this hearing various influential experts like Succor, Zeyno Baran, Joseph Biden and others emphasized the importance of the US more active engagement and a stronger presence in the Black Sea region

important to mention, that as part of the security and war on terrorism discourse, this document does talk about post 9/11 changes, stating that some countries initially had been part of the problem then gradually transformed into the types of states searching for solutions.²⁰² And even though 9/11 is perceived as a turning point in the US conception towards the Black Sea, this region is still not mentioned in the country strategy. Furthermore, when unpacking the US strategic priorities in Europe, the document names only Russia and Ukraine as NATO's (vital pillar of US foreign policy) key European partners.²⁰³ Especially interesting is the following passage about Russia:

*'Stability and prosperity in **Russia's neighborhood** will help deepen our relations with Russia. ... We will seek to persuade Russia's government that democratic progress in Russia and its region benefits the peoples who live there and improves relationships with us, with other Western governments and among themselves.'*²⁰⁴

According to this statement, the USA did not only not perceive the Black Sea region as a stand-alone regional entity in which Washington had its special interests, but referred to it as Russia's neighborhood. Labeling any area as the neighborhood of a certain state certainly points to that state's unique influence over that area. If so, the Black Sea countries and their neighbors should be expected to be treated as Russia's neighborhood - with special caution and providence. This rhetoric remained unchanged in the US security strategy of 2010 as well. Within the framework of the European partnership, the US underlined the importance of conflict resolution in Caucasus and Cyprus.²⁰⁵ This was the first case when one of the Black Sea littoral countries was (indirectly) addressed, albeit in a different (not regional) context. In the section covering the US-Russia relationship, the US commitment to support the territorial integrity of Russia's neighbors was emphasized.²⁰⁶ This was the second indirect reference to one of the Black Sea littoral states (Georgia); once again it was not mentioned in the context of regional partnership. Interestingly enough, 2010 Security Strategy document specifically touches on the importance of investment in regional capabilities; the growing role of regional organizations in the unifying efforts of regional problem solving is stressed. Organizations like NATO, OSCE, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union, the

²⁰² National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002, p. 8

²⁰³ National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2006, p. 38

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 39

²⁰⁵ National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2010 p. 42

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 44

Organization of American States, ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council are listed among those with evolving roles,²⁰⁷ but here again no reference to either BSEC or GUAM is made.

On one hand, we can see efforts in the form of time, money and expertise invested in various rounds of meetings about the Black Sea region (including the ones held by the German Marshall Fund), as well as the 2005 hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations and other regional security enhancement initiatives (e.g. Black Sea Border Security Initiative (BSBSI), Black Sea Civil-Military Emergency Response Planning etc.). Majority of those steps taken in relation to the Black Sea region reflected the US interest and a strong desire to further enhance its own security by stabilizing the situation in the Black Sea area and fostering peace and intra-regional partnership. On the other hand, we observe a consistent neglect of the Black Sea area in a strategic document, which indicates the key aspects of the US foreign policy in satisfying its national interests and ensuring security. This incongruity of interests drives us towards the hypothesis/assumption that the interest towards the Black Sea region in the US was triggered by a certain group of individuals/experts who did not manage to translate the identified strategic directions into a wider foreign policy conception of the country. Due to these inconsistencies and contradictions, we cannot consider the US efforts to create strong incentives among the Black Sea countries (at least among the littoral ones) to foster and deepen intra-regional dynamics as successful.

This assessment might be less surprising in light of Ross Wilson's declaration of the US interests towards the region; he stated that the US regional approach towards Black Sea "is to work with its allies and friends and within the frameworks they find comfortable, to strengthen cooperation and collaboration on security."²⁰⁸ More or less the same idea is conveyed in Bryza: "the US conception towards the Black Sea cooperation is non-exclusive."²⁰⁹ Application of non-exclusiveness and searching for frameworks of cooperation comfortable for all the parties engaged seems to be a very unrealistic approach when talking about such a diverse group of states that includes Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria (to count a few) under one umbrella. We believe this further contributed to the non-existence of a clear set of US objectives towards the Black Sea region. Accordingly,

²⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 46

²⁰⁸ Wilson Ross US Policy In The Black Sea Region p. 2 http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_id_58.pdf (last time accessed on September 29, 2014 at 6 pm Georgia time)

²⁰⁹ Ibid. Bryza p. 39

willing to keep good partnerships with all the key players (including regional powers, Russia and Turkey), Washington continued with bi-lateral relationships with some key parties. One can also say that America was more willing to strengthen its presence (and thus influence) in the region, rather than foster intra-regional dynamics. That particular purpose could be served by the application of bilateralism with individual countries, among which we can specify Romania and Bulgaria - since 2005 the Pentagon has acquired the right to use 7 military bases in these two countries.²¹⁰ While pursuing national interests is a normal practice for any state, including the US, , the particular context of the US-Black Sea relations does not provide us a strong evidence to believe that either the US had some exceptional interests in the Black Sea region or that the pro-Black Sea foreign policy of the US has had a positive impact on (at least the littoral) Black Sea states, deepening the level of cooperation and coalescence among them.

2.4. Additional Initiatives

Analysis of the conception of the Black Sea region would not be complete without some overview of various regional initiatives originally aiming at strengthening the intra-regional dynamics and improving the coordination in the wider Black Sea area. While the Black Sea region building is not a primary goal of any of those projects that we will be discussing below, our study will aim to see how (if at all) they reveal the regional conception, how they could further influence the regional coalescence and how different regional initiatives are interconnected. We will try to examine only the major regional initiatives mainly by visiting respective websites and exploring respective links.

One of those Black Sea basin initiatives that we would like to quickly overview is the **Community of Democratic Choice (CDC)**. The idea was born at the meeting of 2005 between the president of Georgia Saakashvili and the president of Ukraine Yushchenko. While it was not a regional project, rather an idea of like-minded people and states willing to promote democracy, as a three seas initiative it could still contribute to building a common ground for states unified under the umbrella of the CDC choice, thus strengthening

²¹⁰ Ibid. Konoplyov p. 204

coalescence. However this idea did not last for long, limiting itself to overall 3 meetings taking place in 2005 and 2006 altogether.²¹¹

Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue is one of the first initiatives born as a result of Romania's long term advocating for a need of a high profile regional initiative in the Black Sea. It started as a summit in Bucharest on June 5, 2006.²¹² The purpose of this summit was to support the consolidation of regional commonalities through intensified dialogue and cooperation in the Black Sea region.²¹³ However the forum's life turned out to be very short as it did not have any specific follow ups right after the first and the only summit. It is interesting that one can hardly find any information about the summit on the website of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (at least among the pieces of the information that is accessible for everyone) despite the fact that Romania was the initiator and the promoter of this Forum.

Aiming at the revitalizing the regional cooperation in the Black Sea, Romania took a leadership in promoting some regional projects, simultaneously pursuing the EU engagement in the regional dynamics. One of those projects is the **Black Sea NGO Forum**.²¹⁴ Launched in 2008 this initiative has been supported by the European Commission and the Romanian MFA within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy. The primary purpose of this project is to ‘‘ increasing the level of dialogue and cooperation among NGOs in the wider Black Sea Region, strengthening the NGOs capacity to influence regional and national policies and to increase the number and quality of regional partnerships and projects.’’²¹⁵ Analysis of the reports of the annual Black Sea NGO forums reveals a very interesting picture. The first forum taking place in 2008 and unifying more than 220 participants from more than 100 NGOs was the first attempt to set a platform of dialogue and knowledge sharing.²¹⁶ In 2009 the discussion topic of the meeting was the NGOs in the time of crisis which had 184

²¹¹ For more details please see Emerson Michael What Should the Community of Democratic Choice Do? EU Foreign Policy. CEPS Policy Briefs, 3 March, 2006

²¹² Tassinari Fabrizio, A Synergy for the Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Guidelines for an EU Initiative, CEPS Policy Brief No 105/June 2006, p. 2

²¹³ Manoli p. 55

²¹⁴ Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of Romania <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2158> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:21 am Georgia time)

²¹⁵ Official website of the Black Sea NGO Forum <http://www.blackseango.org/> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²¹⁶ For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘‘Time to Meet’’ 31 October – 2 November, 2008, Bucharest, Romania <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-Report-2008.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

participants from different countries.²¹⁷ Analysis of the civil society development and related challenges was selected as a major theme of the NGO forum of 2010 with 143 participants.²¹⁸ The meeting of the year of 2011 had a wide scope addressing the issues of environmental organizations, importance of child protection, monitoring in the social sector etc.²¹⁹ One interesting aspect of this particular forum is that the report of 2011 meeting does not provide a concrete list of participants with associated NGOs, rather it only states that around 250 persons gathered for the discussions.²²⁰ The same applies to the report of 2013 which not only does not have a list of participants but also does not indicate their overall number.²²¹ Extremely interesting is a report of the year of 2012 where one of the NGO representatives shares some statistics of the participants in the Black Sea NGO forum for the period of 2008-2011. According to this data during the aforementioned 4 years more than 250 NGOs participated in those annual forums. Romania had the biggest number of representatives (almost 30%) followed by 17% of participants from Moldova. 9% of participants were from Armenia and Azerbaijan accordingly followed by the 6% of participants from Georgia, Ukraine and Russia (each), 5% from Bulgaria and 1% from each from Greece and Belorussia.²²² What does all this tell us about the Black Sea regional conceptions? Gathering hundreds of representatives of the NGO world and providing them with a space to discuss various issues important for the regional development and cooperation is truly valuable. However diversity of topics and a broad scope of discussion points changing from year to year does not provide a good opportunity to focus on concrete areas of regional cooperation to address them accordingly. No specific follow up mechanisms monitoring the implementation of forum recommendations transforms those gathering into simple platforms

²¹⁷ For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘‘NGOs in Times of Crisis’’ 29-31 October, 2009, Bucharest, Romania <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-2009.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²¹⁸ For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘Investing In Our Common Future’’ 21-23 October, 2010, Constanta, Romania <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-Report-2010.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²¹⁹ For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘Building a Common Vision’’ 6-8 October, 2011, Constanta, Romania <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-Report-2011.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²²⁰ Ibid. page 2

²²¹ For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘Building Sustainable and Effective Regional Cooperation’’ 4-6 September, 2013, Constanta, Romania <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-Report-2013.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²²² For more details please see Black Sea NGO Forum ‘‘Participation and Inclusion for Responsible Development’’ 24-25 October, 2012 <http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Black-Sea-NGO-Forum-Report-2012.pdf> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time) pp. 6-7

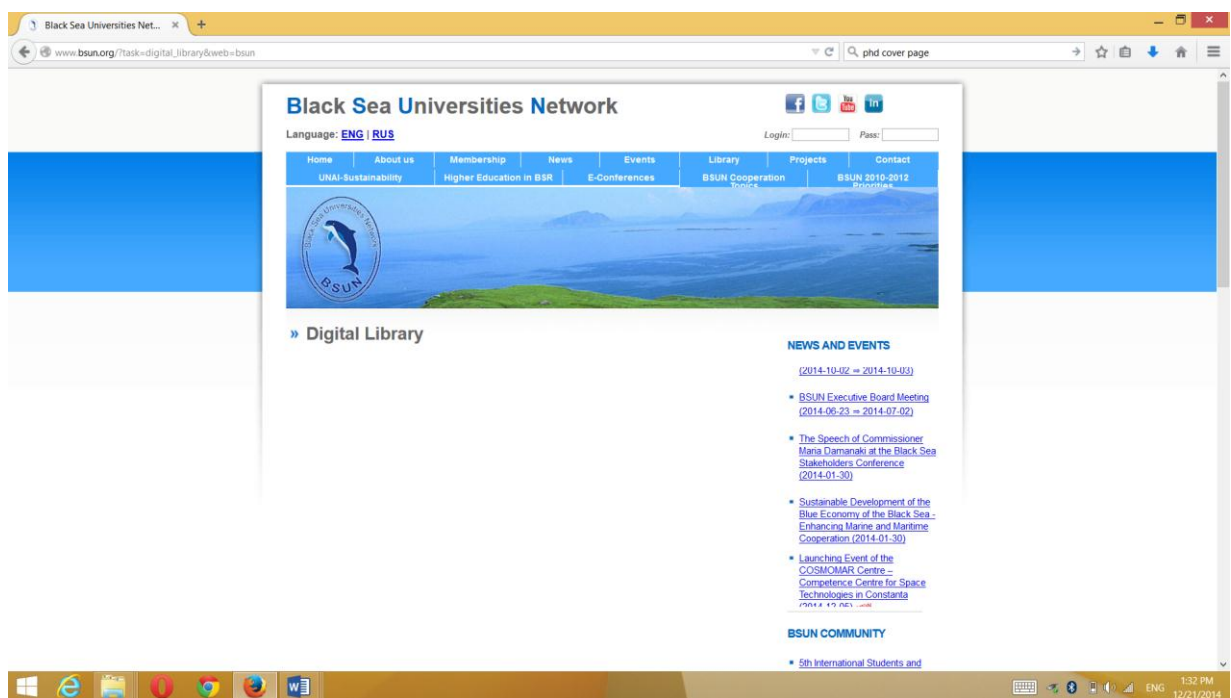
for discussion with poor contribution to the regional coalescence. It is also interesting that representatives of the Black Sea littoral states (e.g. Georgia, Ukraine, Russia and Bulgaria) are less in numbers of participants than the representatives of the wider Black Sea area. The only exception is Romania but 30% can easily be explained by the fact that the initiative is supported by the Romanian MFA and the first six forums took place in Romania. We believe this once again reveals the lack of a clear conception of the Black Sea region leading to multiple and often duplicating initiatives which do not gain popularity among all the littoral states.

Another initiative that we would like to analyze is the **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**. It was 'set up to promote the development of civil society in the partner countries, to facilitate their contacts with the authorities, and to promote co-operation between the civil societies of the EU and the partner countries.'²²³ While there is a somewhat different (or additional to be more correct) focus in the purpose of this forum (with a major focus on the EU integration and collaboration with national governments), still we consider it as a duplication of efforts (especially the Black Sea NGO Forum). It's unclear for us why there should be two different initiatives spending EU money on the same civil society development of the EU eastern neighbors. While the EaP is focused on a smaller number of states as discussed below, those countries are anyway represented at the Black Sea NGO Forums through their NGOs and other civil society representatives. Accordingly we believe that this is a duplication of efforts revealing the inconsistency of external and internal players. We believe that the lack of the clear conception of the Black Sea region can be one of the explanations of this happening. One more interesting aspect of the EaP Civil Society Forum and more importantly the EaP itself is that as indicated on the respective website 'as of June 1, 2012 the content of the Eastern Partnership Community portal is no longer updated, but will remain available for everyone.'²²⁴ Not providing any additional explanation of this decision as well as the decision itself makes us further believe that the EaP initiative was not a very well thought idea. This in itself happened because neither external nor internal Black Sea states are confident about how to conceive the Black Sea basin.

²²³ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum <http://www.easternpartnership.org/eap-institutions/civil-society-forum.html> (last time accessed on October 12, 2014 at 3:40 am Georgia time)

²²⁴ EaP Community website <http://www.easternpartnership.org/> (last time accessed on November 12, 2014 at 2:33 pm Georgia time)

One more initiative that we would like to refer to is the Black Seas Universities Network. Created as a BSEC initiative, the website of the BSUN provides us with a very detailed explanations of how and when it was created, how it operates, who the leads and members are etc. However such important links as the BSUN a digital library and projects show only empty pages as presented in the screen shots below.²²⁵ However when we go to the events link, it shows certain number of events (mainly meetings) per year in the period of 1998 up to 2014. Reviewing the topics of those gatherings makes us think that the scope of those meetings are too broad and less focused starting from the Universities' rectors meetings and ending up in businessmen forum, renewable energy sources, humanitarian forum, academic cooperation etc.²²⁶ While the network could become another source of foundation for the creation of the sense of we-ness and strengthening the integration, in reality its dynamics show us that there is no focus and without it, ad hoc interventions and initiatives might further indicate the lack of the conception of the Black Sea region along with some other factors (e.g. inefficiency of the BSEC).



²²⁵ <http://www.bsun.org/?task=projects&web=bsun> (last time accessed on November 12, 2014 3:32 am Georgia time)

²²⁶ Ibid.

The screenshot shows the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) website. The browser address bar displays 'www.bsun.org/?task=projects&web=bsun'. The page title is 'Black Sea Universities Network'. The language is set to 'ENG | RU'. There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. A navigation menu includes: Home, About us, Membership, News, Events, Library, Projects, and Contact. Below the menu, there are sub-links: UNAI-Sustainability, Higher Education in BSR, E-Conferences, BSUN Cooperation, and BSUN 2010-2012 Profiles. The main banner features a landscape image of a coastline and the BSUN logo. The 'Projects' section is highlighted with a blue arrow. The 'NEWS AND EVENTS' section lists several events with dates and titles, such as 'THE IV BAKU INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN FORUM (2014-10-02 - 2014-10-03)'. The 'BSUN COMMUNITY' section includes '5th International Students and...'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 1:34 PM on 12/21/2014.

Chapter 3. Intraregional Dynamics of the Black Sea Region: the Role and Interests of the Littoral States

3.1. Introduction

Different stakeholders play a role in regional dynamics. Both outsiders and insiders are likely to have their own interests vis-a-vis a particular region. Pursuing those interests can have an influence on bi- and multilateral relationships among different states within and outside the region. Integration can be triggered from the outside, as well as from the inside (according to various outside-in and inside-out theoretical perspectives that will be discussed in the respective chapter) However, sustaining and expanding coalescence depends on the countries inside of a given area. In order to understand what role the insider powers play in the region and what are the prospects of regional development (especially in the area of further integration), we need to analyze some key intra-regional aspects of the problem, among which are the presence (or not) of a strong regional power, its perception of the region and its neighborhood, its strategic goals and understanding of its role of a regional leader, and the dependence of other states on the regional leader. .

Within the framework of the given chapter, our purpose is to define the interests, the goals, and the needs of six Black Sea littoral states: Turkey, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Ukraine. Turkey and Russia will be analyzed as regional powers, which have a very big influence on intra-regional dynamics. A brief historical overview of the role of the Black Sea in the history of those two states and the post-Cold War developments will help us with the understanding of the background of Turkey's and Russia's Black Sea policies. We will also examine the commonalities and differences between those two powers and the impact they have on the intra-regional dynamics.

We will analyze Romania and Bulgaria from the perspective of their pursuing of the European Union membership and how this process was intertwined (if at all) with their Black Sea regional cooperation. The policies of Georgia and Ukraine will also be discussed in light of their foreign policy aspirations and perspectives on integrating into Euro Atlantic structures and institutions. Wherever possible, we will try to compare the officially declared regional interests of the littoral states (reflected in the foreign policy and/or security concepts of respective countries, and in other strategic documents) with the actual steps taken by their

governments to get an idea of how the actions of the six coastal countries match with their declared goals. We will also be studying the websites of the respective countries' ministries of Foreign Affairs with the goal to discover the organizational structure of the ministry (wherever provided). We will be assuming that the organizational structures of their ministries will be reflecting the real priorities of the states, as the presence of particular departments and units in the organigram will be a reflection of the ones that the respective country's ministry is focused on.

All those analyses will be conducted in consideration of two important trends. First, Black Sea regional policies of all the littoral states were developed (regardless of their clarity and specificity) after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some of the states, such as Georgia and Ukraine, were newcomers to the inter-state and regional games, and therefore had to develop their foreign policy conceptions from scratch. But the post-Cold-War world was new to all states, and all of the Black Sea littoral countries – even the regional leaders Turkey and Russia – had to rethink their roles and find their own niches within the reshaping system of international order. All the post-Soviet transitions were accompanied by a common question that had to be answered one way or another: how to deal with Russia?²²⁷ Another trend that was common for the majority of Black Sea littoral states was their Euro-Atlantic aspirations: speeding up the processes of their integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions was top on their priorities' list, which often times shaped their bi and/or multilateral relations with other states, as well as determined their engagement (or not) in different Black Sea regional policies and cooperation programs. We will keep these two important trends into consideration throughout the analysis.

Considering the fact that we dedicate a separate chapter to the economic and financial indicators of Black Sea intra-regional dynamics, this chapter will not cover the coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states from the perspective of trade, investments, and migration.

3.2. Black Sea Regional Powers: Turkey and Russia

3.2.1. Turkey and Its Black Sea Politics

With the longest shoreline among all the Black Sea littoral states, Turkey's outlook towards the Black Sea area is much preconditioned by its historical background. For centuries, starting

²²⁷ Manoli Panagiota (2012) *The Dynamics of the Black Sea Subregionalism*, Ashgate page 99

from the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 up to 1809, Black Sea was regarded as an Ottoman lake and had gained the status of an inner sea of Turkey.²²⁸ Turkey enjoyed the exclusive right to control the Straights, which required all the foreign vessels passing through the Straights to obtain permission from the Sublime Porte. The Turkish Straights were internationalized in the 19th century, thus reducing the Turkish influence on the Black Sea, but in 1936 Turkey restored its power and secured its sovereign right to control the Straights with the signing of the Monteux Convention.²²⁹ Such historical background influenced official Ankara's conception towards the Black Sea region and contributed to the establishment of a perception of a self as well as vis a vis this area.

When talking about how the historical background preconditioned Turkey's current role in the Black Sea region, one must devote considerable attention to **the Monteux Convention**, the importance of which cannot be overstated. It is not just an international treaty which provides official Ankara with a sovereign right to govern the passage of ships through the Turkish Straights. It carries much more significance. For one, it creates the foundation for the foreign policy perspectives of the country, including the regional conception.

The Monteux Convention is one of the founding documents that legitimized the creation of the Republic of Turkey. It also underlines that the Turkish Straights are under Turkish sovereignty. Finally, thanks to this convention, Turkey plays a central role in the region in the affairs of energy security, frozen conflicts and other security related issues, which go beyond the regional context and become international concerns.²³⁰

Among Turkish officials there is a fear that the United States has a desire to become more active in the Black Sea area/region, and some of them call for certain adjustments to be made to the provisions of the Monteux Convention. The existence of such plans is verified by the statements of the US Ambassador to Ankara, Ross Wilson, who underlined the possibility of entertaining certain rights over the Black Sea. Such rights originate from the Black Sea's

²²⁸ There is even a quote of the 17th century Ottoman statement stating that the Black Sea is an Ottoman lake

²²⁹ After the 1815 Vienna congress, when Russians began to extend into the Black Sea region, Ottomans lost their unique positions and unilateral control of the straits; after the Crimean war of 1853-1856 a special commission on Straights was created and included parties like France, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Turkey and Sardinia. Commission was responsible for managing the navigation in the lower Danube. In 1923 when Turkey gained its independence the Straights were demilitarized further reducing Turkey's power over them. However, in 1936, as war was approaching Europe, through the rounds of negotiations Turkey managed to gain back its authority over the Straights which is still valid and applied into practice.

²³⁰ Kiniklioglu Suat Turkey's Black Sea Policy: Strategic Interplay at a Critical Juncture pp. 55-64 in Asmus Ronald D. (ed.) (2006) Next Steps in Forging a Euro Atlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea, German Marshall Fund of the United States, p. 57

status of international waters, and it is apparent that Washington desires to benefit from this right.²³¹

If such scenario becomes a reality, this will for sure undermine the role and influence of Turkey over the Black Sea Straights and related policies. Consequently Ankara's aim is to ensure that no other regional or international powers will penetrate into the area and threaten its dominant role in the region.²³²

How did these fears and concerns related to the sovereign right of Turkey over the Straights impact its policies towards the Black Sea region? Official Ankara not only prioritized **the maritime security**, but also **separated** it from the other issues related to the Black Sea region. So while the maritime security is of crucial importance for Turkey, the larger debate around the wider Black Sea area becomes secondary.²³³ Such prioritization is reflected in different ways in the foreign policy of Turkey, starting from the development of the maritime security cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Initiative **BLACKSEAFOR**, started in 1998 with founding documents being signed in 2001 in Istanbul, was revived after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Initially aiming at humanitarian aid and search and rescue operations, it expanded its scope to include the prevention of terrorism, organized crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and trafficking. The year of 2003 marked the creation of **Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre (BBCIC)**, responsible for fostering information sharing about the illegal maritime activities in the Black Sea region. In 2004 Turkey started another initiative – **Operation Black Sea Harmony** – with the intention to increase the ability and interoperability of the Black Sea littoral states to respond to the changing security challenges.²³⁴ Ankara believed that maritime security of the Black Sea area was the main objective of the littoral countries, while solving

²³¹ There are several official agreements that are used as a basis of the US claims over the Black Sea among which one can find the 1954 US special privileges agreement, annexes of the Defense Cooperation Agreement of 1980 and its 16 March, 1987 extensions on Konya as well as some other legal documents about Konya. More details about the US-Turkey approaches to the Montreaux Convention and its influence on their vision towards the Black Sea can be found at Ogan Sinan The Black Sea: New Arena for Global Competition, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Summer 2006 <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/762/the-black-sea-new-arena-for-global-competition-summer-2006/> (last time accessed on June 12, 2014 at 3:13 pm Georgia time)

²³² Ozdamar Ozgur The Black Sea Region in the New Turkish Foreign Policy, Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, Black Sea Discussion Paper Series 2011/2, Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, p. 8

²³³ Ibid. Kiniklioglu Suat p. 57

²³⁴ Baran Zeyno Turkey and the Wider Black Sea Region pp. 87-101 in Hamilton Daniel and Mangott Gerhard (eds.) (2008) The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives, Washington DC: Centre for Transatlantic Relations, p. 88-89

some other issues could allow a wider representation.²³⁵ Consequently all the aforementioned projects aimed to unify the Black Sea coastal countries including Russia.

On one hand, one could perceive all those initiatives as not only tools of ensuring a higher maritime security, but also a good opportunity to make the Black Sea littoral states closer to one another. Some could argue that even if it was not the primary reason why Turkey proposed those ideas, their implementation could contribute to the better integration of the coastal countries. However, in reality, it is very hard to show any reliable signs of this integration through the maritime security cooperation under Turkey's leadership.²³⁶

As we do not aim at going over the security perceptions of the Black Sea littoral states in detail, because it goes beyond of the scope of this study, we can only say that different Black Sea littoral states have different understanding of security (and/or insecurity), considering Russia-Georgia relationships, EU membership of Romania and Bulgaria (whose Black Sea regional affiliation will be discussed below), NATO membership aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine, and the interests of regional powers like Turkey and Russia (some of which also contradict). Without common security perceptions (both national and regional), further integration under this area is unlikely. Accordingly, we believe that maritime security efforts of Turkey, even if they unify the Black Sea littoral states as signatories, cannot truly contribute to their real coalescence. We also think that all the Black Sea maritime security initiatives of official Ankara does not reveal its Black Sea regional conception in general for two reasons. Firstly, because there is no clear stand-alone Black Sea regional conception as such (we will further unpack this area below when discussing Turkey's priorities presented at its website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Secondly, because we perceive Turkey's securitization of the maritime area as its efforts to preserve and enhance its leadership role over the Black Sea, not allowing other powers, including NATO and the US, to increase their presence there. Some might disagree with the latter point of view, being more prone to believe that Ankara tried to use its naval strategy to contribute to the consolidation of NATO's superiority in the wider Black Sea area.²³⁷ On our part, we argue that with naval security strategies, Turkey tried to show that, with 3 littoral states (Turkey, Romania, and

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 90

²³⁶ We do not consider the initiatives themselves as signs of integration or a bigger regional coalescence, as we see them as a tools in the hands of Turkey preserving status quo

²³⁷ Tanrisever Oktay F. Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict, Centre for Economics and foreign Policy Studies, Black Sea Discussion Paper Series 2012/1 p. 13

Bulgaria) already being NATO members and taking care of its security, there is no need for a separate NATO presence in the Black Sea region.²³⁸²³⁹

While Turkey is seriously interested in maritime security and is actively engaged in its procurement, the same drive and interest can hardly be noticed in other areas related to the Black Sea region and its development. As mentioned above, while Turkey is one of the two important regional powers along with Russia, its official foreign policy vision neither reflects nor includes any specific Black Sea regional goals and/or interests.

Synopsis of Turkish foreign policy does not even mention the Black Sea region as such. When talking about the influencers of the foreign policy priorities of Ankara, Turkey's location in the intersection of different foreign policy dynamics is underlined. What is also interesting is that Turkey is perceived as an epicenter of "Afro-Eurasian geography."²⁴⁰ Furthermore, the part of the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, which talks about Turkey's conception towards different regions, lists the following eleven regions, again, without mentioning the Black Sea region: European countries, Balkans, Southern Caucasus, Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, North America, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, East-Asia and Pacific, North Africa.²⁴¹ Interestingly enough, the list of 'European countries' includes all of the Black Sea littoral states (Russian Federation, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine)²⁴² except Georgia, which is included in the South Caucasus region.²⁴³ It is also interesting to see that while Georgia is perceived as a Caucasian country, Belarus is perceived as part of Europe.

We believe that such grouping of those states clearly indicates the *absence of the conception of the Black Sea region* (as a single entity) in Turkey's conception, foreign policy thinking, and strategic planning. In addition, Turkey does *not see the Black Sea littoral states as one group*, regardless of the fact that they are unified not only geographically by the sea, but also

²³⁸ Kiniklioglu Suat p. 61

²³⁹ Turkey has been historically opposing the entry of non-littoral warships and vessels into the Black Sea; one of the examples of this is the 1947 case when Ankara did not allow the USS Missouri, sent by Americans as a sign of support to Turkey by that time suffering from the pressure from Stalin, to enter the Black Sea

²⁴⁰ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴¹ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?e55ad6a5-1b09-4788-a51c-2c1cae96fd0d> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴² <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?855064bb-a737-421f-b84d-a3024d9c7795> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴³ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?6bda4d8b-81a3-44d7-b8a0-5a287804f77b> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

under the umbrella of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which was also initiated by Turkey. Furthermore, seeing Romania and Bulgaria as not only European countries, but also as Balkans, Ankara underlines the role of the *South East European Cooperation Process* (SEECP) that brings together Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Croatia, Moldova, and Montenegro and represents "a symbol of the common will of the countries of the region to improve cooperation among themselves and to bring lasting stability in South East Europe."²⁴⁴ This further contributes to our argument that there is no conception of the Black Sea littoral states as a single entity; rather Turkey applies differentiated approaches to Romania and Bulgaria as of European and Balkans countries (underlining the importance of businesses in Turkish-Romania relationships,²⁴⁵ and the mutual support in the area of Euro-Atlantic integration as well as Turkish investments in case of Bulgaria),²⁴⁶ while treating Georgia as a member of the Caucasus region (Caucasian dynamics vis-a-vis Georgia are mainly described as a continuation of historical linkages, geographic proximity and the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline).²⁴⁷ Special attention is paid to Ukraine's location between Russia and the European Union, Turkey's relationships with which are mainly triggered by the High Level Strategic Council with a focus on trade and visa liberation.²⁴⁸

The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey has a special link to the maritime issues. But here again, the Black Sea is not mentioned (only Aegean and Mediterranean); instead, a part on the Turkish Straights links us to the Montreux Convention implementation. Only then the MFA website starts talking about the Black Sea. However, the key focus is made on the principle provisions of the Convention ruling and/or restricting the passage of various vessels.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/south-east-european-countries-cooperation-process-seeecp_en.mfa (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴⁵ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-romania.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴⁶ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-bulgaria.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴⁷ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-georgia.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴⁸ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-ukraine.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁴⁹ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/implementation-of-the-montreux-convention.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

The structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey further reflects the lack of the strategic importance or priority of the Black Sea region. The official organigram of the Ministry clearly shows us that under the undersecretary (which is the second layer in the structure coming right after the Minister, his advisors, cabinet, board of press and inspectors represented as the first key layer), which specifies and overlooks the key directions of the foreign policy of Ankara, none of them is related to the Black Sea region: deputy undersecretary (administrative affairs), deputy undersecretary general political affairs, deputy undersecretary (political affairs), deputy undersecretary (Asia-Pacific affairs), deputy undersecretary (bilateral political and African affairs), deputy undersecretary (economic affairs).²⁵⁰ Furthermore, sub-directions under the deputy undersecretaries listed above do not include the Black Sea regional affairs either. This fourth layer reveals the importance of bilateral relationships that Turkey prioritizes, however South Asia under Asia-Pacific is still underlined as an important area with its own directorate general.²⁵¹ We believe, the MFA organigram itself is a clear verification or a visual representation of the absence of the Black Sea region as a single entity of the strategic importance in the foreign policy thinking of Turkish officials.²⁵²

All the aforementioned provides a strong foundation to our thinking that Turkey, even if it groups countries and tries to develop some regional perspective about them while pursuing its foreign policy:

- Does not see the Black Sea region as a single entity;
- Does not see the Black Sea littoral countries as one group towards which Turkey might want or need to develop a group conception;
- Does not see itself as a Black Sea regional power (actually it considers its role to be far more important, considering its self-perception as the epicenter of the Afro-Eurasian geography);

²⁵⁰ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/BAKANLIK/teskilat-semasi-en-links-11-2014.pdf> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² The organigram accessible on the Turkish MFA website also shows some abbreviations which are not explained or described anywhere else; it is not clear either whether those abbreviations are in English or Turkish (while the organigram is in English some complete titles still have abbreviations with Turkish letters under them); however none of those abbreviations are either BSR that can be unpacked as the Black Sea Region, nor WBSR (wider Black Sea region), nor BSEC, accordingly we believe that our conclusions about the absence of the Black Sea region is still valid

- Does not build its foreign policy according to some Black Sea regional imperatives in mind.

Accordingly, we can say that Ankara pursues its foreign policy with its near or far neighbors around the Black Sea (and not only) on the basis of bi- and multi-lateral relationships. It also becomes once again affirmed that the major focus of Turkey's foreign policy vis-à-vis the Black Sea region is mainly linked to the preservation of the status quo in the maritime domain. This would include not only keeping the Montreux Convention requirements valid and in force, but also not allowing a penetration of any other power into the region which might possibly change the so called regional balance, questioning Turkey's sovereign power over the Straights. All this drives us to believe that despite the fact that Turkey is one of the most powerful and influential Black Sea littoral countries, it did not and could not create an internal drive for the intra-regional coalescence. Prioritization and segregation of the maritime security from other Black Sea related issues is only one of the many facts that attest to this assumption.

Another issue that has contributed to the complication of the development of a clear Black Sea policy and/or a conception of Turkey was related to its aspirations of accession to the European Union. On one hand, Ankara has been considering its active engagement into the Black Sea regional affairs as contradictory to its EU membership aspirations. Building and strengthening the Black Sea regional cooperation ties would, first of all, mean working closely with non-European Russia and Azerbaijan.²⁵³ Partnership with those countries could raise lots of questions among the EU officials about Turkey's identity and its European-ness.²⁵⁴ This in itself could further suspend Turkey's complete European integration, a goal Turkey has been pursuing for such a long time without much success. Consequently, aiming at avoiding and/or mitigating additional challenges on its way to the membership of the European Union, Ankara used to try to be less active in the Black Sea region. On the other hand, whenever the process of Turkey's final EU integration would slow down or be hindered by new and old barriers on its way, Ankara would start engaging more actively in the Black Sea cooperation.²⁵⁵ Considering the importance of energy resources and respective pipeline

²⁵³ While Azerbaijan is not the Black Sea littoral country, its closely linked (especially from the perspective of energy security and collaboration) with other Black Sea littoral states, including Georgia, Turkey and Russia, consequently it would still be part of even the most unstructured and inconsistent thinking around the Black Sea area among Turkish politicians. Historical and cultural linkages would further contribute to this.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. Baran Zeyno p. 93

²⁵⁵ Ibid. Manoli p. 106-107

policies, Turkey would not be able (nor willing) to stay away (especially for long) from the not-so-European Azerbaijan. The Russian Federation also was and is a strategic, economic, and political partner for Turkey, from which Ankara cannot isolate itself. These circumstances could be considered to have triggered Ankara's relatively active engagement in the Black Sea regional affairs (or at least have fostered some bilateral relationships within the region).

The dependency on the speed and prospects of the European Union membership could have and did contribute to the inconsistency of Turkey's conception towards the Black Sea region. Activation in the Black Sea regional cooperation was perceived as some sort of an alternative to the EU membership, which was dropped each time the Union's attitude towards Turkey would improve and thus Turkey-EU relationships would become more promising. Furthermore, it showed that Ankara did not have any concrete conception of how this particular part of the world could be approached, nor did it reveal any specific regional interests that could have contributed to or enriched Turkey's national interests.. Thus we believe that such dynamics not only did not contribute to the intra-regional integration (at least among the Black Sea littoral states), but actually made this integration less possible.

While the EU membership stays to be one of the main priorities Turkey, there still is a tendency of Turkey's rapprochement and increasing its interest in the Middle East.²⁵⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey underlines the importance of positive developments with "the Arab world that Turkey enjoys deeply rooted historical, cultural, social and religious ties. As one of the strategic components of the Middle East geography, Turkey has therefore taken important steps over the last few years to develop and diversify its relations, both on bilateral and multilateral basis, with the Arab world."²⁵⁷ Considering the challenges inside the European Union,²⁵⁸ as well as changes inside Turkey,²⁵⁹ bigger interest towards the Middle East might mean not only strengthening cooperation with the Arab countries, but could also signal an increased engagement in the Middle Eastern affairs and even lesser engagement with the Black Sea region.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. Ozdamar Ozgur p. 4

²⁵⁷ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-relations-with-the-arab-countries.en.mfa (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

²⁵⁸ Not speaking with a single voice, the United Kingdom re-thinking its EU policies and membership etc.

²⁵⁹ Control of the media, increasing influence Islam, especially in country officials rhetoric etc.

3.2.2. Russia and the Black Sea Region

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's perspectives towards the Black Sea region can be clustered into four different phases with each of those having their own specific features:

- Phase One covers the period from 1991 through 1994 and is characterized by the emergence of ethnic conflicts, their freezing and the establishment of a totally new post-Soviet status quo;²⁶⁰ at that time the so called regional outlook was shaped with the ethnic conflicts in mind and was marked with Russia searching for a new role/niche;
- Phase Two covers the period of 1995-2002. It was mainly dominated by the Chechen war, which was also used as a prism through which the Black Sea Region was perceived;²⁶¹
- Phase Three lasted from 2003 through 2008 (the latter year becoming a turning point with regards to Russia's role in the Black Sea region). During this period, the Azov-Black Sea zone started to be considered as a zone of strategic interests of the Russian Federation;²⁶²
- Phase Four started with the Russia-Georgia war of 2008 and it is still in place so far;²⁶³

Depending on the phase and its respective characteristics, Russia's engagement into the regional affairs altered from nominal to active. One of the key foundations of Russian strategic vision that remained unchanged during all four phases is that Russia believes that it has more rights to play a leading role in the region, than any other outside power (i.e. the United States of America and the European Union).²⁶⁴ However, despite this strong willingness to be a regional leader, Moscow could not (and did not) develop a clear strategy towards the Black Sea region. There are several explanations of this.

We can hardly indicate any particular period when the Black Sea region was perceived as a stand-alone independent entity by Moscow. It was usually seen as a part of something bigger and more important, and accordingly was treated as a geographical area belonging to a wider

²⁶⁰ Kobrinskaya Irina The Black Sea Region in Russia's Current Foreign Policy Paradigm pp. 1-5 in Transformations In The Black Sea Region A PONARS Eurasia Workshop Policy Memos Nos. 41-54 Washington DC, December 2008, p. 1

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Kobrinskaya Irina p. 2

area of more strategic importance,²⁶⁵ being it the wider Mediterranean, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), etc. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 2000 attests to this argument. According to this document, “Viewing the **Greater Mediterranean** as a **hub** of such regions as the **Middle East, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and the Caspian Sea basin**, Russia intends to steer a purposeful course forward for turning it into a zone of peace, stability and good neighborliness, something that will help advance Russian economic interests, including in the matter of the choice of routes for important energy flows.”²⁶⁶ Later on, while touching on the country’s regional priorities, in the same document the Kremlin indicates that “a priority area in Russia's foreign policy is ensuring conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to national security tasks of the country.”²⁶⁷

These two excerpts from Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept of the year 2000 make it clear that Moscow did not have any clear understanding of what the Black Sea region was and how it could be treated. By thinking of the Black Sea region as a part of the wider Mediterranean hub, which is an important entity due to the multiplicity of energy routes, and at the same time including some of the Black Sea states (both littoral and their neighbors) into the CIS, expecting from them to conform to Russian national interests, Russia sent out an unclear and confusing message.

Similar inconsistency and lack of clarity around the Black Sea region can further be traced in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 2008. There we read that “Russia will define its approaches to developing comprehensive practical interaction in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions by preserving the identity of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and strengthening the mechanism of cooperation between the Caspian States.”²⁶⁸ While it is not very clear what is meant by “preserving the identity of the organization,” we can still conclude from this statement (actually it is the only statement in

²⁶⁵ For more details about Russia’s understanding of the Black Sea region please see Kuznetsky N. A. pp.205-214 Geopolitical Aspects of of Russian Politics in Kovalsky N. (ed.) (1996) *the Black Sea Region in Russia: The Mediterranean and the Black Sea* Moscow: Russian Academy of Science, Institute of Europe, Council for the Mediterranean and Black Sea Studies

²⁶⁶ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation Approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, June 28, 2000 <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (last time accessed on April 23, 2014 at 5:45 pm Georgia time)

²⁶⁷ Ibid. <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (last time accessed on April 23, 2014 at 5:45 pm Georgia time)

²⁶⁸ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation July 12, 2008 <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml> (last time accessed on April 24, 2014 at 2:34 pm Georgia time)

this concept in which the Black Sea region is explicitly mentioned; in all the other cases CIS dominates) that the Black Sea is no longer perceived as the part of the wider Mediterranean hub (at least not stated that way), however it is still seen from the prism of another wider entity - this time the BSEC. The same logic applies to the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of the year 2013, where Article 53 underlines that Russia's approach to the Caspian and Black Sea regions will be led by the principles of the Charter of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.²⁶⁹

Examining the organizational structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation further provides us with additional arguments that there is not a regional understanding of the Black Sea area among the Russian officials. Here again, as in the case of Turkey, we take the departments of the MFA as indicators of the country's strategic directions in the foreign policy. With that in mind, we try to search where the Black Sea region finds its place. As the organigram shows us, grouping the countries into different categories and setting up departments accordingly is the main approach utilized by the MFA of Russia. We can outline four different departments of the CIS Countries. Furthermore, there are 4 European departments, each headed by its respective leader. North America, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, and Southern Africa (countries below Sahara) each have their own departments. There are also three separate Asian departments and a stand-alone department of the Asia-Pacific.²⁷⁰ As we can see, there is no department of the Black Sea region which is in line with the aforementioned discourse. What is also interesting is how countries are allocated among the departments. One of the Black Sea littoral states, Ukraine, is grouped with Belarus and Moldova under the Second CIS department. Another Black Sea littoral state Georgia belongs to the Fourth CIS department, which also includes Azerbaijan, Armenia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Three more Black Sea littoral states – Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey – are grouped together under the Fourth European Department, along with Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece, Cyprus, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation February 12, 2013 <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument> (last time accessed on April 25, 2014 at 4:43 pm Georgia time)

²⁷⁰ <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ministry.nsf/info/01.03.01.04> (last time accessed on September 23, 2014 at 2:43 am Turkey time)

²⁷¹ Organigram in a special word document uploaded at the <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ministry.nsf/info/01.03.01.04> (last time accessed on September 23, 2014 at 2:43 am Turkey time)

As we can see, there is not only a lack of the Black Sea region as a single entity in the organizational structure (thus the political thinking) of the main governmental body of the foreign policy of Russia, but even the Black Sea littoral countries are not seen as a single group; rather, they are clustered into three different groups of states. Therefore we believe that the Russian Federation, with these types of conflicting perspectives on the Black Sea region, could not be a driver of the intra-regional coalescence. Like Turkey, with its inconsistent conception that regards this area as a part of different wider groups, Russia might be sending confusing messages to its neighbors, further contributing to the lack of integration among the states.

When talking about Russia and Turkey, two major regional powers in the Black Sea basin (especially in its eastern part), one might also want to explore the relationship between those two. Regional dynamics depend not only on the relationships among the countries within its boundaries, but also on the relationship between the regional powers (if there are any). The Black Sea region is definitely one of those areas where much would depend on how Turkey and Russia relate to each other.

While it is out of the scope of this study to fully explore the relationships between Ankara and Moscow, we are going to briefly describe the major directions and modes of their interaction, as this is going to help us to better understand their impact on the Black Sea region.

Overall, there are four different modes of interaction between Turkey and Russia:²⁷²

1. Post-Soviet power vacuum of the 1990s when Russia neglects Turkey's initiative of BSEC and economic cooperation does not translate into political partnership;
2. Rapprochement in the period of 2000s when Russia can no longer neglect Turkey's influence; Putin's presidency makes the leadership more predictable, which further contributes to drawing Russia and Turkey closer as they start to better understand what to expect from each other;
3. Naval security as a special area of cooperation, where Russia and Turkey unify their forces (the common aspect of the prevailing Russian and Turkish perceptions of the Black Sea region is that both of them believe that no outsiders are needed in the Black Sea zone)

²⁷² For more details about those four aspects of Russia-Turkey relationships, please see Tanrisever Oktay F. Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, Black Sea Discussion Paper Series 2012/1

4. Pipeline politics as an area of disagreement mainly caused by Ankara's support for the energy routes within the East-West corridor, which would neglect Russia's national interests by bypassing it.

What can the dynamics of the relationship between Russia and Turkey tell us about the roles they play in the Black Sea region and the influence they exert on it? Our perspective is that such ups and downs in the interaction of the two major regional powers, as well as disagreements in the area of energy resources, which is a strategic priority for all states, could further impede the coalescence among the littoral states. One more important thing, common for both Moscow and Ankara, was that along with the aforementioned diversity of relationships, they both lacked a clear conception of the Black Sea region. Accordingly, none of those regional powers could trigger the rapprochement of at least the Black Sea littoral states and promote region building from within – apparently neither of them was interested in doing so.

3.3. Romania and Bulgaria: Between the Black Sea and the European Union

The next pair of countries that we would like to analyze from the perspective of their interests and the roles they play in the Black Sea region building processes are Romania and Bulgaria, whose accession to membership of the EU influenced the organization's thinking towards its eastern neighbors a lot, as it found itself on the doorstep of the Black Sea area after expansion.

From the very beginning it needs to be emphasized that before the EU membership, both Romania and Bulgaria had revealed some sort of reluctance to be actively engaged in the Black Sea regional affairs. On the hand they feared that their involvement in the cooperative schemes with eastward orientation, especially with Russia being the active participant of those processes, could hinder their prospects of obtaining the EU membership in the future. At the same time Bucharest and Sofia had been trying to emphasize and stress nothing but their European identity. Accordingly, they tried to avoid or limit their engagement in other cooperation schemes which could question their Europeanness.²⁷³ For sure, such attitude could not transform either of those countries into the main drivers of regional cooperation and integration. Their European membership aspiration was so strong that the majority of their

²⁷³ Ibid. Manoli p. 111

efforts was focused on pursuing this primary goal, thus undermining the process of Black Sea region building from inside as a secondary and less important goal.

Of course, this does not mean that Romania and Bulgaria did not engage in the Black Sea regional affairs at all. Good neighborhood policies were part of the requirements for their EU membership, which motivated them to be closer with their eastern neighbors; however any form of partnership was only pursued if it could further support the European aspirations of both Bulgaria and Romania²⁷⁴ Such thinking led both countries to the membership of the Central European Initiative (CEI), which was created after the apparent failure of Balkan Cooperation. The interesting thing is that Bucharest and Sofia were very positive towards this organization and their membership in it, as it underlined their European identity.²⁷⁵ However their attitude, especially that of Bulgaria, was not so positive towards the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). After consulting with official Athens, Bulgaria decided to join PABSEC only after Greece had done so.. In 2004 Bulgaria even declined the BSEC Chairmanship.²⁷⁶ All this makes us believe that such attitudes of Bulgaria and Romania towards the Black Sea cooperation could not trigger the development of an intra-regional coalescence. Furthermore, there is a perception that Bulgaria in particular was not a policy builder, but rather a follower of already established agendas. “Historically, the country’s foreign policy choices have been made in the capitals of neighboring empires – Istanbul until the 19th century, Berlin in the first half of the 20th century or Moscow during the Cold War. The pattern of foreign policy making based on such historical and geopolitical premises can be characterized, therefore, as re-active rather than pro-active.”²⁷⁷ Consequently, it might be safe to conclude that Bulgaria could not serve as the key initiator of intra-regional coalescence.

However situation has somewhat changed since Bulgaria obtained the EU membership. Aiming at contributing to the development of the Commission’s Black Sea Synergy document, in 2007 Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared and shared with the EU a special policy paper titled *Bulgaria’s Approach to strengthening Stability and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region*. In this document official Sofia tries to explain the significance of

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 114

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 115

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Nikolov Krassimir Y. The Black Sea Regional cooperation and Bulgaria: Context, Concepts and Actors pp. 37-84 in Nikolov Krassimir Y. (ed.) (2007) Europe On The Black Sea Shore: Opportunities and Challenges for Bulgaria, Bulgarian European Community Studies Association

positive neighborly relationships and the importance of the engaging the Black Sea countries into different European and Euro-Atlantic processes.²⁷⁸ While Bulgaria's activation in the good neighborly relationships with the other Black Sea countries could be perceived as a positive change, we take those statements as Bulgaria's attempts to show its added value to the EU. Also, considering that this policy paper was developed only after Bulgaria's accession to EU membership, it is doubtful that the imperative to change the regional cooperation policies came from within, as Bulgaria had not perceived itself as a member of the Black Sea region even before the EU membership.

Current website of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs further provides us with a very interesting picture. Unfortunately, the link which is supposed to have the information on Bulgaria's policy perspectives is empty.²⁷⁹ Therefore, it is hard for us to analyze the most recent foreign policy conception of Sofia and how it reflects the regional dimensions of the Black Sea area. Examining the organigram provided on the MFA website does not reveal any signs of Bulgarian interest in the Black Sea region. Under the European Affairs General Directorate only the department of the EU policy and Institutions and the Directorate of European Countries are unified. In addition, Political Affairs' General Directorate includes Middle East, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania. No other regions or geographic areas are indicated.²⁸⁰ More details are provided under the Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria where we can see that the European Union Policy and Institutions Department includes Southeast Europe Directorate, which in turn consists of two directions: bilateral cooperation and regional cooperation.²⁸¹ Without any further specifications, which are not provided on the website, it is hard to tell which Black Sea regional countries might be covered under "southeast Europe" and which particular regional cooperation organizations and/or mechanisms are included in the framework. Drawing from the information about the structure of the Bulgarian MFA that is publicly available on its website, the only kind of conclusions that we can make would involve arguing that the Black Sea regional initiatives are not among the priorities of the Bulgarian ministry of foreign affairs. At least it is not regarded to be as important some other strategic areas, otherwise it would be reflected in the

²⁷⁸ Bulgaria's Approach to strengthening Stability and Cooperation in the Black Sea Region Policy Paper prepared at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nikolov Krassimir Y. (2007) p. 86-87

²⁷⁹ <http://www.mfa.bg/en/pages/59/index.html> (last time accessed on November 10, 2014 at 4:12 am Georgia time)

²⁸⁰ <http://www.mfa.bg/uploads/files/organigram%281%29.pdf> (last time accessed on November 10, 2014 at 4:30 am Georgia time)

²⁸¹ <http://www.mfa.bg/en/pages/122/index.html> (last time accessed on November 10, 2014 at 4:30 am Georgia time)

organizational structure of the ministry, which does reflect the strategic directions of the foreign policy of the country. However, considering that we do not have more specific information about the regional cooperation (which might include BSEC), such conclusions could be premature, so at this stage we would rather avoid making final conclusions.

The case of Romania is significantly different. The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania is some sort of an attempt to prove that ‘Romania steadily became the most active EU member state in promoting the strategic importance of the Black Sea area and stressing the need for an increased strategic EU role in the region.’²⁸² The Black Sea region carries the status of “a neighborhood of interest” for Romania, itself being a EU member state. This in itself is a very interesting formulation for us, as, per our understanding, it implies that Romania does not see itself as a member of the Black Sea region; rather its belonging to the EU makes it feel responsible to take care of its eastern neighborhood. This might also be a good way to reveal and maybe even prove its Europeanness and show the added value of its membership. This is further revealed in the main objectives’ section of the Romanian conception of the Black Sea region shared on its official MFA website, stating that the country aims at “creating and strengthening a stable, democratic, prosperous *area in the Eastern neighborhood*, but also at opening the Black Sea wider region to the European and Euro-Atlantic values and processes. “The fatigue” of eastward enlargement should be replaced with a new paradigm of cooperation that would amplify the EU potential of influence and drive for change in the region, without excluding the possibility of EU accession.”²⁸³

We believe, such formulation of the goals shows us that Romania is not that much of an insider of the Black Sea region (even if we discuss it as a part of this chapter). As a EU representative in the area, it simply tries to contribute to the development of various areas and/or regions around it (Whether its efforts are successful or not is a question of a different study). This is why, per our assumption, Romania not only underlines the importance of the Black Sea region’s development in its eastern neighborhood, but also emphasizes the importance of the role that Romania plays in various cooperation formats in the Balkans, as well as in Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.²⁸⁴ It is also interesting that the official Bucharest, while talking about the Black Sea region as one of its

²⁸² <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2183> (last time accessed on November 10, 2014 at 4:30 am Georgia time)

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2182> (last time accessed on November 10, 2014 at 4:30 am Georgia time)

key areas of interest, further specifies the significance of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and South Caucasus which includes one of the Black Sea littoral states as well – Georgia. Our understanding of all this is that the Romanian government priorities both bilateral and multilateral relations, with the latter often being reflected in its engagement in various regional schemes. Romania's mission is believed to be preconditioned by "its geostrategic vocation to have a voice in the Central East European region as well as in the enlarged area of the Black Sea – Caucasus – Central Asia region, extending, in a broader context, towards the Greater Middle East region."²⁸⁵ Accordingly, Bucharest sees itself as a European power which shares and contributes to the implementation of the EU goals in its eastern neighborhood. Regardless of different considerations, Romania seems to be one of the few states that have a relatively focused conception towards the Black Sea region (however this vision does not specify what exactly do the Black Sea region and its wider version represent).

Unlike all the other littoral states analyzed so far, Romania has declared the Black Sea region to be one of its key areas of interest, even if this is done from the perspective of a EU member state, with the intention to support the EU neighborhood in general and not necessarily the Black Sea regional countries in particular. However, the following question still rises: does a country with a Black Sea coastline and important ports have enough will and power to contribute to the regional coalescence of the Black Sea area, or at least of the littoral states, if it perceives itself only (or mainly) as a European state with the EU membership? Our response to this question would be more negative due to several reasons. Firstly, one state alone, especially if it is not a regional hegemon (and it is obvious that Romania is not one of them), cannot really initiate any tangible intra-regional dynamics. Secondly, if we are talking about the coalescence among the littoral states, and one of the states appears not to regard itself as one of them, this could further hinder prospects of coalescence among those states. Accordingly, we are driven to the conclusion that even if Romania did and still does play a role in the development of the Black Sea region (more details can be found in the respective chapter about the regional initiatives some of which are led by Romania), it still cannot be considered as a power initiating and/or driving the intra-regional coalescence.

3.4. Georgia and Ukraine

Georgia and Ukraine are the last two Black Sea littoral states that we would like to analyze in the framework of this chapter. Out of six Black Sea littoral states, these two countries could

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

be considered to be the weakest, with both of them revealing certain common characteristics: both of them share the Soviet past; both states had to undergo a challenging journey of transition from the post-Soviet order to westernized democratic statehood. Unified by the color revolutions that brought into power reformist governments, both states exhibit more or less hostile relationships with Russia, while trying to pursue their Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

When talking about the intra-regional triggers of greater coalescence potentially led by either Georgia and/or Ukraine, we will need to consider the following factors which could have an influence on their role in the Black Sea:

- Strong aspiration towards the membership of the Euro-Atlantic structures: both the EU and NATO
- Dependency on Russia, especially in the areas of economy
- Russia-Georgia conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia
- Russia-Ukraine's conflict in southern and eastern parts of Ukraine
- Russia perceiving the potential NATO membership of Georgia and Ukraine as a threat to its interests and positions in its neighborhood

These factors that have been actively present almost at all times since the collapse of the Soviet Union could be perceived as strong enough barriers that have prevented Georgia and Ukraine from becoming the intra-regional coalescence drivers among the Black Sea littoral states. The coalescence among all Black Sea littoral states, along with all the other things, would also mean collaboration and partnership with Russia, which, judging from the current contexts of Ukraine and Georgia, seem very difficult, if not impossible due to the hostile relationships and Russia's unwillingness to let those two states out of its sphere of influence. It's interesting to see how those challenges and/or overall conceptions were reflected in the strategic thinking of public officials and governments of those two states.

Unfortunately, the English version of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine provides access only to the 2014 Visual Identity Concept, which states the following: "Ukraine is a ship. The people's will is its wind. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the sail taking us back to Europe."²⁸⁶ While we do not have an opportunity to compare this identity concept with

²⁸⁶ Ukraine's Visual Identity Concept 2014 <http://mfa.gov.ua/mediafiles/files/misc/mfa-concept-en.pdf> (last time accessed on November 1, 2014 at 3:33 am Georgia time)

other Ukrainian foreign policy and/or security concepts of previous times, we still believe that such an emphasis on European identity reflected in the phase “back to Europe” gives us an idea of Ukrainian foreign policy priorities, which might not be directly linked to the Black Sea region, as now more than ever, Ukraine wants to be approached and treated as nothing more than a European country.²⁸⁷ While there is no concrete organigram, the analysis of which could help us in further understanding the role and/or intentions of Ukraine in the Black Sea intra-regional dynamics, the link on the MFA website with the list of departments and sectors was still helpful. While the Americas, EU, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, and Europe have their own Directorates General (actually there are two Directorates for Europe), apparently Black Sea region is not among them.²⁸⁸ Through its MFA structure, Ukraine prioritizes relationships with the Russian Federation, which has its own department – one very weak link to the Black Sea region as it is essentially a bilateral relationship between two nations. Another link to the Black Sea region can be found in the context of cooperation with international organizations where one can find BSEC along with the CoE, UNESCO and NATO.²⁸⁹ The whole page on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation talks mainly about its creation, structure and the mode of work, up until the point when it states that in the first half of the year 2013 Ukraine had the BSEC chairmanship. At this moment, along with underlining the importance of following the organizational principles reflected in its Charter, Ukraine lists the following priorities that it would pursue during the chairmanship:

- “Promotion of development of multilateral economic cooperation in the BSEC Region;
- Practical implementation of the previously adopted decisions and concluded agreements;
- Enforcement of the BSEC project-oriented approach through implementation of the projects and programs of regional dimension (e.g. Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and Motorways of the Sea);
- Preparation of multilateral document on regional multimodal transport;

²⁸⁷ We do acknowledge that the Euromaidan and 2014 events in southern and eastern Ukraine triggered by Russia did have a huge influence on Ukraine’s foreign policy vision; however, we still believe that even more motivated pro-western 2014 government of Ukraine might consider the coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states, which would also include Russia as the regional leader and a littoral state, less feasible

²⁸⁸ <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-mfa/structure/staff> (last time accessed on November 1, 2014 at 3:33 am Georgia time)

²⁸⁹ Interestingly enough above presented list of the international organizations is a separate link under the MFA website; the Directorate General for International Organizations under the departments and sectors does not give us any further details; accordingly it’s hard to say whether Ukraine limits itself to those 5 organizations (EU + 4 listed in the aforementioned link) or not

- Direction of BSEC's efforts at the disclosure and elimination of the barriers in mutual trade, Harmonization of the customs and trade regimes on the basis of the WTO;
- Strengthening of the Organization's financial capability;
- Promotion of the BSEC activities in the sphere of environmental protection, touristic sphere, etc.²⁹⁰

From our perspective, all those Ukrainian priorities in BSEC are very pragmatic and focused on various dimensions of economic cooperation. While all this (if successfully implemented) could prepare a good soil for the closer intra-regional dynamics and a deeper coalescence, when talking about achievements the same webpage provides a list of 23 Steering Committee meetings and three Ministerial meetings held during the Ukrainian Chairmanship as success indicators.²⁹¹ Plus, increasing the intra-regional integration and developing stronger ties with the other Black Sea littoral states are not mentioned among the priorities of the state. This for sure does not automatically mean that Ukraine was/is not interested in building stronger intra-regional partnership, including among the Black Sea littoral states. However, there is a limit to how important a certain issue can be, without it appearing alongside other priorities in different policy documents or strategy brief. Overall, we are more prone to conclude that the collected information does not provide us with solid evidence, showing that Ukraine did play an important role in promoting intra-regional coalescence among the Black Sea coastal countries. Furthermore, considering the 2014 events and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it seems to us even more unlikely that Kiev will have a strong incentive to contribute to the intra-regional integration processes, with Russia being among the states to be integrated with.

Georgia's perspective about the Black Sea region and its role in the regional development can be well presented through the comparison of two important documents: National Security Concept of Georgia of two different years: 2005 and 2011. While both documents do refer to the Black Sea region, the changes in the latter document clearly show the shift in the perspectives of Georgian foreign policy.

Under the national interests of Georgia, both concepts have a paragraph dedicated to regional stability. However the regional stability and ways of guaranteeing security seem to be perceived in different ways in 2005 and in 2011. Security concept of 2005 puts a special emphasis on the Black Sea region by stating that 'Georgia attaches *particular importance to*

²⁹⁰ <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/international-organizations/obsec> (last time accessed on November 1, 2014 at 3:33 am Georgia time)

²⁹¹ Ibid.

developments within the Black Sea basin, the Caucasus and Russia.”²⁹² Security concept of 2011 lists Europe, Black Sea region, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Middle East as the areas of developments which could either influence Georgia’s national security and/or play an important role in ensuring it. Accordingly, ”the maintenance of stability and security and the peaceful resolution of the existing disagreements in these regions *is in Georgia’s interest.*”²⁹³ The differences in the formulations about the regional stability are vivid. If in the first case a special focus was made on the Black Sea, in the second case, the same area is listed along with Central Asia, Middle East, Europe, and the Caucasus (without any differentiation among those). The reference to those regions is made only because changes in these parts of the world could affect Georgia’s security. Furthermore, when discussing the importance of the integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union, both concepts refer to Georgia as a *Black Sea and South-Eastern European Country.*²⁹⁴ However, the collaboration with either of those organizations is, once again, perceived through different prisms in the two security concepts. The security concept of 2005 expresses its belief that ‘integration of the Black Sea states into NATO and the EU will significantly reinforce the security of the Black Sea region as the South-Eastern border of Europe.’²⁹⁵ In addition, it also reads that the ‘membership of NATO would not only endow Georgia with an unprecedented degree of military and political security, but would allow it to contribute to *strengthening the security of Europe, particularly the Black Sea region.*’²⁹⁶ Georgia’s accession to EU membership was also believed to be the way to strengthen Europe by *transforming the Black Sea region into a ‘European trade and stability zone.’*²⁹⁷ As we can see from the document, back in 2005 official Tbilisi did perceive its Euro-Atlantic integration as a means to ensuring the security and economic prosperity of the Black Sea region. With the provided statements it not only underlined its Europeanness, but also coupled the idea of its Europeanness with the idea of Black Sea regionness, by designating an important role to Georgia in the transformation of the region. Unlike the security concept of 2005, the concept of 2011 does not say anything about this issue.

One of the biggest changes that makes the security concept of Georgia of 2005 substantially differ from that of 2011, thus revealing the shift in the political mind set, is the disappearance

²⁹² National Security Concept of Georgia 2005 http://www.parliament.ge/files/292_880_927746_concept_en.pdf (last time accessed on September 29, 2014 at 3:00 am Georgia time)

²⁹³ National Security Concept of Georgia 2011 p. 6

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 15 and National Security Concept of Georgia 2005

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

of the paragraph on Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region. It is not the merely rewording some of the same ideas or re-allocating the statements under the different headings; the security concept of 2011 simply omits a paragraph that we can find in the security concept of 2005:

“The Black Sea region is an integral part of Europe. The new European security system based on transformed European and Euro-Atlantic organizations cannot develop fully without establishing a reliable Black Sea Security system as an essential element of the whole Euro-Atlantic security. This is a unique opportunity for NATO and the EU to work together to assist Black Sea nations to secure sustainable regional stability and security.”²⁹⁸

The disappearance of the above paragraph would not be so crucial if not for its special focus on the Black Sea region as one of the cornerstones of the Euro-Atlantic security structure. Back in 2005, Georgia perceived its role as a contributor to the regional security and stability through its aspirations of EU-NATO membership, enhancing the wider security systems provided by those organizations. Disappearance of such statements (while still keeping the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration as a top priority) in the security concept of Georgia of 2011 clearly indicates that official Tbilisi no longer wants to be perceived as part of the Black Sea region. Another big change in the 2011 security concept is that a big focus is made on the environmental security of the Black Sea. While this is a positive addition, previously missing in the 2005 security concept, our understanding of this change is that the Black Sea is mainly equaled to a geographical entity with less and less political flavor adding to it. Furthermore, the 2011 security concept of Georgia only mentions the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization, often called the institutional foundation of the Black Sea region (though many disagree), in the context of the cooperation between Georgia and Ukraine in different bilateral and multilateral perspectives, among which the BSEC is listed along with GUAM, UN, OSCE and Council of Europe.²⁹⁹ Another interesting aspect is that while the role and the significance of the UN, OSCE and the CoE are explained,³⁰⁰ neither of the organizations linked to the Black Sea region – GUAM and BSEC – are analyzed or discussed. These apparent changes in the security concept of Georgian foreign policy further convince us that Georgia could not trigger the intra-regional coalescence of the Black Sea littoral states. Its vision towards the Black Sea region was inconsistent, changing drastically from attaching a big importance to the area in 2005 to almost totally neglecting it in 2011. With such

²⁹⁸ Ibid. National Security Concept of Georgia 2005, paragraph 5.5.6.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. National Security Concept of Georgia 2011 p. 20

³⁰⁰ Ibid. pp. 21-22

transformations in political perspectives, it would be very difficult for any state, especially Georgia, to assume the role of an integration leader.

The structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia provided on its official website attests to the findings of the above analyses. Among the existing departments of the Georgian Ministry, one can find the Departments for the European Affairs, European Integration, CIS Countries, America, Asia, Africa, Australia and Oceania, but there is none specifically related to the Black Sea region. In addition, legal acts (statutes) of the listed Departments provided at the MFA website say nothing about the Black Sea region, not even the ones of the departments of the Commonwealth of Independent States and/or European Affairs, regardless of the fact that they work closely with the Black Sea countries.³⁰¹ It is also interesting that the legal act (statute) of the Department of International Organizations only refers to the cooperation with such organizations as the UN, OSCE and the CoE. Once again, Black Sea related organizations, including the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization, are not even mentioned.³⁰² The only reference to the Black Sea region is made in the statute of the Department of the International Economic Relations, when listing the tasks of the Unit of the Multilateral and Regional Economic Cooperation. Only in that particular case does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia refer to the Black Sea region (indirectly, we think), while stating that the Unit aims at coordinating the collaboration within BSEC, as well as supporting the development and implementation of regional projects within the framework of this organization. Collaboration with the BSTBD is the second task related to the Black Sea named in the statute of the aforementioned Department.³⁰³ All this leads us to the conclusion that the Black Sea region and its related organizations are perceived purely from the economic point of view: as a result, even the BSEC is listed not under the International Organizations' Department, but appears in the department for international economic relations. This one-sided and relatively limited approach to the Black Sea area, which is reflected in the organizational structure of the MFA, as well as in the security concept statements of 2011 (the most recent one), convinces us that the government of Georgia can not – and in fact will not want to – play the role of a trigger in the process of intra-regional coalescence. Even when the Black Sea regional relationships were listed among the top

³⁰¹We looked through the individual legal act of respective department listed on the website http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=558&lang_id=GEO (last time accessed on September 29, 2014 at 3:12 am Georgia time)

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³http://www.mfa.gov.ge/files/558_17052_107347_საერთაშორისოეკონომიკურურთიერთობათადადეპარტამენტისდებულება.pdf (last time accessed on November 1, 2014 at 2:48 pm Georgia time)

priorities of the state in the security concept of 2005, Euro-Atlantic integration still remained to be the primary goal of the country.

Overall, we can say that none of the Black Sea littoral states, including the regional leaders like Turkey and Russia, has a clear conception towards the Black Sea region. Lack of conception is also often mixed with the inability and/or unwillingness to take a leading role in the Black Sea regional coalescence processes. In the majority of cases, this can be explained by the fact that the nations do not want to be perceived as anything else but European nations and their active engagement in regional dynamics could be seen as contradictory to their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. In the special case of Romania, which has the clearest declared conception towards the Black Sea region in comparison to other littoral states, it seems that the Romanians have detached themselves from the collective identity of the Black Sea region; Romania perceives itself to be more of an EU representative in the region, a sort of outsider feeling the responsibility to support the development of its eastern neighborhood. All the aforementioned drives us to the conclusion that there are no strong drivers among the Black Sea littoral states who could lead the integration process by fostering intra-regional dynamics.

Chapter 4. Integration Processes around the Black Sea

4.1. Introduction

When studying the Black Sea area, the most common starting point is the question: “Is there a Black Sea Region?” However, we believe that in order to properly understand the dynamics around the Black Sea, the best approach is to engage in empirical analysis based on the data from different areas like trade, investments, etc. Therefore, the given chapter will be an attempt to analyze the integration processes around the Black Sea. We will study the strength and depth of the coalescence among the littoral states, exploring specific impediments and contributory factors (if any) to regional integration and region formation.

As the organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is often considered to be an institutional source of regional integration around the Black Sea, we will try to analyze the role and the impact of BSEC on the coalescence of the littoral states, checking it vis-a-vis its mandate. While doing so, we may also refer to the issue of the efficiency of this organization; however it needs to be emphasized from the very beginning that BSEC’s efficiency is not the primary interest of the given research.

Interdependence and coalescence among different countries is well revealed through their economic and social cooperation, being it the scope and the direction of trade, foreign direct investments (FDI), etc. It is not difficult to be explain why the emphasis is placed on these key components. If there is a deep coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states, then we should observe the direction of trade, FDI to be stronger, more intensive³⁰⁴ **among** the littoral states, rather than the flows *between the littoral states and the outside world*. Definitely, we will have to consider the roles and interests of two regional powers – Russia and Turkey – in our analysis of the data on the Direction of Trade (DOTs), and FDI.

In his book *Black Sea: A History*, Charles King argues that what constitutes a region, depends not only on **how** we ask the question, but also **when** we ask the question.³⁰⁵ When analyzing the regional integration processes on the basis of different empirical data, the ‘**when?**’ question becomes even more important. It is of crucial importance to analyze the statistical

³⁰⁴ Under the intensity we mean the scope of both import and export among the Black Sea littoral states and the ranking of those states in the trade with one another vis a vis the the trade with other partners

³⁰⁵ King Charles (2004) *Black Sea: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 7

data of the same period and for the same or at least for similar indicators. The given research will try to build its arguments on the most updated and reliable data (often time series) from sources like the IMF and/or the OECD. In addition, we examine the datasets of individual states whenever necessary. Our goal is to identify the trends that have been revealed throughout the years of cooperation among the Black Sea littoral states. We will let the numbers speak for themselves, but at the same time, we will try to make sense of the implications of those numbers from today's perspective. The ability to comprehend dynamics from today's position is very important. Much of the literature on the Black Sea regional integration talks of the possibility of having stronger bonds in future, on the basis of analysis of some current (often vague and unclear) information. However, we will have to consider limitations as well.

Due to the absence of a unified dataset on the so called Black Sea region, which was supposedly collected by the BSEC (more details on this issue will be presented below), we might face some difficulties with the analysis of the trends, especially when putting the findings into a more general context. We collected data from all countries, but not all Black Sea littoral states collect the same data (if at all) using the same methodologies and approaches (e.g. the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, while tracking FDI, does not present the information about the inflows or outflows of individual partner countries.³⁰⁶ The same thing applies to Bulgaria.³⁰⁷ The FDI information details are available for the partner states of Turkey; this information is publicly available at the OECD website, but not through the Turkish government website, TurkStat³⁰⁸). Even though these circumstances present a challenge for the analysis, such a situation in itself is a good characteristic of the current level of coalescence in the Black Sea area, This issue will be discussed in more detail below.

4.2. Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and Its Role in the Integration of the Black Sea Littoral States

Established as a cooperation model which aimed to make the Black Sea Region a place of peace, stability, and welfare with the signature of the Summit Declaration of June 25, 1992,

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http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Anuar%20statistic/12/12%20Investitii%20si%20imobilizari%20corporale_en.pdf
(last time accessed on Jan. 23, 2013 18:00 Geo time)

³⁰⁷ <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=49> (last time accessed on Jan. 23, 2013 18:00 Geo time)

³⁰⁸

<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Start.do?jsessionid=vKFSRXBMcTJpL1DgVtjzv47h7GTChpv5WvTMnm8YWXdWKrVy91Bv!-943275854> (last time accessed on Jan. 23, 2013 18:00 Geo time)

Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization initiated numerous technical and expertise studies, as well as founded 16 working groups, among which was the **”Statistical Data and Economic Information Exchange Working Group.”**³⁰⁹ Efficient operation of this working group would not only ensure the timely collection of information, but the analysis of the collected data would also help member states to better understand in which sectors they operated efficiently. They would also get the idea of which areas proved to be more challenging from the perspective of cooperation and integration, and why. However, despite the initial commitment of the member states to being transparent and sharing the needed data regularly to support further coalescence and regional prosperity, the actual implementation of this agreement turned out to be troublesome.

The official website of the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) under the page title of “Centre of Statistics” indicates that the Coordination Centre for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information was established as a unit under the Turkish Statistical Institute in 1993; however, after issuing several publications, continuing this work turned out to be problematic. *“Presently the different statistical systems in the region have been the main obstacle in the preparation of such studies. A more regular horizontal flow of information between the Member States and the Center will facilitate the coming of such publications which are needed for a better understanding of the state of economies within the region and the trends therein,”*³¹⁰ we read on the website. In addition to that, the official website of the TurkStat also refers to the challenges faced during the process of compiling data from the member states for the publication called “Social and Economic Indicators of BSEC Countries.” TurkStat official website does not specify, which particular challenges were faced during the data compilation, however it’s officially indicated that due to those problems the given publication was cancelled.³¹¹ For the sake of the acceleration of the studies on BSEC and intending to still keep them on the agenda, bilateral activities were considered to be better alternative among the wider Black Sea area states.³¹² However, we believe that the failure of aforementioned BSEC working group, as well as the challenges of

³⁰⁹ http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/arastirmaveprojeler/uluslararasi/ui/ui_bolgesel2.html (last time accessed on Jan. 24, 2013, 12:00 Geo time) for more details please also see the Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Istanbul, 25 June, 1992 <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/Istanbul1992.pdf> (last time accessed on Jan. 24, 2013, 12:00 Geo time)

³¹⁰ <http://www.bsec-organization.org/Relatedbodies/Pages/center.aspx> (last time accessed on Jan. 24, 2013; 12:00 Geo time)

³¹¹ http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/arastirmaveprojeler/uluslararasi/ui/ui_bolgesel2.html (last time accessed on Jan. 24, 2013; 12:00 Geo time)

³¹² Ibid.

systematic and transparent information sharing practices among the BSEC states, reveals the problematic side of the integration, or to be more precise, it exposes the low level of coalescence among the wider Black Sea area countries. For sure, the lack of resources (either financial or human) to collect the needed data on a regular basis, the problems with synchronizing the statistical datasets, and the absence of a common methodology for information collection and processing could explain why the Centre of Statistics of BSEC does not operate as an independent agency or under the supervision of the TurkStat. However, if the real willingness to do so were present and the BSEC members were truly interested in the studies of regional economy and respective needs to fill the gaps and improve the integration, they have had enough time since the 1992 to implement appropriate systemic changes and adjustments, but they have failed to do so. The fact that certain bilateral technical support provision turn out to be successful, whereas joint regional efforts usually fail, drives us to subscribe to the idea of lack of sufficient coalescence among states. .

4.3. Direction of Trade and Investment Flows

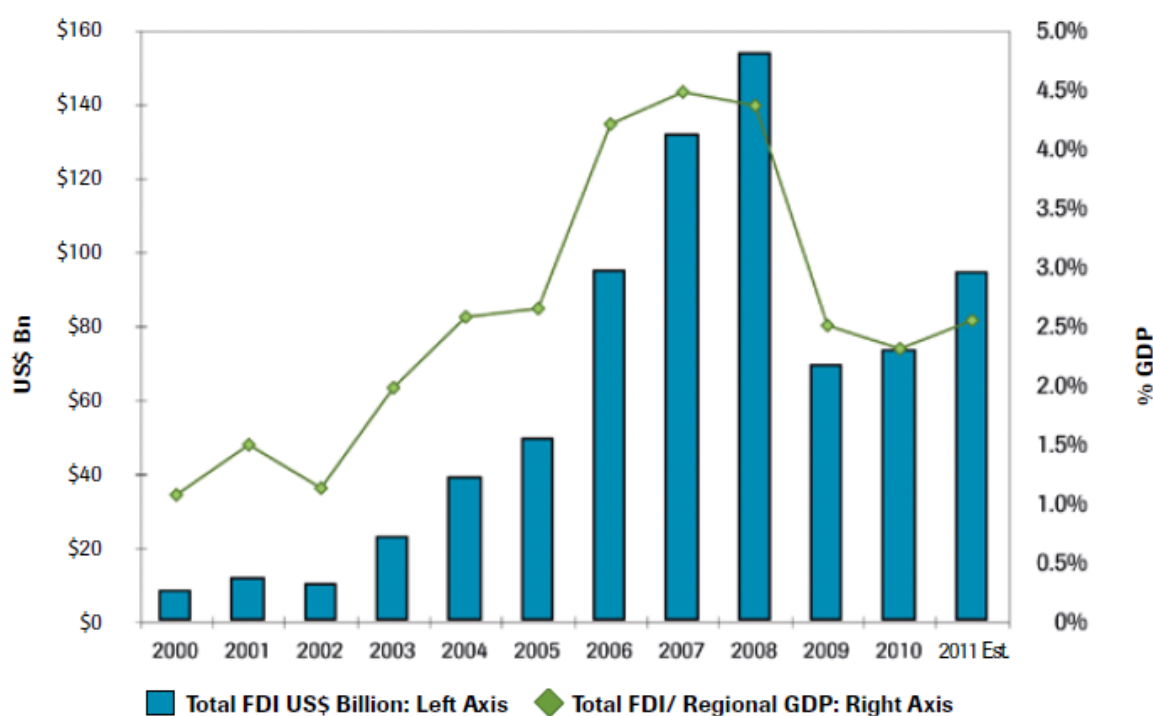
One of the ways to understand and analyze the integration processes within any geographic area (especially the one which is often considered to be a region geographically and ideationally) is to study the flows of foreign direct investments (FDI) and the direction of trade (DoT). Direction of investments and trade will show clearly, whether countries of a given area cooperate (at least economically) more intensively with one another inside of whatever is considered as a region, or with the outside world. Definitely, there is no single threshold of intensiveness that indicates the minimum level of integration that needs to be present. This, for sure, complicates the whole process of analyzing the FDI and DoT data (as well as other flows). The key question in this case would be: What is the minimum ratio of the intra-regional trade to the total regional trade of a given area, at which we can consider the area to be integrated as a region? For example, if the 2011 annual report of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) indicates that the 40% of total regional trade in the Baltic Region was accounted for by the intra-regional trade,³¹³ should we consider this number high enough to assess the coalescence among Baltic state as deep enough? Definitely there is no single answer to those questions, as economic integration (studied on the basis of the aforementioned flows) should not and cannot be the single key indicator of the depth (or its lack) of integration among particular states. This process is much more complex and other

³¹³ Black Sea Region: Quest for Economic Growth and Financial Stability Annual Report 2011 BSTDB, p. 18

factors, such as the identity of peoples living in the country of interest, their cultural affiliations and other considerations should also be studied (which we will be doing in the next chapters) in order to get a full picture. However, we still believe that the study of the depth of coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states on the basis of FDI flows and the direction of trade can present an interesting picture. In the discussion below, we will try to analyze the top partner countries of each Black Sea littoral state (where information is present and accessible) in terms of FDI and DoT.** This will give us an opportunity to see whether the top partners of each littoral state represent countries from the Black Sea area or from the outside of the region. We will also try to explain these findings.

In the analysis of FDI in the Black Sea region for the period of 2000-2011, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank emphasized the positive trend of FDI increase by nearly 29% in 2011 in comparison to 2010. This number is higher than the global average increase of 17%, and considering that Eurozone, where the majority of Black Sea region's FDI originates from, was hit by an economic crisis in the past few years, the conclusion can only be that the trend is even more promising.³¹⁴

Graph 1. Foreign Direct Investment in the Black Sea Region



Source: BSTDB 2011

** NB! Even though the current research does not

³¹⁴ Black Sea Region: Quest for Economic Growth and Financial Stability Annual Report 2011 BSTDB p. 14

Indeed, the FDI trends are very good indicators of not only the investment environment in the given area, but also of its attractiveness to the existing and potential business partners. Reforms and positive systemic changes in the period of 2005-2011 in countries of the Black Sea area led to significant improvements in the terms of the general business environment. Georgia, as one of the Black Sea littoral states, is ranked number one in respective reforms and improvements, which makes it an attractive destination for different international businesses in the region. Other Black Sea littoral states – Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia – also appear in the list of top 50 countries for business, rated by Bloomberg as 32nd, 41st, 43rd, 45th and 48th accordingly.³¹⁵ These are very important factors contributing to the changes in the investment flows in the Black Sea area. This can explain **not only inflows from outside of the Black Sea area, but also intra-regional FDI flows** as well. But despite those positive trends showing an increase in FDIs presented by the BSTDB, what do they tell us about the **coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states? How (if at all) does the increase in the FDI towards the Black Sea area impact the regional integration among the littoral states?**

Interestingly enough, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank is not interested in the analysis of the impact of the FDI flows and/or DoT on the integration among the Black Sea (especially littoral) states. We can assume that the BSTDB approaches the Black Sea region as a single unit and studies all the processes inside of it (as well as towards it) through the analysis of trends of inflows and outflows. This enables us to see how the region develops economically: which type of businesses might become prosperous? How sustainable and credible could it be for the investors? how did recent crisis influence it? But the answers to these questions do not show or explain what effects do any changes in the FDI flows (as well as DoT) have on the integration processes, or how integrated the region is, and what role does this level of integration play (if any at all) in attracting the business partners. We believe that without focusing on coalescence among the states, the analysis might otherwise end up being one-sided and presenting an incomplete picture.

While discussing the Foreign Direct Investments to/from the Black Sea Region, we need to pay a special attention to two states within the given region: Russia and Turkey. Those countries (especially Russia) represent important economic partners of the EU (as revealed by

³¹⁵ Ibid. p. 15

the DoT presented below) and many others. In addition, Turkey was the initiator of the creation of BSEC (thus showing its economic interest in the wide Black Sea economic area), with Russia being its important member. Consequently it might be interesting to see how such interest and economic might of those countries is reflected in the FDI stats of the Black Sea Region (littoral states). Using the four tables below, we present the Turkish and Russian FDI inflows and outflows.³¹⁶ Information is color coded with yellow indicating the Black Sea littoral states and blue signaling the countries with FDI close to or above 100 million USD as of the most recent year of information collected (2011 in case of Turkey and 2012 in case of Russia). Interestingly enough, the Central Bank of Russian Federation provides separate data on Abkhazia, which is listed as an independent state. The author shares the information below, but does not consider Abkhazia as a littoral state in this research.

Table 1. FDI Inflow (in USD) by Partner Country in the Period of 2001-2011											
Turkey											
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Austria	17	0	8	7	6	1106	395	590	1048	1746	2264
France	190	18	115	85	2132	433	378	634	606	652	1011
Germany	124	55	174	42	-333	323	1134	1222	591	650	911
Netherlands	311	165	97	706	520	5175	5701	1779	944	735	1513
Spain	12	5	0	4	66	57	519	876	191	144	2212
United States	280	115	52	141	175	916	3613	870	233	361	1419
Bulgaria	..	0	8	0	9	2	1	1	0	1	2
Romania	..	0	0	3	3	8	1	0	1	0	0
Russian Federation	..	0	0	3	1617	9	122	90	132	11	821
Ukraine	..	0	0	0	2	23	3	9	10	11	66
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	0	-3	0	3	4	10

Source: OECD 2013

³¹⁶ Unfortunately the data on Russia from the Russian central bank is available only from 2007. OECD per country data of 2013 does not provide information for Russia per partner state

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Austria	0	0	0	18	1	0	0	3	22	19	139
Germany	35	17	18	25	158	90	40	143	77	58	91
Ireland	0	6	2	1	1	1	0	4	228	0	506
Luxembourg	4	0	14	0	45	1	13	0	454	-274	96
Netherlands	377	19	89	174	90	485	314	330	214	703	360
Switzerland	0	18	0	7	10	7	5	334	31	36	151
Bulgaria	1	6	2	5	9	0	3	6	13	0	16
Romania	0	25	5	9	29	9	14	23	17	18	25
Russian Federation	0	0	8	2	8	13	49	73	103	74	91
Ukraine	0	0	1	1	3	17	15	13	4	21	25
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	25	12	7	3	6	24

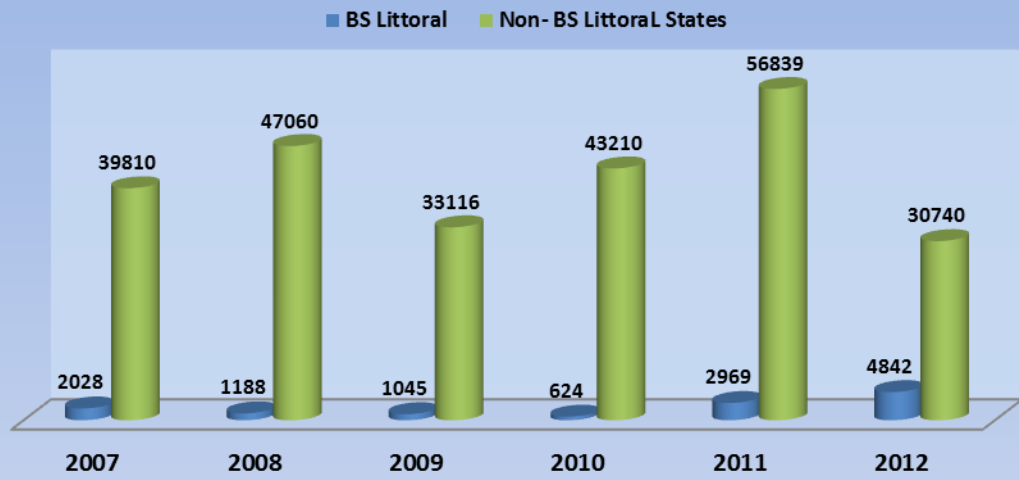
Source: OECD 2013 1

One of the first discrepancies in the given data that hinders the proper analysis of trends is that Turkish FDI outflows to Russia do not match with the Turkish FDI inflows in Russia for the same years. For example according to the OECD data in 2011 Turkish FDI outflow to Russia was 91 million USD (Table 2), while the Central Bank of the Russian Federation for the same year indicates 150 million USD (Table 4). This, once again, leads us back to the challenge of non-existence of a unified BSEC/regional dataset, with a common information collection and processing methodologies. But if we still try to analyze the FDI flows separately per country, we will see that, as in the case of Turkey's FDI in- and outflows vis-à-vis the Black Sea littoral states, it is hard to determine definite trends as the numbers fluctuate a lot. The same would apply to the case of Russia. However, if we compare the intensity of FDI flows of those two states (both inflows and outflows) with the Black Sea littoral countries and other countries as well, we will see that Russia and Turkey are more integrated with the non-Black Sea littoral states. For example, in 2005 when Turkey received the biggest FDI from Russia (1617 million; Table 1) its inflow from the Black Sea littoral states as a whole was only 1631 million, while for the same year, the inflows from big investor countries outside the Black Sea area amounted to 2566 million (and this is the only year when there were no investment from Germany). For the other years, even after the

economic crisis, the countries outside the Black Sea area (non-littoral states) were more active in terms of investment in Turkey, than all of the Black Sea littoral states combined, as the following numbers reveal: 5971 million USD compared to 100 million USD (2008), 3613 million USD vs. 146 million USD (2009), 4288 million USD vs. 27 million USD (2010), and 9330 million USD vs. 899 million USD (2011) (Table 1). We will get similar results if we compare the yearly sums of Turkey's outflow of FDIs to the Black Sea littoral states with the yearly sums of those to the non-Black-Sea-area states (Table 2).

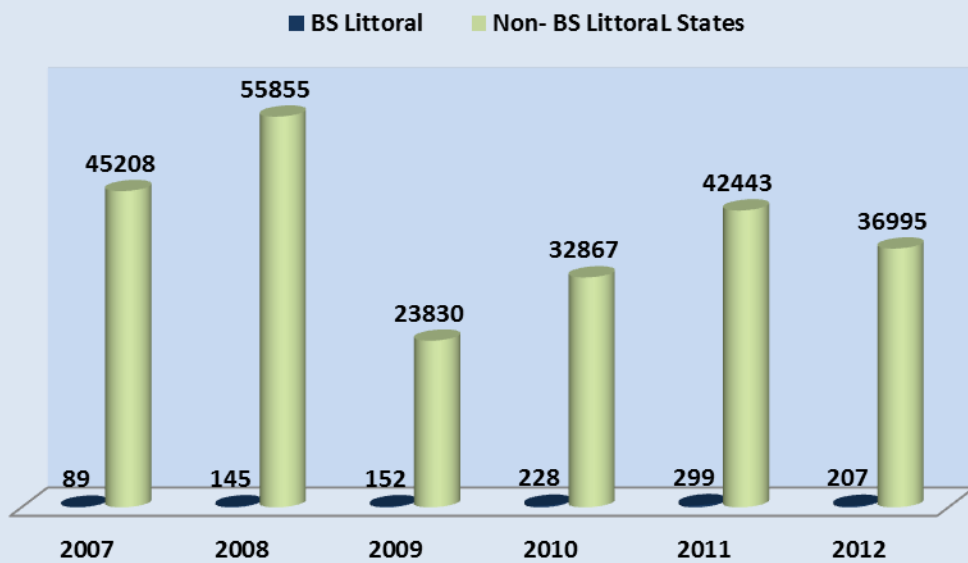
Similar trends can be noticed while looking at the FDI flows of Russia. As presented in the tables 3 and 4, as well as in Figures 1 and 2 below, investments to and from the Russian Federation are bigger with non-Black Sea littoral states, rather than with the latter group. This can be explained by various factors, ranging from the ability (or lack thereof) of respective markets to receive and 'digest' bigger investments and end up with differences in local business environments and legislation. Those might be very legitimate factors. However if two regional economic leaders __ Russia and Turkey __ cooperate less intra-regionally and more inter-regionally, this leads to legitimate questions, whether the intra-regional economic coalescence is present and if yes, how strong it is.

Figure 1. FDI Outflows from Russia: Black Sea Littoral States VS. Non-Black Sea Littoral States, per year in millions of USD



Source: Central Bank of Russia, 2013

Figure 2. FDI Inflows to Russia: Black Sea Littoral States VS. Non-Black Sea Littoral States, per year in millions of USD



Source: Central Bank of Russia, 2013

Table 3. FDI Outflow from Russia in the Period of 2007- 3rd Quarter of 2012 in Millions of USD						
Country	2007 r.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (3rd Quarter)
Abkhazia	...	0	2	44	30	15
Austria	230	253	458	847	545	1171
Bahamas	-285	-89	333	457	394	327
Belgium	80	49	36	36	61	140
Belorus	759	735	881	1410	2804	436
Bermuda	2689	1305	854	1056	990	326
B&H	1	55	287	94	104	190
Bulgaria	168	387	229	286	554	621
Canada	181	123	20	863	288	224
Cyprus	14630	15480	15391	16048	22400	16110
Czech Republic	248	319	142	359	353	193
Denmark	-15	16	48	-4	399	222
France	257	217	386	335	677	280
Georgia	71	63	2
Germany	674	1860	1488	1880	1227	781
Iceland	259	458	375	490	860	651
Italy	87	295	158	315	406	279
Ireland	227	294	-279	1002	533	264
Jersey	5	5	86	-25	895	634
Kazakhstan	103	326	1029	-282	644	684
Latvia	79	166	78	147	334	182
Luxemburg	497	2722	784	2920	1170	1550
Moldova	41	15	110	24	-12	112
Montenegro	188	173	85	117	170	132
Netherlands	12501	4685	3377	7042	3859	1388
Romania	1	25	39	196	-96	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	172	22	1	1	4663	655
Sweden	-55	177	256	203	483	632
Switzerland	1404	2426	1806	1750	3883	208
Turkey	183	272	106	143	1690	3667
Ukraine	1605	441	663	-1	821	554
United Kingdom	2454	3886	2016	1233	1520	354
USA	974	7265	1634	1061	1658	540
Virgin Islands	1425	3822	2305	1833	4194	2646

Source: Central Bank of Russia 2013

Table 4. FDI Inflow to Banking and Non-Banking Sectors of Russian Federation in the Period of 2007-2012 in Millions of USD

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Abkhazia	0	0	0	1	-2	0
Austria	328	636	885	1353	1563	1182
Azerbaijan	111	24	48	18	127	152
Bahamas	354	-524	1731	2282	1829	2097
Belarus	2	50	63	34	121	178
Belgium	81	282	286	467	112	213
Bermuda	8369	9959	2243	436	594	-261
British Virgin Islands	3962	5519	1761	2139	7225	2531
Bulgaria	0	0	-1	0	33	-79
China	112	-49	231	336	126	212
Cyprus	11917	20428	4182	12287	12999	3267
Finland	677	1415	518	347	217	341
France	415	604	696	2592	1107	1194
Georgia	0	1	0	30	0	4
Germany	7626	3379	2914	3196	2234	2086
Hungary	61	171	112	374	454	678
Italy	78	153	249	309	154	278
Ireland	-200	52	564	2326	5306	9873
Japan	80	195	272	473	369	596
Jersey	104	8	68	126	775	642
Kazakhstan	87	14	114	46	56	274
Luxemburg	-2062	1403	6195	2892	4106	11099
Netherlands	10268	10184	-3391	3733	7383	10241
Republic of Korea	120	313	385	318	-270	119
Romania	2	6	2	1	0	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2	34	1253	208
Seychelles	-442	74	196	16	127	419
Singapore	19	7	0	3	51	577
Spain	366	315	336	-13	30	116
Sweden	529	1892	1863	1831	2025	1079
Switzerland	386	569	1925	-1	741	473
Turkey	124	179	146	146	150	178
Ukraine	-37	-41	5	51	116	104
USA	1860	2161	2296	435	276	284

Source: Central Bank of Russia 2013

Trends revealed during the analysis of the FDI flows are in coincidence with the trends of the Direction of Trade for the same countries. This is true not only for Turkey and Russia, but for the other littoral states as well. Looking at the lists of the major trade partners and the directions of the trade, we can see that while Turkey and Russia are present in *all of the littoral states' lists of top 10 trading partners*, Georgia, Russia and Turkey have only one more littoral state (Ukraine) among their top trade partners (see Tables below), and Ukraine does not have any other than Turkey and Russia. Interestingly enough, there are very few *non-littoral BSEC member states* listed among the top 10 trade partners of the Black Sea littoral states. Georgia has Azerbaijan and Armenia (which would be more explained by their geographical proximity and local Caucasian trade routes), Ukraine has only Azerbaijan, and Russia and Turkey have none. Thus, one can also conclude that despite the institutional

foundation in the form of the regional economic cooperation organization, still the coalescence in this area is very poor.

GEORGIA'S TRADE WITH MAIN PARTNERS (2010)

The Major Imports Partners				The Major Export Partners				The Major Trade Partners			
Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%
	World (all countries)	3 893,1	100,0%		World (all countries)	1 189,5	100,0%		World (all countries)	5 082,6	100,0%
1	EU27	1 106,1	28,4%	1	EU27	218,1	18,3%	1	EU27	1 324,1	26,1%
2	Turkey	673,2	17,3%	2	Azerbaijan	184,8	15,5%	2	Turkey	835,8	16,4%
3	Ukraine	423,2	10,9%	3	Turkey	162,6	13,7%	3	Azerbaijan	550,0	10,8%
4	Azerbaijan	365,2	9,4%	4	United States	136,9	11,5%	4	Ukraine	501,5	9,9%
5	China	253,0	6,5%	5	Armenia	120,7	10,1%	5	China	271,3	5,3%
6	Russia	218,8	5,6%	6	Ukraine	78,2	6,6%	6	United States	271,1	5,3%
7	United States	134,2	3,4%	7	Canada	65,4	5,5%	7	Russia	245,1	4,8%
8	United Arab Emirates	120,1	3,1%	8	Kazakhstan	36,1	3,0%	8	Armenia	155,9	3,1%
9	Kazakhstan	70,9	1,8%	9	Russia	26,4	2,2%	9	United Arab Emirates	141,2	2,8%
10	Japan	61,4	1,6%	10	United Arab Emirates	21,1	1,8%	10	Kazakhstan	107,0	2,1%

Source: EuroStat

UKRAINE'S TRADE WITH MAIN PARTNERS (2010)

The Major Imports Partners				The Major Export Partners				The Major Trade Partners			
Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%
	World (all countries)	46 230,6	100,0%		World (all countries)	38 840,8	100,0%		World (all countries)	85 071,4	100,0%
1	Russia	16 754,3	36,2%	1	Russia	10 163,0	26,2%	1	Russia	26 917,3	31,6%
2	EU27	14 449,0	31,3%	2	EU27	9 886,2	25,5%	2	EU27	24 335,2	28,6%
3	China	3 561,4	7,7%	3	Turkey	2 290,6	5,9%	3	China	4 556,9	5,4%
4	Belarus	1 946,3	4,2%	4	Belarus	1 434,8	3,7%	4	Belarus	3 381,1	4,0%
5	United States	1 338,9	2,9%	5	India	1 073,9	2,8%	5	Turkey	3 271,4	3,8%
6	Turkey	980,8	2,1%	6	Egypt	1 001,8	2,6%	6	United States	1 956,4	2,3%
7	Azerbaijan	713,3	1,5%	7	China	995,4	2,6%	7	India	1 588,6	1,9%
8	Japan	606,5	1,3%	8	Kazakhstan	985,0	2,5%	8	Kazakhstan	1 566,8	1,8%
9	South Korea	594,5	1,3%	9	Lebanon	781,6	2,0%	9	Azerbaijan	1 175,7	1,4%
10	Kazakhstan	581,9	1,3%	10	Iran	781,0	2,0%	10	Egypt	1 064,6	1,3%

Source: EuroStat

RUSSIA'S TRADE WITH MAIN PARTNERS (2010)

The Major Imports Partners				The Major Export Partners				The Major Trade Partners			
Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%
	World (all countries)	163 380,0	100,0%		World (all countries)	280 539,4	100,0%		World (all countries)	443 919,4	100,0%
1	EU27	70 438,3	43,1%	1	EU27	138 560,6	49,4%	1	EU27	208 998,8	47,1%
2	China	29 577,5	18,1%	2	China	14 918,0	5,3%	2	China	44 495,5	10,0%
3	Ukraine	10 596,2	6,5%	3	Turkey	10 549,6	3,8%	3	Ukraine	20 887,8	4,7%
4	Japan	7 783,3	4,8%	4	Ukraine	10 291,6	3,7%	4	Japan	17 228,1	3,9%
5	United States	7 453,8	4,6%	5	Japan	9 444,8	3,4%	5	United States	16 512,3	3,7%
6	South Korea	5 521,8	3,4%	6	United States	9 058,5	3,2%	6	Turkey	14 238,8	3,2%
7	Turkey	3 689,2	2,3%	7	South Korea	7 885,2	2,8%	7	South Korea	13 407,1	3,0%
8	Brazil	3 095,3	1,9%	8	Switzerland	6 478,0	2,3%	8	Switzerland	8 306,2	1,9%
9	Kazakhstan	1 958,9	1,2%	9	India	4 057,7	1,4%	9	Kazakhstan	5 812,0	1,3%
10	Switzerland	1 828,3	1,1%	10	Kazakhstan	3 853,1	1,4%	10	India	5 685,2	1,3%

Source: EuroStat

TURKEY'S TRADE WITH MAIN PARTNERS (2010)

The Major Imports Partners				The Major Export Partners				The Major Trade Partners			
Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%	Rk	Partners	Mio euro	%
World (all countries)				World (all countries)				World (all countries)			
138 894,2 100,0%				85 949,4 100,0%				224 843,7 100,0%			
1	EU27	54 609,7	39,3%	1	EU27	39 754,5	46,3%	1	EU27	94 364,1	42,0%
2	Russia	16 290,8	11,7%	2	Iraq	4 564,0	5,3%	2	Russia	19 788,3	8,8%
3	China	12 999,0	9,4%	3	Russia	3 497,5	4,1%	3	China	14 715,2	6,5%
4	United States	9 338,2	6,7%	4	United States	2 906,2	3,4%	4	United States	12 244,4	5,4%
5	Iran	5 791,1	4,2%	5	United Arab Emirates	2 522,1	2,9%	5	Iran	8 091,5	3,6%
6	South Korea	3 608,9	2,6%	6	Iran	2 300,3	2,7%	6	Iraq	5 586,3	2,5%
7	Ukraine	2 903,5	2,1%	7	China	1 716,2	2,0%	7	Switzerland	3 976,5	1,8%
8	India	2 585,8	1,9%	8	Egypt	1 698,9	2,0%	8	Ukraine	3 853,2	1,7%
9	Japan	2 495,7	1,8%	9	Saudi Arabia	1 683,7	2,0%	9	South Korea	3 838,1	1,7%
10	Switzerland	2 389,3	1,7%	10	Switzerland	1 587,2	1,8%	10	Saudi Arabia	3 529,1	1,6%

Source: EuroStat

All of the tables presented above indicate the EU to be one of the most important trade partners of all Black Sea littoral states. However, this cannot be interpreted as an increased coalescence with the two Black Sea littoral states: Romania and Bulgaria. Here are the reasons why. Romania is responsible for only 0.8% of extra EU export and 0.9% of extra EU import; the same indicators for Bulgaria are 0.5% and 0.6% respectively.³¹⁷ In terms of trade, both Romania and Bulgaria are more integrated with the EU than with the outside world³¹⁸. For example, out of Romania's 37368 million EUR of total export and 46902 million EUR of total import in 2010, the EU shares were 26946 million EUR and 33992 million EUR accordingly.³¹⁹ The trend is similar for the other years as well. Interestingly enough, Romania's statistical yearbook of 2011 on the official website of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania does not even give any data on trade with Georgia.³²⁰ IMF DoT Year Book of 2011 shows weak dynamics of trade with Georgia (166 million EUR export & 6 million EUR import in 2010 with the similar data for the other years).³²¹ Turkey and Russia are still important partners (Turkey more so, than Russia, according to the data), but Romania trades much more with France, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria.³²² In case of Bulgaria, it needs to be emphasized that this country is heavily dependent on Russia, as it imports more value from Russia, than from any other country within or outside the EU (4079.03 million USD in 2010, 3157.05 million USD in 2009, 5350.95 million USD in 2008³²³). However trade relationships with other Black Sea littoral states are relatively less intense. For example in 2011, the export to Georgia was 188.76 million USD and the import was – 206.88 million

³¹⁷ International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment, 2013, EuroStat Pocket Book, ISSN 1977-7876, pp.39-40

³¹⁸ Statistical Reference Book 2012 Republic of Bulgaria, National Statistical Institute, p.175

³¹⁹ http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Anuar%20statistic/18/18%20Comert%20international_en.pdf p. 17

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ IMF DoT 2011, pp. 447

³²² Ibid. pp.446-447

³²³ Ibid. p.126

USD. In other years (except for the crisis years of 2008 and 2009), those numbers were even less than 100 million USD. As a comparison Bulgaria is more linked to China when it comes to import (471,16 million vs. 28.45 million in 2004, 703.05 million vs. 55.30 million in 2005, 971.13 million vs. 29.55 million in 2006, 838.60 million vs. 79.74 million in 2007, 1103.79 million vs. 482.45 million in 2008, 632.12 million vs. 260.38 million in 2009 and 640.93 million vs. 206.88 million in 2010).³²⁴ Trade between Bulgaria and Turkey is much more intense than the trade between Bulgaria and Romania both in case of import and export, but again this can be explained by Turkey's importance as a regional trade partner for the EU as it is among top 10 extra EU trade partners along with China, Russia, US, Switzerland, Norway, Japan, India, Brazil and South Korea.³²⁵

Generally speaking, the analysis of the FDI flows and the direction of trade does not reveal a very strong coalescence trend among the Black Sea littoral states. In cases when the intensity of economic partnership is relatively strong (mainly when one of the sides is either Russia or Turkey), this does not necessarily translate into a high level of integration among the Black Sea littoral states; otherwise, using the same logic, we would be talking about integration of China or Brazil within the EU, as those countries have very intense trade relations with the European Union.

³²⁴ Ibid. pp. 125-126

³²⁵ International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment, 2013 p. 16

Chapter 5. Integration Processes around the Black Sea: Human Flows

5.1. Human Flows: Rationale of this Indicator and Explanation of Limitations

One of the ways to analyze the level and depth of intra-regional coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states is to look at human flows and study the respective dynamics. Along with the financial flows, this will help the readers to see the different directions of human flows (being it tourists, other types of visitors, or migrants) and compare the ones going on intra-regionally (among the Black Sea coastal countries) with those that go beyond the region (from the region towards the other states). Taking into consideration the intensity of those flows, one could better assess the level of coalescence among Georgia, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria.

Before moving on to the actual analysis of different data, it is important to once again emphasize that the lack of a unified dataset of different statistics about the Black Sea region, discussed in more details in the previous chapter on financial flows and the direction of trade, turned out to be a major impediment for the efficient collection of information. Firstly, it was practically impossible to analyze human flows among the Black Sea littoral states through grouping different types of flows (e.g. tourists, business visitors, etc.). However, as long as the key goal of this research is to understand and analyze the intensity of human flows, the purpose of visits (being it touristic or business) does not alter the big picture. In general, not all the countries of interest track the in and out flows of visitors *per country of origin or destination*. In many cases, if the human flow statistics are available at all, then only the yearly or monthly statistics are given. In the cases of Romania and Georgia, only one-sided information was accessible on the official state statistics' websites and/or in statistics year books: while the details of visitors per country of origin were present, no information could be found on the Georgian and Romanian citizens who decide to leave their respective countries. The most challenging situation was that of Russia, as the official website of the Federal State Statistics Service does not provide any data on the visitors going to or coming from Russia. The only accessible information is the infographics on Russia's top attractions for tourists³²⁶ and a brief video on the tourist flows *within* the Russian Federation.³²⁷

³²⁶ Please see the details http://www.gks.ru/publish/prezent/infograf/for_tourist_eng.pdf (last time accessed on March 28, 2014)

³²⁷ Please see the details http://www.gks.ru/publish/prezent/video/tourist_eng.wmv (last time accessed on March 28, 2014)

Consequently, the only way to somehow analyze dynamics of human flows linked to Russia would be to do so on the basis of the statistics about Russian visitors accessible from the official websites of other Black Sea coastal countries.

Our understanding of all the challenges with regard to the data (or the lack thereof) on human flows is that the Black Sea littoral states are apparently not very interested in tracing the dynamics of human flows among one another. Systematically collected data on visitors per country of origin and destination could help the governments of the Black Sea coastal countries in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the process of integration among one another, understanding why certain states are more frequently visited (as the next step of analysis) than the others, and what can be done to fill the existing gaps and enhance the intensity of regional integration. This does not fully comply with the officially stated intentions of the BSEC countries, including the Black Sea littoral states, aiming at “promoting the BSEC Region as one of the leading tourism destinations of the world.”³²⁸ The Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period of 1 July, 2013 – 30 June, 2015 also prioritizes the transformation of the Black Sea area as one of the top tourist destinations, strengthening the cooperation and enhancing the facilitation of integration processes via joint marketing campaigns, simplified visa procedures, and by promoting cultural and creative industries.³²⁹ However, it is very hard to understand how all those stated goals are supposed to be achieved without tracing the tourist flows of specific countries of origin and destination. Having no common approach to data collection and processing might also prove to be a challenge for getting findings (for those that collect some sort of data). Creation of a common ground for further regional integration in the area of tourism through new tourist packages and networks³³⁰ also sound a bit ephemeral, considering the current state of accessibility of data.

When considering human flows as one of the directions of regional integration, migration is one of the most important issues. Being concerned with the customs’ control and operation, the BSEC signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International

³²⁸ <http://www.bsec-organization.org/aoc/Tourism/Pages/information.aspx> (last time accessed on March 28, 2014)

³²⁹ The Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period of 1 July, 2013 – 30 June, 2015 <http://www.bsec-organization.org/aoc/Tourism/Pages/Action.aspx> (last time accessed on March 28, 2014)

³³⁰ Ibid. The Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period of 1 July, 2013 – 30 June, 2015

Organization of Migration (IOM) in 2006. The MoU identified the importance of regional cooperation among the BSEC countries as part of the wider European integration and stressed the role of the IOM in “social and economic development through migration.”³³¹ Within the framework of this research, we will also try to understand the direction and intensity of the migration flows on the basis of the IOM research on migration in the Black Sea Region. The collection of migration-related data and its consequent analysis by the IOM was connected to certain challenges. Various definitions of migrants and migration applied by different countries, governments driven by their country legislation and specific interests when collecting the migration related info (thus leading to differences in approaches), and no differentiation between stock and number of migration are among the issues.³³² The lack of coordination of efforts of different parties also points to the low level of the regional integration, and to the weakness of the regional institution BSEC as a trigger of coalescence among states. However, despite all those challenges, we will still try to incorporate the concept of migration and its observable trends into the given research, enriching our understanding of the challenges of regional integration.

5.2. Analysis of Flows of Visitors Incoming and Outgoing Within and Outside the Black Sea Area

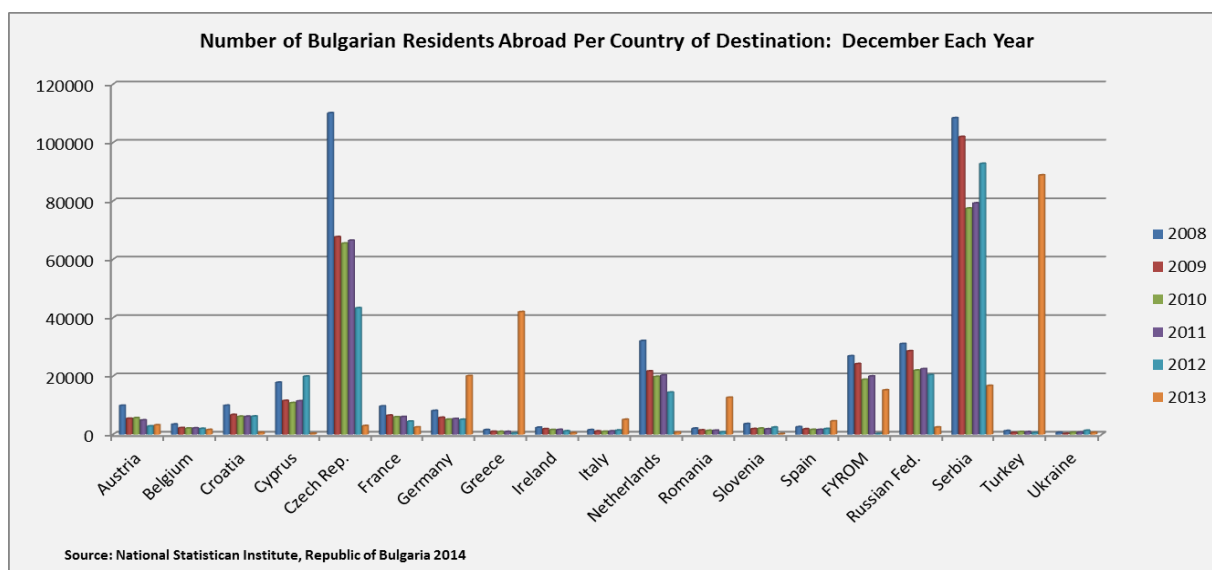
One of the first Black Sea coastal countries that we would like to start our analysis of visitors' flows from is Bulgaria. The data on Bulgarians leaving for abroad and foreigners coming into the country is collected on regular basis and information is easily accessible on the official website of the state's statistics institute. The information is presented per months, but no totals per year are given. The graphs, which show the number of Bulgarians abroad and foreigners in Bulgaria, reflect the statistics for every month of December starting from the year 2008 (the year after the accession of Bulgaria to EU) all the way through 2013. Even a very quick glance at the first graph would give an interested person a clear understanding that the intensity of the Black Sea intra-regional movement of Bulgarians is much lower than that of outside the region. Appendix 1 below would further strengthen that perception. Serbia and Czech Republic are the countries that Bulgarians visit most. Even though the number of Bulgarians living in those states fluctuates (e.g. the number of visitors to Czech Republic has

³³¹ Memorandum of Understanding Between The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and The International Organization for Migration, 2006 <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/agreementmous/t/Download/BSEC-IOM%20MoU.pdf> (last time accessed on March 28, 2014)

³³² Migration In The Black Sea Region: An Overview 2008, IOM pp. 15-25

been consistently decreasing), still they can be considered as the most frequently visited countries by Bulgarians. Russian Federation, Netherlands, Macedonia, and Cyprus come next. None of Ukraine, Turkey and Romania are among the countries that are actively visited (for different purposes including business and tourism) by the Bulgarians. Even though the December 2013 stats shows a boost in the number of Bulgarian visitors to Turkey, this year is an outlier in the dataset. In general, the Bulgarians visit France, Germany, and Croatia more often, than Romania, Turkey and Ukraine. Publicly accessible data does not include separate number of Bulgarians visiting Georgia, as it is reflected in the respective graph and the table in Appendix 1. This makes us believe that the number is too small and is probably reflected under the umbrella of ‘other European countries. In either case, the absence of separate statistics for Georgia speaks for itself, signaling the insignificance of this Black Sea littoral state as a country of destination for Bulgarians. Despite its proximity, Romania is not among the common destinations of Bulgarians.

Figure 1.

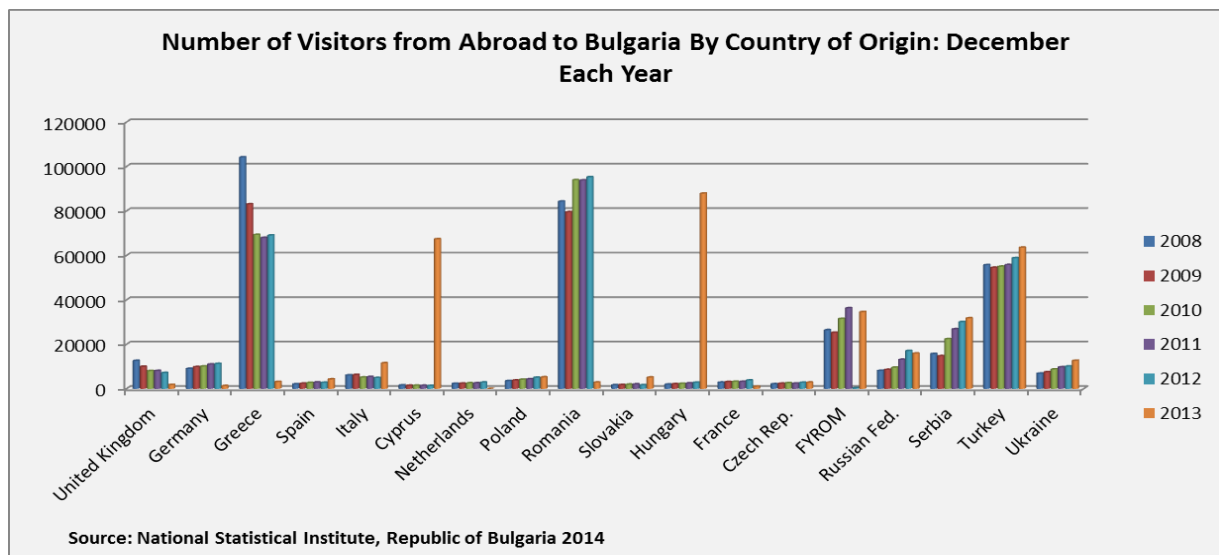


When it comes to Russia, while this Black Sea coastal country is visited by more Bulgarians than Romania, Ukraine, or Turkey (not to say anything about Georgia), this can be better explained not by the level of the regional coalescence but rather by the role Russia plays in the wider Black Sea area, Europe and in the world. And even considering Russia's stake in regional and European affairs, the flow of Bulgarians to other foreign countries such as the Czech Republic and Serbia are much intensive, than those to Russia.

The number of visitors going to Bulgaria (presented in Appendix 2, as well as on the graph entitled “Number of Visitors from Abroad by Country of Origin: December Each Year”)

describes a somewhat different picture. As shown in the graph below, Bulgaria seems to be actively visited by Romanians, Greeks, Turks, Macedonians and Serbs. Here again, as in the case of Bulgarian visitors abroad, Georgia is not listed separately and the assumption can be the same as above. Once again, one can hardly make the argument that the inflow of visitors to Bulgaria shows a bigger integration with the Black Sea littoral states, than with the outside world. While the number of Romanians visiting Bulgaria is more than the number of visitors from any other countries for almost all years presented (except for the year of 2008 when more Greeks visited Bulgaria, and the year 2013 when the number of Romanian visitors dropped drastically), and the number of Turks visiting Bulgaria is also high in comparison to other states, still this can hardly be an indication of some kind of regional coalescence: firstly, there is a low level of human flows from Ukraine, Russia (according to the statistics, Bulgaria is visited by more Macedonians and Serbs, than by Ukrainians and Russians) and Georgia (which is not even listed separately), and secondly, because a big portion of Greek, Turkish and Romanian visitors only visit Bulgaria for recreational and holiday purposes, as Bulgaria appears to be a famous tourist destination in this regard, attracting lots of visitors from different countries. In addition, it must be noted that Romania, Turkey and Greece share borders with Bulgaria — a well-known touristic destination — which explains the reasons behind the large number of visitors from those states.

Figure 2.

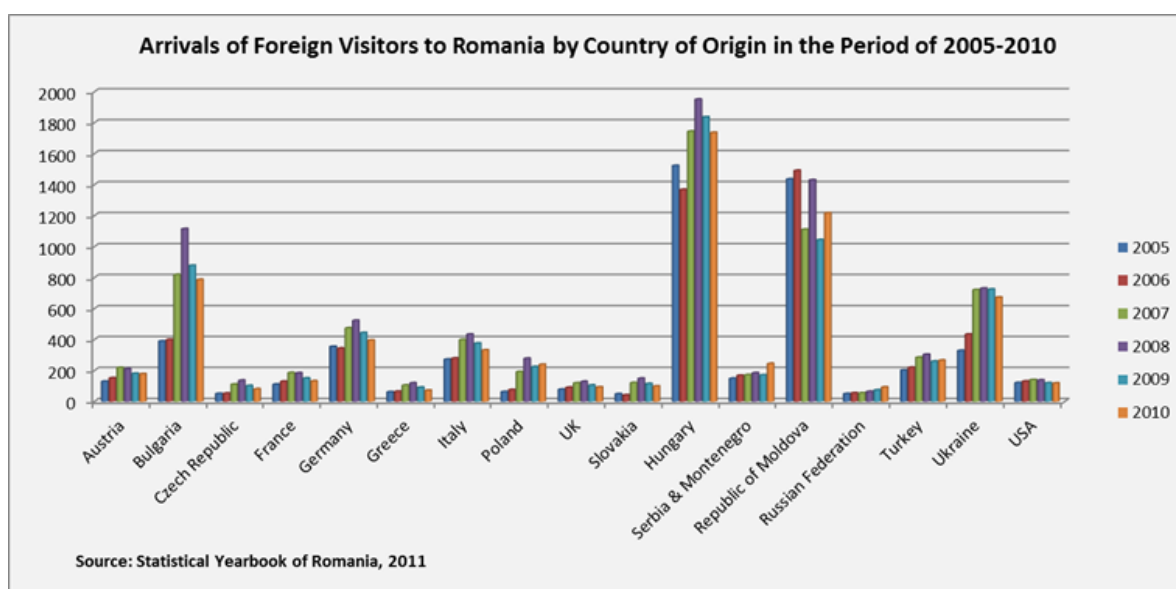


If we try to analyze the numbers of both flows of visitors to and from Bulgaria using the details presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, along with the graphs, we would most likely be able to say that Bulgaria seems to be more integrated with the European (EU member)

countries like the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Greece, Cyprus, Austria, than with the countries of the Black Sea region. Intensity of flows with Romania in this particular case could be considered as part of the EU ties of Bulgaria. Human flows of Bulgaria do not present an evidence for stronger linkages with the group of the Black Sea littoral countries.

Romania is the next Black Sea littoral state which we will try to analyze within the framework of this research. However from the very beginning we will have to state that the picture won't be as complete as in case of Bulgaria.

Figure 3



Unfortunately, a document having details of the Romanian statistics is only available in the Romanian language, as indicated on the website of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania.³³³ Accessible information on the website is not the same for all the years (e.g. per month per year information on tourists is not presented per country of origin, except for the year of 2013, thus making it impossible to identify a trend). Another source of the information is the statistics yearbook of 2011, which does contain the detailed statistics of visitors per country of origin (reflected in the Appendix 3 and the graph entitled Arrivals of Foreign Visitors to Romania by Country of Origin in the Period of 2005-2010). However, no data is available about the number of Romanian visitors abroad per country of destination (the page is somehow omitted – only the title is given).³³⁴

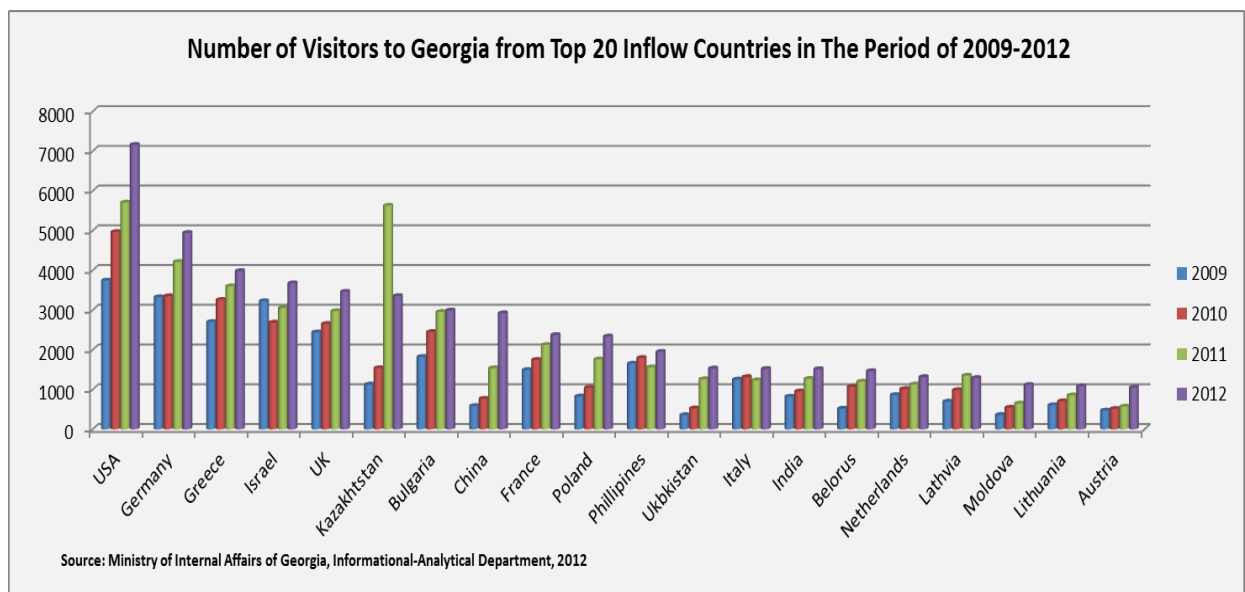
³³³ <http://www.insse.ro/cms/en/content/tourism-statistics> (last time accessed on March 31, 2014)

³³⁴ Statistics Yearbook of Romania 2011, p. 624

By looking at the number of visitors to Romania in Appendix 3, one can say that Romania is not actively visited country in general. It turns out that the citizens of Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, and Ukraine tend to visit Romania more often than the citizens of any other states do. From the perspective of the integration on the basis of human flows and the number of visitors, Romania seems to be more integrated with Germany and Italy, than with Turkey, and more integrated with Poland, than with the Russian Federation. As in the case of Bulgaria, information about Georgian visitors to Romania is not presented separately. It is hard to say whether this information is omitted or simply not collected, but its absence can once again be perceived as either a sign of lack of interest towards Georgia, or an indicator of very weak connections with Georgia, pointing to the low level of integration.

As for the statistics about visitors going to Georgia, as well as the statistics of Georgian visitors abroad, they are poorer than those about Romania and Bulgaria. The only data about the human flows of the country that is publicly available free of charge is accessible from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.³³⁵ As in many other cases, while the number of visitors is tracked, they are not always presented per country of origin and/or destination. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia contains the information about the visitors to Georgia for the period of 2009-2012, but includes no data about the number of Georgians going abroad per country of destination.

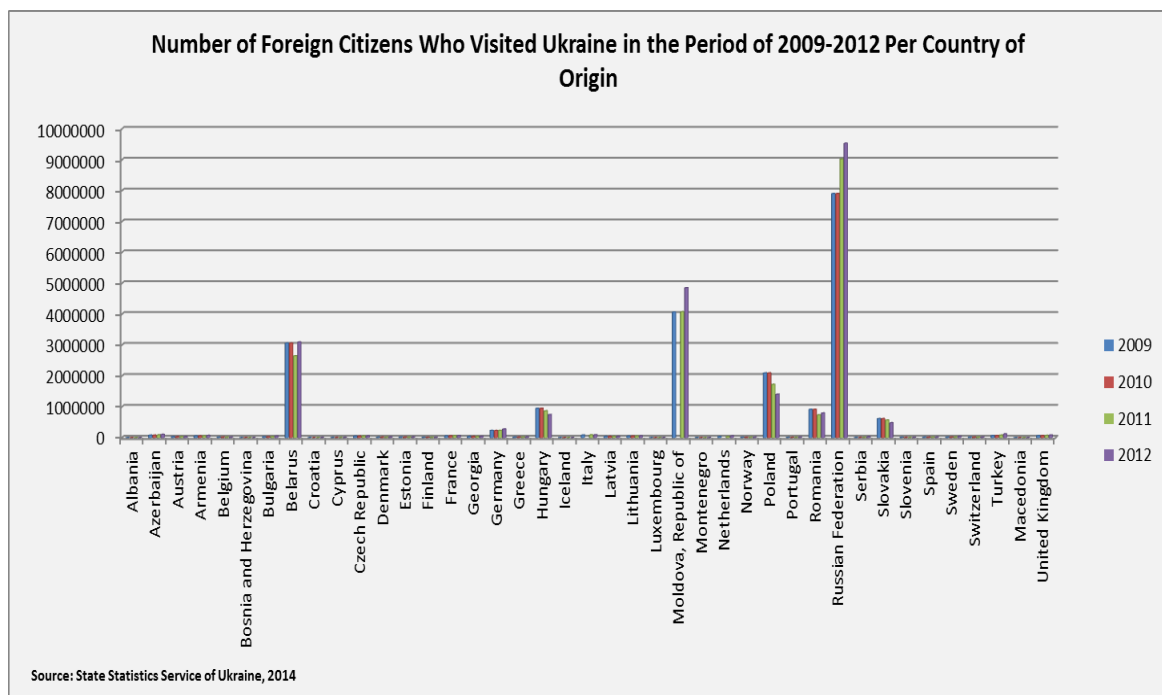
Figure 4



335

The graphical representation of the visitor inflow to Georgia shown above, which includes twenty countries, the citizens of which visit Georgia the most frequently, does not show signs of strong integration with the Black Sea littoral states. Out of those states only one — Bulgaria — is the Black Sea coastal country and more Americans, Germans and citizens of Kazakhstan visited Georgia than Bulgarians did. However we have to admit that the picture is one-sided only, as there is no data openly accessible about Georgians going abroad per country of destination for the same time period.

Figure 5.

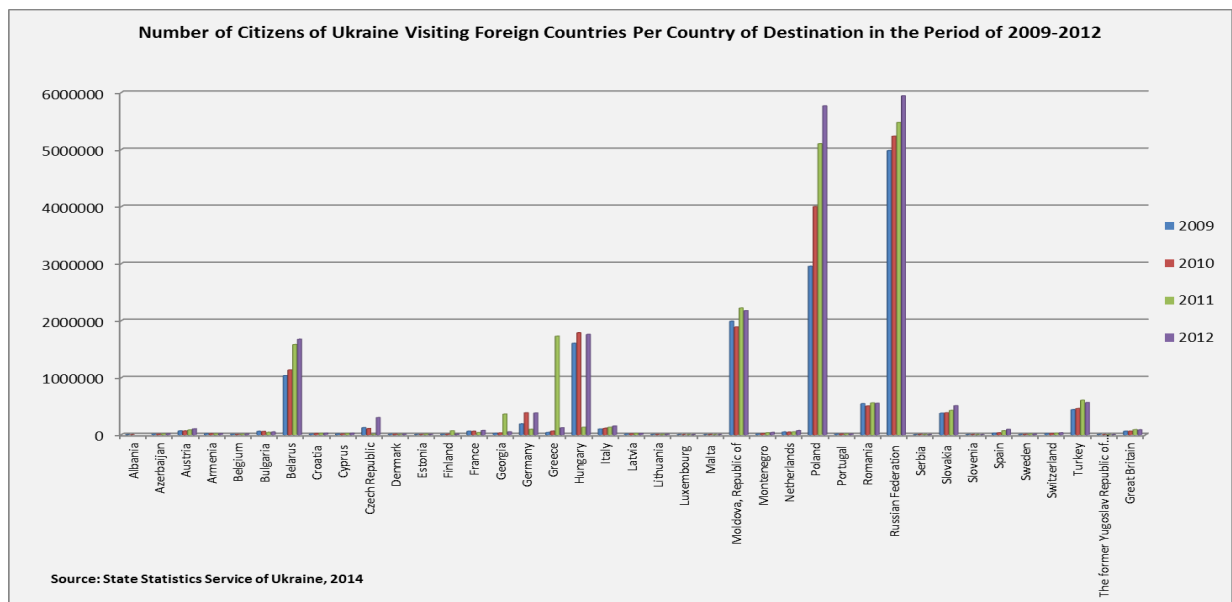


Unlike Georgia and Romania, human flows to and from Ukraine can be analyzed in a more complete manner as the data is accessible on the official website of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, both about foreigners visiting the country, as well as about Ukrainians going abroad. Tables presenting this information for the period of 2009-2012 do not show Ukraine's strong intra-regional integration with the Black Sea littoral states. Russian Federation, Moldova and Belarus are the three leading states, both as countries of destination for Ukrainians going abroad and as countries, the citizens of which most actively visit Ukraine (for more details please see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). While Russian Federation is a Black Sea littoral state, intensive flows in between Russia and Ukraine can be much better

explained by the fact that 17.3% of the Ukrainian population is ethnically Russian.³³⁶ In certain parts of the country (e.g. Crimea), the Russians represent the majority of the population and their ties with the Russian Federation are very strong. In addition, Russia is a regional power and thus active engagement with this country can hardly be used (unless some other aspects also correlate, which is not the case in the case of Ukraine) as an indicator of any state's intra-regional integration, including Ukraine.

In the case of Ukrainians going abroad, the dynamics with Romania and Turkey seem to be intensive. However, considering the number of Ukrainians visiting Poland and Hungary in the same time period, Ukraine can more easily be perceived to be integrated with those EU members more than with the Black Sea littoral states.

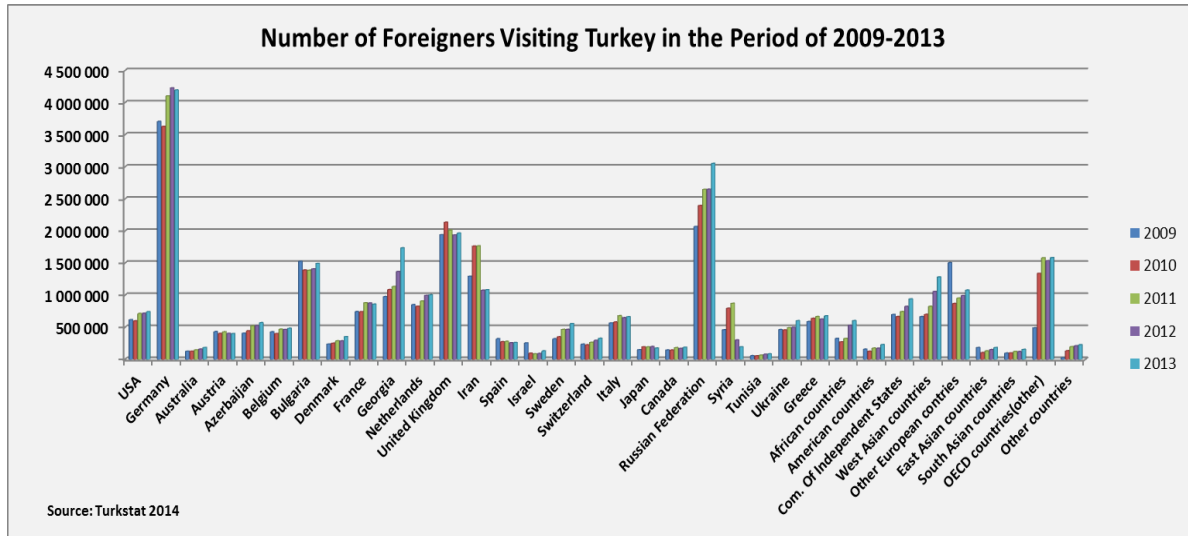
Figure 6.



Another important Black Sea littoral state that we will try to analyze is Turkey. The data about visitors going to Turkey in the period of 2009-2013 does not show that Turkey is too much integrated with the other littoral states. While many Turks keep visiting Russia, judging solely from the perspective of human flows, the country seems to be more coalesced with Germany and United Kingdom.

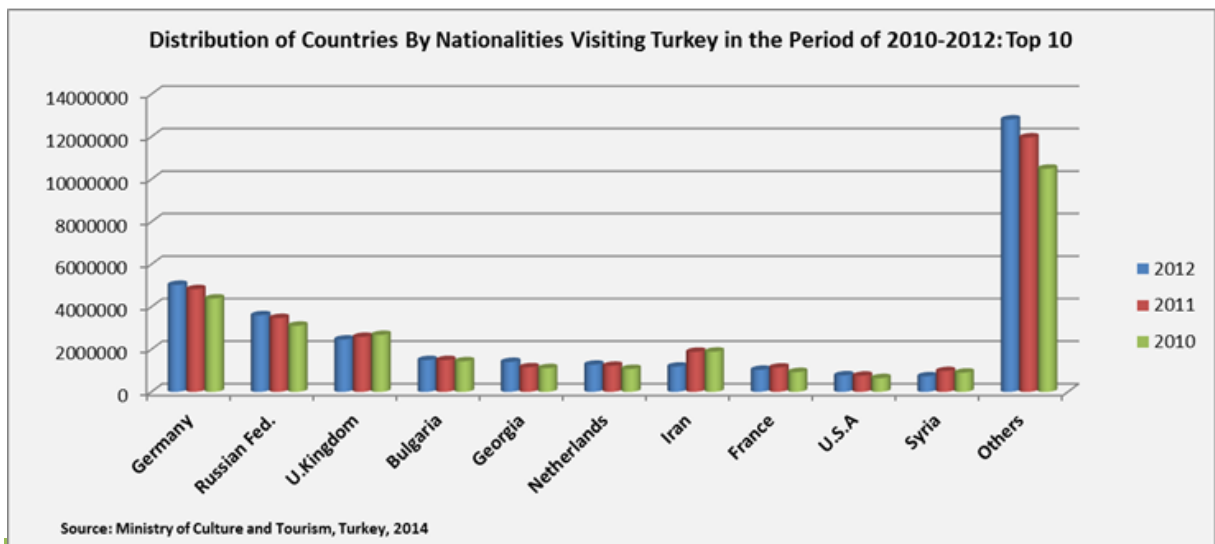
³³⁶ <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/> (last time accessed on March 29, 2014)

Figure 7.



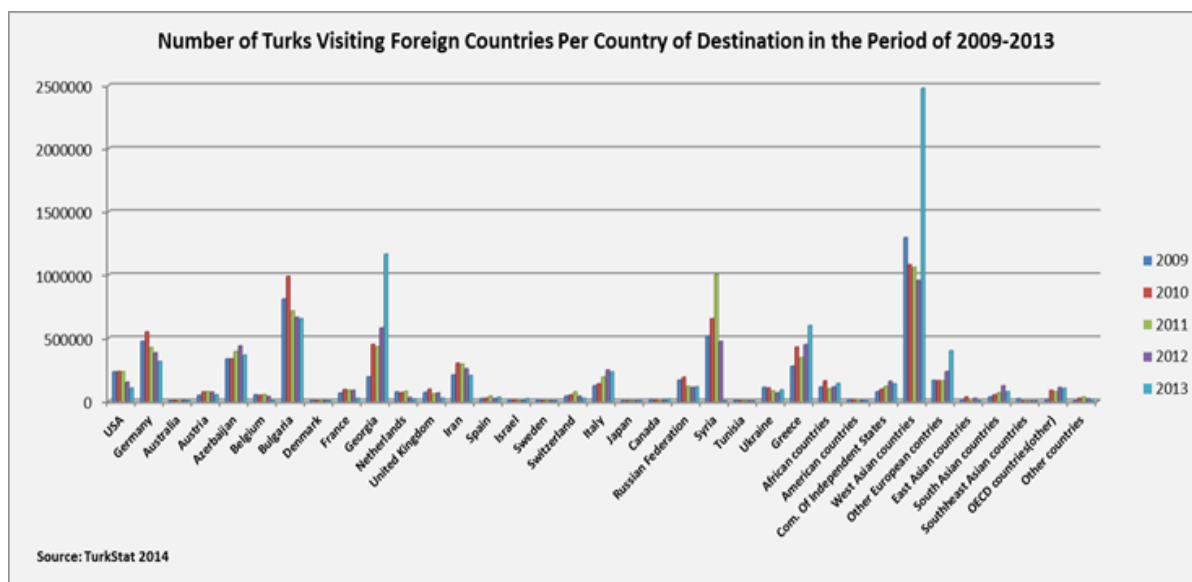
Along with the Russian Federation, Bulgaria and Georgia are the other two Black Sea littoral countries, whose citizens are among the top visitors of Turkey. Yet, once again, this cannot be perceived as a sign of regional coalescence, because the human flows with Ukraine are not so high, while Romania is not listed separately at all. According to these numbers alone, Turkey seems to be more integrated with Iran, than with Ukraine, and more integrated with Germany and UK, than with Bulgaria. The graph that includes the top ten states whose citizens visited Turkey the most in the period of 2010-2012 also strengthens the assumption that Turkey’s intra-regional integration is not so strong. The second place of the Russian Federation in the list can be explained by the fact that both states are regional powers with strong partnership ties, in addition to Turkey being famous for its affordable and diverse sea resorts. Indeed, many Russian tourists choose Turkey as their destination to spend vacations there.

Figure 8.



As shown in the graph below, West Asian countries seem to be the most popular destination for Turks going abroad. The graph details the number of Turks visiting foreign countries in the period of 2009-2012 according to the countries of destination. While many Turks visit Bulgaria and Georgia, two of the Black Sea littoral states, many more Turks visit Syria or Azerbaijan, than they visit the biggest Black Sea coastal country – Russia. Romania again is not even listed separately among the common destinations of Turkish tourists and emigrants. Considering the human flows to other foreign countries, Turkey also seems to be more coalesced with Iran, than with Ukraine. All this drives us to the conclusion that Turkey’s intra-regional integration in terms of human flows is far weaker, than its integration with the outside world.

Figure 9.



5.3. Migration in the Black Sea Region

The Black Sea area has historically been a bridge and a crossroad of traditional and modern routes of migration and trade, ranging from the famous Silk Road to different energy routes and pipelines. This part of the world represents the political, cultural and economic hub of nations with different backgrounds and levels of development. The territory which holds the population of 350 million experiences serious migration challenges, being at the same time the transit, the origin, and the destination area of migrants.³³⁷ BSEC countries are considered

³³⁷ Migration In The Black Sea Region: An Overview 2008, IOM p. 9

to be both the “sending states” and the “transit states” on the routes of migration flows towards Western Europe such as via Russia and Ukraine or via Bulgaria and Turkey.³³⁸ However, intra-regional migration is also considered to be strong as Russia continues to be the major destination country of the region (12.1 million migrants in the year 2005).³³⁹ Ukraine is the second major destination country for intra-regional migrants (6.8 million migrants in the year 2005).³⁴⁰ Those two Black Sea littoral countries are top two destinations for intra-regional migrant, comprising up to 82% of the overall immigration in the region.³⁴¹ However, despite the aforementioned information, it is very hard to analyze the intra-regional linkages between the Black Sea littoral states on the basis of migration. One reason is that migration data is not always collected the way it should be (an issue described in the beginning of this chapter) and it is hard to come across systematically and correctly tracked data for all the littoral states for the same period of time, on which one could build a comprehensive analysis of the issue. Also, considering the nature of the phenomenon of migration (migrants moves towards countries with better economic systems and more employment opportunities), the high intensity of migration can often times be ascribed to (inter)dependency rather than integration. But still, migratory trends play a key role in the framework of human flows and regional integration.

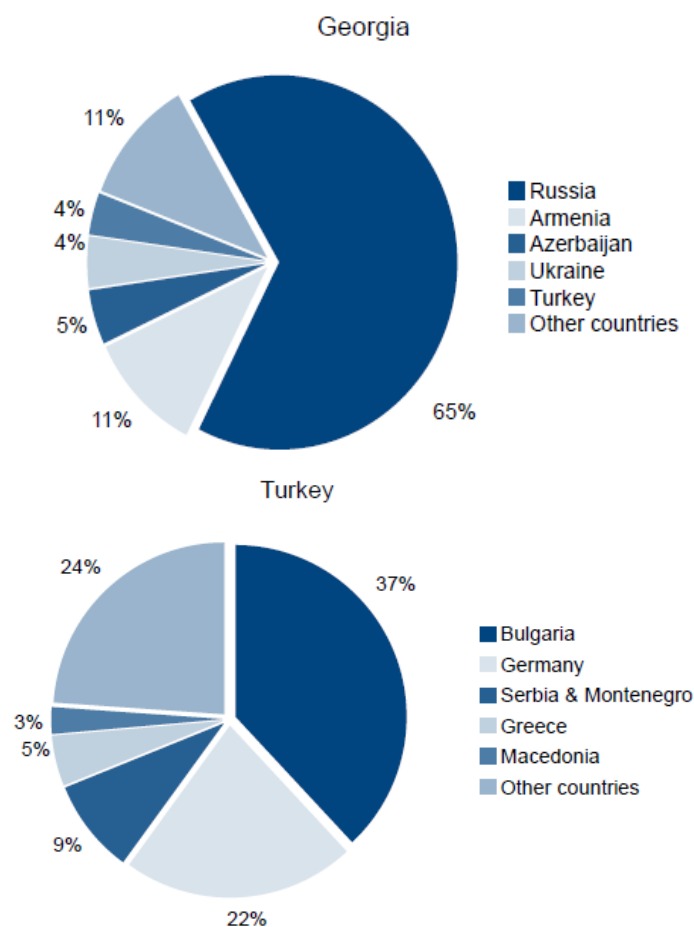
³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 27

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

5.3.1. Immigrants by top 5 Countries of Origin in 2005

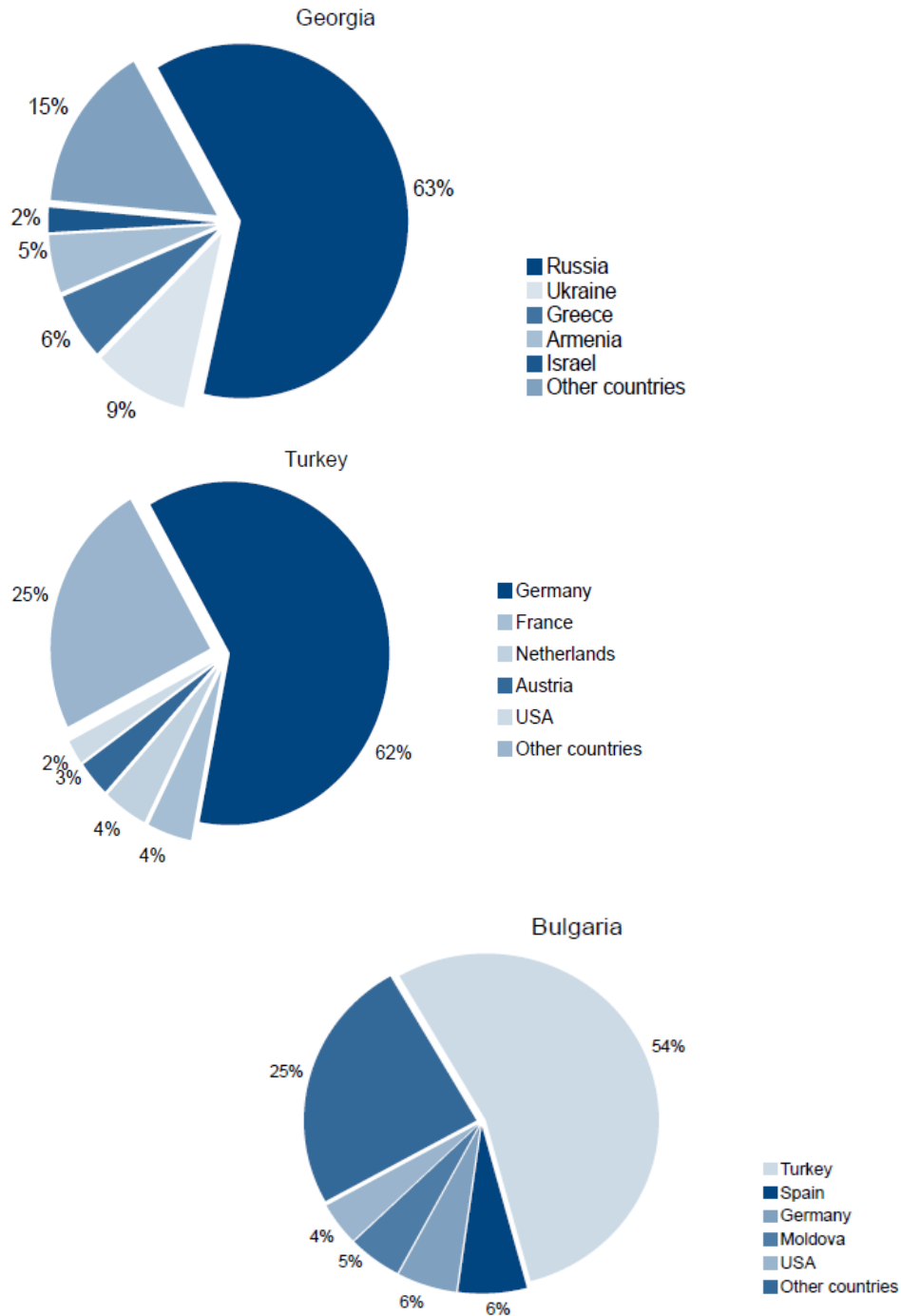


Source: Migration In The Black Sea Region: An Overview 2008, IOM

Graphical representation of immigrants per countries of origin in Georgia and Turkey in the year of 2005 shows Georgia strongly linked to three littoral states: Russia, Ukraine and Turkey. Russia no longer contributes to this trend after the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 and the eventual closure of borders. Concerning the other countries that also appear in the top 5 list (Armenia and Azerbaijan), the dynamics can be explained by the proximity of those states, that could be signaling Georgia's strong linkages with its neighbors, not necessarily with the Black Sea littoral countries (note that we do understand that in many cases, Armenia and Azerbaijan are considered as the wider Black Sea Region countries, but within the framework of this research, we don't apply that vision and thus make assumptions accordingly). As for Turkey, while the immigrants from Bulgaria account for the largest percentage of migrants in Turkey (37% in the year 2005), the second place is held by Germany, which is not a member of the wider Black Sea area at all. all this gives us a reason

to say that the statistics do not present an overwhelming evidence to argue that Turkey exhibits a strong trend of intra-regional migration.

5.3.2. Emigrants by top 5 Countries of Destination in 2005



Source: Migration In The Black Sea Region: An Overview 2008, IOM

The analysis of emigration statistics of the year of 2005 from three Black Sea littoral states of Georgia, Turkey, and Bulgaria shows no signs of existence of strong intra-regional flows between Turkey and Bulgaria. While Turkey is the country hosting 54% of emigrants from Bulgaria, all the other destination countries are non-littoral and non-Black-Sea-area EU states. Data for Turkey does not even list any of the Black Sea countries (neither littoral, nor non-littoral) among the common destinations of Turkish emigrant flows. The data for Georgia still shows strong linkages with the two littoral states of Russia and Ukraine, hosting 63% and 15% of Georgian emigrants respectively, but the data was collected before the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, and the population movement trends would have markedly changed since that incident. Even when it was still a significant trend, the migration of Georgians to Russia had more to do with Georgia being an economically drained country, than with anything else. There certainly were no signs of a high level of coalescence between these countries that we can talk about.

Combining the trends of immigration and emigration presented above might help us in conclude that Turkey, as a strong regional power and a Black Sea littoral state, is not very integrated intra-regionally, at least in terms migration, as the most countries among top 5 lists of immigration and emigration are not the Black Sea littoral ones. It is hard to make any definite concluding remarks in the case of Georgia, as certain migration trends can reasonably be attributed to different external considerations. The available information about Bulgaria is one-sided (IOM report only provides data about emigration) and we want to avoid making any premature conclusions on the basis of incomplete data.

Conclusion

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the former Soviet Union marked the beginning of a totally new era. Before those systemic changes, the wider Black Sea area, representing the crossroads of various civilizations, cultures, historical backgrounds and battlefields of different interests, had been disregarded under the mainstream politics. However, in the middle of 1990s the situation began to change. Lying at the cross-road of European, Middle Eastern and Eurasian security spaces, the Black Sea region gradually ceased to be viewed just as a periphery of other important political or geographic unit(s). It no longer represented the sphere of influence of the Ottoman or Russian empires, extended Soviet zone, a frontier of Europe, or extension of the Mediterranean. This shift in the conceptualization of the Black Sea area occurred through the changes in the conceptions of such influential players of international politics as Brussels and Washington.

The preparations for 2004 enlargement, moving the European Union closer to the Black Sea neighborhood, followed by the accession to membership of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, made the organization a direct neighbor of the so called Black Sea region. This strategic move was a wake-up call for certain powers. A terrible tragedy of 9/11 also transformed the foreign policy thinking in Washington. The United States of America tried to enhance its efforts for ensuring a global security, paying more and more attention to the Black Sea littoral states and their neighbors. In addition, Romania and Bulgaria, two of the Black Sea coastal countries, became NATO members and thus the transatlantic family led by the US faced a new reality and a renewed imperative to address the eastern neighborhood of their boundaries.

Two regional powers – Turkey and Russia – also had to re-adjust their foreign policy frameworks to the new reality created by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Other Black Sea littoral countries like Georgia and Ukraine also had to find out their role and mission in the new neighborhood after getting their long sought independence back. all these circumstances played a role in creating an environment in which more and more policy makers and scholars started talking and writing about the Black Sea region, albeit not always having a clear or common understanding of the term. Different think tanks and governmental organizations started to draft strategies, indicating different perspectives for the development of the region, and outlining foreign policy goals vis-à-vis the Black sea area. Rounds of conferences, workshops and other discussion panels were dedicated to the exploration of the

Black Sea basin issues. But majority of the scholarly work has been done *about or towards* the different groupings of the states in the Black Sea basin, without having a comprehensive conception of what the Black Sea region is or is not. Countless policy papers and reports were prepared about the area, without having a clear understanding of the analyzed entity. Most of the existing scholarly work and policy papers have been applying either of the two approaches:

a) Taking the Black Sea regionness as a given fact or as part of the given reality and proceeding to study different processes within or around it;

b) Believing that the Black Sea area is not a region, but still studying different processes around it, taking the Black Sea area more as a tool of analysis. Providing a setting for a specific type of regional studies to be made. In either case, most of the scientific work is a form of *meta-analysis* with a special focus on any of the following areas of interest:

- discussing the impact of the frozen conflicts (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Karabakh) on the relationships among several Black Sea countries;
- describing the energy routes (existing and potential) crossing the so called wider Black Sea area, linking the east and the west;
- discussing interests of the big powers like the EU, the United States, Turkey, and Russia in the area;
- describing and assessing the efficiency of various Black Sea related initiatives of the European Union (such as Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership);

It can also be said that the existing literature around the Black Sea region is much driven by the argumentation around the security of the area, as well as security related interests of the big powers within the so called region (Russia and Turkey) or outside of it (US and European Union). Whether we want to discover the character of the frozen conflicts or analyze energy trade routes, , we believe that , it is extremely important to have a clear picture of what this area represents before we start developing any kind of organizational conception towards the area. Not having a clear understanding of the Black Sea region might lead to the development of inefficient, irrelevant or inconsistent policies and strategies towards the region.

With all this in mind, we conducted an empirical study applying the bottom-up approach, within the framework of which we tried to discover existing regional perceptions of the Black

Sea area, calling them the conception of the region. We also wanted to understand, how the presence (or not) of any of those regional conceptions, as well as the way they are shaped (if present), influence the intra-regional dynamics among the Black Sea littoral states. We tried to unpack the different conceptions of the Black Sea region of both insiders (littoral states) as well as outsiders (US and EU). These individual conceptions were constructed according to some past or present experiences with the region. The conceptions were also influenced by the historical contexts of the littoral states and the roles they played in the development of regional ties. The Given study also aimed at the exploration of how those regional perceptions were reflected in the relationships among the coastal countries. We wanted to see whether there were any similarities or differences in the regional perceptions of the insiders and the outsiders.

Therefore, this research was framed with an intention to provide answers to the following three central questions:

- 1. How is the Black Sea region conceived by the littoral states?*
- 2. How is the Black Sea region conceived by the US and EU?*
- 3. How are the inside and outside conceptions of the Black Sea region reflected in the intra-regional dynamics?*

We believe that better understanding the perceptions of the Black Sea region will help us to make better, more informed decisions about the needs and gaps of the existing framework. The development and implementation of more efficient strategies and policies towards the Black Sea area would only be possible through a complete understanding of the existing order and its problems. We considered it optimal to focus on the Black Sea littoral states. The decision was based on the belief that if any kind of a conception of the Black Sea region could be traced, it would be present in the coastal countries in the first place, due to their proximity to the sea. Also, the trends of coalescence, developing as a result of the presence of the Black Sea regional conception, would be more visible among the littoral countries.

Major Findings of the Research

While the given research did not try to test any of the existing theoretical perspectives about regionalization or region building, we still dedicated some part of our study to analyzing the

existing scholarly work about theories on bonding states under the umbrella of a region. We tried to unpack the “**jigsawpuzzle view**,” when scholars of different areas studying the phenomenon of a region believe that “static continental units fit together in an unambiguous way.”³⁴² By exploring the diversity of the conceptual definitions, we tried to understand and explain the assumption of some scientists that there is a high risk for the concept of a region to become an “empty idea.”³⁴³ The brief overview of the physical and functional regions, as well as the description of the classifications, including the one suggested by Russet putting regions under different five categories, helped us to present the diversity of the discourse around this topic. Differentiating between the regionalization and regionness, combined with the overview of subregionalism, further contributed to the richness of the overall picture. Considering the Black Sea area as a sub-region subordinated to the wider regional project of the European Union³⁴⁴ has been one of the actively discussed issues in [this research/in regionalism literature in general].

The idea of the subregionalism as a transitional platform for groups of states aiming at the membership of another regional entity leaves us with too many questions. While the unification under the same goal is a common practice, what we struggle to understand is how the aspirations of becoming members of a wider group of states drives the smaller groups of states to cease being independent, standalone entities? Do the states grouped under the so called sub-regions realize that they are merely jointly knocking on the door of another a wider region, and that this goal is the major factor that unifies them? If yes, what is the evidence of this? Subordination, which is the necessary component for subregionalism to exist, is a very tricky concept to analyze. It is not easy to understand what is the difference between collaboration and subordination? Or, between subordination and a small group of states that are united under a common goal (in this particular case the goal is engaging in wider regional coalescence projects). This discussion is interesting for our study because, as mentioned above, the Black Sea zone is considered a sub-region by some scholars. While we did not test any of the existing theories within the framework of our research, we still touched on this aspect of regionalist analysis of the Black Sea area as part of our theoretical overview. However, we see no definite reasons of why the Black Sea area could be a sub-region, especially if we consider (and rightly so) Russia to be a Black Sea littoral state, which does not aspire to become a member of the EU. Also, it is hard for us to see a difference between a

³⁴² Vayrynen Raimo *Regionalism Old and New International Studies Review* (2003) 5, 25-51, p. 25

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Manoli Panagiota (2012) *The Dynamics of the Black Sea Subregionalism*, Ashgate

sub-region and a region at its early stages of formation, when the level of coalescence is relatively weak and the given group of states requires more support from the outsiders. When the outside players trigger the region building process (outside-in regions), often times it creates a strong interdependence of inside players on outsiders. So how can we differentiate this kind of interdependence from the sub-regionalist subordination? Even if the states within the region strongly desire the membership of a wider regional project, what evidence can we have that such aspirations make them cease being stand-alone entities? Does it mean that one common desire of individual states, which are also unified in regional groups, where they interact and coalesce, outweighs the positive impacts of internal interdependence and cooperation? We found it difficult to come up with clear and consistent answers to these types of questions. Therefore, our argumentation in this study about the Black Sea region was not influenced by the theories of sub-regionalism.

As part of the theoretical perspectives of region building, we provided a brief overview of old and new regionalisms, as well as inside-out and outside-in theories of region building. We also analyzed Paasi's and Knapp's suggestions about the various stages of regional institutionalization and regional identity. This further helped us to better comprehend the ongoing discussions about what the region is, how it is built and how it might be analyzed. The existing diversity of theories and definitions clearly showed the complexity of the field of regionalism. This partly explained of the reason why the given study we did not select a particular definition or theory of regionalism, but rather applied the bottom-up approach, trying to explore the dynamics around the Black Sea on the basis of empirical data.

Aiming at the understanding of the internal and external conceptions of the Black Sea area, firstly we tried to unpack the perspectives of the European Union and the United States of America. Historical overview of the EU's engagement in different regional initiatives revealed some interesting reasons of its drawbacks since 1990s. Despite the number of regional ideas, initiators were still skeptical to push those regional ideas further. Driven by the enlargement process, the organization has come up with a variety of complex statuses (accession, pre-accession, cooperation, etc.). As a result, a significant part of EU partnerships are often developed on the basis of the individual country specific cooperation frameworks. Also, (sub)regional cooperation has been often perceived as a complementary process of the European integration, not attracting as much attention as it deserves. ³⁴⁵ All this

³⁴⁵ Ibid. Manoli pp. 184-185

preconditioned the European Union's reluctance to lead regional initiatives. Unfortunately, the development of the European Neighborhood Policy, which can be considered as the first attempt to develop and apply a uniform approach to the countries on the Union's east and south, did not contribute to the promotion of region building either.

The EU expressed concerns that the intra-regional dynamics and EU's contribution in fostering them were clearly far more developed in the Mediterranean, than in the EU's eastern neighborhood. Consequently, further development in this direction was recommended.³⁴⁶ The **European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)**, which is the financial instrument of the ENP, for the period of 2007-2013 declared the goals of "regional and local development, and regional integration (Euro-Mediterranean regions and regions of Eastern Europe" were prioritized to spend money on. The **Black Sea Basin Joint Operation Program 2007-2013** (Black Sea JOP) under the ENPI also aimed at contributing "to a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin."³⁴⁷ However all this did not go much further than declarations; this is clearly revealed through the analysis of various EU funded projects and allocations of funds.

ENPI Cross Border Cooperation Program shows us that the Black Sea program under the Sea Basin programs, unifying 8 different countries with different capacities and needs, received **much less** than it was allocated for the majority of the land border programmes (the only exception is Karelia-Russia: Finland, Russia, the amount of which was very close to the amount provided to the Black Sea region). While none of the land border programs unified more than 4 countries (unlike the BS), the financial support provided per program was much higher than that provided for the eight-country initiative of the Black Sea. Origins of the funded projects within the framework of the **Joint Operational Program Black Sea Basin 2007-2013** further shows us that the EU mainly invested in the projects coming from the EU members, as out of 62 projects funded during the 7 years of the program, more than 30% of the funded projects were submitted by Romania, more than 25% by Greece, and more than 19% by Bulgaria, thus accounting up to 74% in total for the three countries.³⁴⁸ Our

³⁴⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 11.3.2003 COM(2003) 104 final p. 8 .

³⁴⁷ <http://81.12.208.42/index.php/eng/Programme> (last time accessed on October 14, 2014 at 10:32 pm Georgia time)

³⁴⁸ <http://81.12.208.42/index.php/eng/content/download/19262/511087/file/Grants%20awarded%20until%2031%20of%20December%202013.pdf> (last time accessed on October 14, 2014 at 5:56 am Georgia time) as well as in Annex 1.

interpretation of all the aforementioned is that the European Union does not have any clear conception of the Black Sea region: it is perceived as part of its Eastern neighborhood towards which the EU struggled to develop a comprehensive and consistent perspective, sometimes sending mixed messages to neighboring states. Some scholars, discussing the impact of the ENP, often consider it as a tool of pursuing de facto integration without actual membership. Others also talk about the hidden agenda.³⁴⁹ Regardless of the perspectives, one thing is clear – the EU does not have a clear strategy of how to treat its neighborhood, because there is no clear understanding of the neighborhood in the first place, making it hard to outline what are the specific imperatives of the day.

The lack of a clear conception of the Black Sea area in the EU is further revealed in the shift from the dominating approach of bilateral relationships of the Union with its neighboring countries to multilateralism reflected in the Black Sea Synergy document. Following the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to EU membership in 2007, the EU became a direct neighbor of the Black Sea eastern coastline. That translated into the need of having a clear strategy towards this area. However, despite its initial purpose to replicate the successful experience of the EU's Northern Dimension (ND) partnerships into the Black Sea regionalism, the Black Sea Synergy was admitted to be a failure and was criticized by the European Parliament Resolution of 2011 for its rather limited results, further calling for the EU Strategy for the Black Sea.³⁵⁰ In 2012 Members of the European Parliament also underlined the need of a Black Sea Strategy, while the existing progress within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy was assessed negatively. Fragmentation of the financial resources and lack of visibility were named as challenges.³⁵¹

The European Union struggled with the development of a clear conception of the Black Sea region due to the fact that it could not speak with a single voice. Inconsistency in organizational steps and fragmentation of the EU policy towards the Black Sea (driven by different interests of various groupings inside of the institution) was further reflected in the development of the **Eastern Partnership** (EaP) program, initiated via Polish-Swedish

³⁴⁹ Cichocki Marek *European Neighborhood Policy or Neighborhood Policies?* pp. 9-28 in Henderson Kareb and Weaver Carol (eds.) (2010) *The Black Sea Region and EU Policy The Challenge of Divergent Agendas*. Ashgate, p. 22-23

³⁵⁰ European Parliament Resolution of 20 January, 2011 on an EU Black Sea Strategy

³⁵¹ Fernando Garces de Los Fayos *The EU's Black Sea Policy: Where Do We Stand?* Policy Briefing September 2013, DG EXPO/B/Pol/Dep/Note/2013_221 p. 5

proposal only 20 months after the Black Sea Synergy.. It focused on the six post-soviet countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine) to help them realize their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. While we do understand that different political perspectives of various sub-groups exist inside the EU, still, the implementation of the EaP, almost in parallel with the BS Synergy, is another piece of evidence that the EU did not and does not have a clear understanding of the Black Sea area, thus elaborating on different issues in various documents, all of which ended up having somewhat vague goals and inefficient proposals. Exclusion of Russia from the EaP group of countries (no matter how politically driven decision it was) further shows that there is no common agreement within the EU as to which countries should be regarded as members of the Black Sea region. Lack of a conception is accordingly reflected in the diverse and inconsistent policies pursued by the EU towards its Black Sea neighborhood.

US interest towards the Black Sea area was also preconditioned by several historical events such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which virtually transformed the Black Sea area from a strategically useless part of the world (for the US) into the ‘platform for influence and power projection for the War on Terror,’³⁵² Romania and Bulgaria became NATO members in 2004, while color revolutions in the Black Sea littoral countries of Georgia and Ukraine brought in power reformist governments. However, despite the increased interest, no clear conception towards the Black Sea region was developed. Despite some initial positive dynamics, the official US Department of Defense Black Sea Security Strategy **was never announced**.³⁵³ While many steps taken by Washington vis-à-vis the Black Sea region were directly linked to the security and stability of the area, the nation’s strategic security documents of 2002, 2006 and 2010 do not say anything about the Black Sea region and the US interests towards it. Even after the **hearing on the future of democracy in the Black Sea area**³⁵⁴ no tangible strategic conception or an action plan was developed. Actually, the US National Security Strategy of 2006 talks about the importance of stability and prosperity of Russia’s neighborhood and plans to persuade the Russian government in the benefits of promoting democracy in Russia’s neighboring regions.³⁵⁵ All the aforementioned not only

³⁵² Konoplyov Sergei & Delanoé Igor Continuities and Ruptures: Tracking the US Interests In The Black Sea Area In the Context of the ‘Pivot to Asia’ in 2013 Harvard Black Sea Security Journal p. 6

³⁵³ Ibid. Konoplyov p. 201

³⁵⁴ At; hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Ninth Congress, first session, March 8, 2005; this hearing various influential experts like Succor, Zeyno Baran, Joseph Biden and others emphasized the importance of the US more active engagement and a stronger presence in the Black Sea region

³⁵⁵ National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2006. p. 39

shows us that there is no clear US conception of the Black Sea region, it presents very clearly that despite some conferences, workshops, and hearings the perception of this part of the world as Russia's neighborhood has been dominating so far.

Therefore, we conclude that neither the EU, nor US had any clear conceptions of the Black Sea region, which could help them in developing and pursuing a consistent policy towards this area. For that reason, their interventions and initiatives were hectic, ad hoc and sometimes even exclusive in the case of the EU.

When it comes to the Black Sea conception of the littoral states, unfortunately, the situation is not very different from that of the outside players. Analysis of the perspectives of the internal parties was done by grouping the states with similar characteristics: a) regional powers like Turkey and Russia, b) EU members like Romania and Bulgaria, and c) post-Soviet pro-Western Georgia and Ukraine. Interestingly enough, despite the historical background and the rule of Ottomans over the wider Black Sea area, the perspectives of Black Sea area as a region is missing in the foreign policy synopsis of Ankara, available on the official website of the MFA of Turkey. On the same website, we read that Turkey sees itself to be in the epicenter of the "Afro-Eurasian geography."³⁵⁶ Turkey is clearly presented as a status quo power, trying to keep the Montevideo Agreement principles in force and respected by all. Accordingly, even if Ankara groups countries and tries to develop certain regional perspective with them, while pursuing its foreign policy as it is presented at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, still the country

- Does not see the Black Sea region as a single entity
- Does not see the Black Sea littoral countries as one group towards which Turkey might want to or need to develop a group conception
- Does not see itself as a Black Sea regional power (actually it regards its own role to be far more important, considering its self-perception as the epicenter of the Afro-Eurasian geography)
- Does not build its foreign policy with the Black Sea region in mind

³⁵⁶ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa> (last time accessed on July 23, 2014 at 5:56 pm Georgia time)

The Russian case is somewhat similar to the Turkish one. Neither its MFA structure, nor its official foreign policy documents reveal a clear conception of the Black Sea region. This part of the world was perceived either as part of the Greater Mediterranean, or as the Commonwealth of Independent States, or through the prism of the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, as reflected in the Foreign Policy Concepts of 2000, 2008 and 2014. We believe that this is enough evidence to claim that Kremlin does not have a clear and consistent conception of the Black Sea region. Even if the BSEC and CIS do have many member states in common, still their organizational perspectives and goals are very different. Therefore, we cannot perceive the discrepancies between their perspectives as richness and diversity of theory; rather, we regard it as the lack of a clear and consistent conception of the region in general.

The foreign policies of Romania and Bulgaria, despite exhibiting some differences in their attitudes towards Russia, had been mainly driven by their aspirations of EU membership, regarding their active engagement in any other initiative as a potential threat to their integration with the EU. Accordingly, until obtaining EU memberships, those countries had been carefully pursuing politics designed to only benefiting their journey towards the overall goal of the membership of the Union. After their accession to the EU, Bulgaria and Romania declared the Black Sea region to be one of their key areas of interest, as officially stated on the MFA website. Romania was more active in trying to play a constructive role in the Black Sea dynamics. While this can be perceived as a positive sign that signals the creation of a comprehensive Black Sea conception by one of its littoral state, it should also be considered that these states see themselves more as outsiders – as EU members feeling responsible to contribute to the transformation and development of their eastern neighborhood. Such perspective do not really place Romania and Bulgaria into the framework of the Black Sea regional countries looking for intra-regional integration. Rather, they are participating in the regional processes as EU representatives. This leads us to further questions such as, what are the territorial borders of the Black Sea region? And what type of or whose regionness are we talking about?

The conception of the Black Sea region is also missing from the current Georgian foreign policy. Looking through the National Security Concepts of 2005 and 2011, we notice a definite shift away from the Black Sea regional conception. The comparison of those two documents reveals the disappearance of certain focuses, which did underline (but no longer

do so) the importance of Georgia's contribution to the Black Sea regional dynamics. Even the current structure of the Georgian MFA and the statutes of different departments attest to the fact that there is no strategic focus on the Black Sea in the framework of the Georgian foreign policy. The only reference to the Black Sea region is made in the statute of the Department of the International Economic Relations when tasks of the Unit of the Multilateral and Regional Economic Cooperation are described. Only then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia refers to the Black Sea region, while stating that the "Unit" program aims at coordinating the collaboration within BSEC, as well as supporting the development and implementation of regional projects within the framework of this organization. And even this reference is indirect.³⁵⁷

The available Information about Ukraine vis-à-vis its role and conception towards the Black Sea area is relatively scarce in comparison to other states. However, the most recent identity concept, which underlines Ukraine's European aspirations, shows us that Kiev wants to be perceived purely as a European country. The list of the MFA directorates does not have any references to the Black Sea region. The only linkage can be found under the cooperation with international organizations where one can find BSEC along with the CoE, UNESCO, and NATO.³⁵⁸

This once again shows us that the Black Sea littoral states do not have a clear conception of the Black Sea area. There are no clear signs a single entity is developing on the lines of the Black Sea littoral states (or the wider area) . Littoral states do partner on bilateral and multilateral basis, but those partnerships do not exhibit the characteristics of we-ness but rather in most cases they are need-driven. The lack of a clear conception of the Black Sea region is further reflected in intra-regional dynamics. Nothing illustrates this as well as the trends in human and financial flows.

Data analysis of the Direction of Trade, Foreign Direct Investment and human flows do not reveal a very strong trend of coalescence among the Black Sea littoral states. In cases when the intensity of economic partnership is relatively strong (mainly when one of the sides

³⁵⁷http://www.mfa.gov.ge/files/558_17052_107347_საერთაშორისოეკონომიკურურთიერთობათადეპარტამენტისდებულება.pdf (last time accessed on November 1, 2014 at 2:48 pm Georgia time)

³⁵⁸ Interestingly enough above presented list of the international organizations is a separate link under the MFA website; the Directorate General for International Organizations under the departments and sectors does not give us any further details; accordingly it's hard to say whether Ukraine limits itself to those 5 organizations (EU + 4 listed in the aforementioned link) or not

represent relatively strong countries economically – either Russia or Turkey), this might easily be explained by the economic might and influence of those regional powers, rather than the high level of integration in general. Looking at the lists of the major trade partners of each littoral states, we notice that while Turkey and Russia are present in *all the littoral states' top 10 trade partners lists*, Georgia, Russia, and Turkey have only one more littoral state (Ukraine) among their top trade partners and Ukraine does not have any more other than Turkey and Russia. While Bulgaria and Romania are among the Black Sea littoral states, they are economically more integrated with the EU, than with the BS region. Bulgaria is more dependent on Russia as it imports from this state more than from any other country within or outside the EU; however trade relationships with other Black Sea littoral states are relatively less intense. We found very similar trends in while analyzing FDI directions.

The analysis of the human inflows and outflows do not reveal strong intra-regional dynamics and coalescence either. Czech Republic and Serbia are extremely popular destination countries among Bulgarians; the biggest number of visitors to Bulgaria come from Romania, Turkey and Greece. Hungary, Moldova and Bulgaria are the most popular destinations for Romanians. Georgia was extremely popular among Americans, followed by Germans and Greeks. The most visitors coming to Ukraine are from Russia, Moldova and Belarus. Russia, Poland and Moldova are among the most popular destinations of Ukrainians. The biggest number of people visiting Turkey comes from Germany, Russia and UK, while for Turks west Asia is the most popular destination. All this shows are there is no strong intra-regional linkage among the Black Sea littoral states which might be explained by the lack of a clear regional conception of the Black Sea among them.

Overall we have to say that we are prone to agree with Prof. King who states that when discussing the region, often where depends on when.³⁵⁹ Accordingly we tried to analyze the current situation as well as applying some retrospective look. This helped us to see that there is no evidence showing a strong coalescence in the Black Sea region and whatever we saw we could not even consider it as a sub-regionalism (as seen by Prof. Manoli).³⁶⁰ Prof. Aydin is right to say that we have to study what we see³⁶¹ and what we see is not a region but a group of countries with no clear conception of the Black Sea region. Whether it is a region

³⁵⁹ Please see the complete interview with Prof. King in Annex 7

³⁶⁰ Please see the complete interview with Prof. Manoli in Annex 3

³⁶¹ Please see the complete interview with Prof. Aydin in Annex 4

to be or not as suggested by one of the experts of the Black Sea area³⁶² lot depends on the respective nations and their leaders, however many of the interviewed experts believe (and we agree with them) that there is no sense of *we-ness* among the Black Sea littoral states nations.³⁶³

Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Considerations

There is a belief that ideas and initiatives, once born, never die away. This might be true for the Black Sea region as well. On one hand, the Black Sea littoral countries have no particular perspectives towards this area, while the US interest in the Black Sea region has been gradually fading away and the EU has been facing many different challenges of more urgent character, (e.g. the implications and influences of the Lisbon Treaty, the financial crisis, slow growth, increasing inequality, deficit and debt crises, the rise of anti-EU political forces etc.) than the regional dynamics of its eastern neighborhood. On the other hand, the call of the European Parliament Resolution of 2011 for the EU Strategy for the Black Sea, which would be able to enhance the consistency of actions and visibility of the organization in the region,³⁶⁴ followed by the Members of the European Parliament further underlining a need of Black Sea Strategy in 2012, can be regarded as some positive signs that some new dynamics might form in and around the Black Sea region. In either case, it is very clear that, considering the previous efforts, interventions and initiatives, both internal and external players need to make a strategic decision on how they would like this foreign policy discourse about the Black Sea region to proceed, or whether they would prefer to withdraw from the region altogether, considering previous failures as lessons learned. Either way, the following key aspects need to be taken into consideration in order to make informed decisions about the wider Black Sea area:

1. There should be a common and widely shared agreement of what is meant under the Black Sea region – considering the lack of a clear conception of the Black Sea region and no sense of *we-ness* among the Black Sea littoral countries, it needs to be decided whether the Black Sea area is only an artificial analytical tool or if it can develop into some sort of a regional entity.

³⁶² Please see the complete interview in Annex 5

³⁶³ Please see all the interviews in Annexes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

³⁶⁴ European Parliament Resolution of 20 January, 2011 on an EU Black Sea Strategy

2. If the European Union finally decides to further pursue the development of the Black Sea region (not as an analytical tool), then any kind of strategy for doing so should be very concrete, specific, time bound, and linked to its own budget, providing the financial foundation for a consistent implementation of strategy;
 3. For any kind of strategy development and implementation, it has to be remembered that the regional conception of the Black Sea area is missing among the littoral states. Therefore there is a very low probability for the Black Sea region building to be triggered from internal drivers. It is safe to say that no tangible intra-regional unity exists among the states; The lack of the conception of the region might be an impediment for the successful implementation of any kind of strategy towards this area for the time being;
 4. The EU membership aspirations turned out to be one of the reasons why the Black Sea littoral states are more outward oriented and thus have little to no sense of unity within the Black Sea basin; antagonism of Georgia and Ukraine towards Russia, the conflicts of certain interests between Turkey and Russia also stand as serious barriers for the intra-regional coalescence to take place; Further research might be needed to better understand the role of the triggers and barriers in the framework of regional coalescence and integration.
 5. Additional research could prove to be very helpful in understanding the role that the Black Sea regional identity (or absence thereof) plays in the national identities of the littoral states.
 6. Without understanding the degree of presence of the Black Sea regional identity in the national identities of the individual states, efforts for creating or strengthening the sense of unity in the Black Sea basin through different cultural, educational, or economic initiatives will always be inconsistent and unsystematic, addressing mainly the ad hoc needs.
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Appendix 1.

Trips of Bulgarian Residents Abroad By Country of Destination						
Country of destination	Dec-08	Dec-09	Dec-10	Dec-11	Dec-12	Dec-13
Austria	9875	5424	5634	4867	2798	3185
Belgium	3437	2233	2089	2153	1960	1578
Croatia	9895	6718	6117	6120	6181	647
Cyprus	17755	11547	10788	11418	19848	294
Czech Rep.	110080	67643	65429	66432	43293	2931
Denmark	231	131	135	141	856	918
Finland	438	6	35	26	89	54
France	9659	6496	5949	6023	4444	2449
Germany	8115	5743	5104	5346	5072	20045
Greece	1540	963	922	920	391	41958
Hungary	512	163	249	161	27	1744
Ireland	2352	1850	1547	1594	1132	486
Italy	1528	1074	959	1084	1390	5060
Malta	198	74	101	99	230	-
Netherlands	32042	21668	19774	20253	14394	720
Poland	317	124	164	149	160	1981
Portugal	217	134	131	136	27	417
Romania	2035	1441	1281	1336	790	12624
Slovakia	37	105	53	57	234	206
Slovenia	3605	1894	2025	1811	2403	140
Spain	2537	1818	1603	1597	1894	4538
Sweden	167	80	92	86	84	807
United Kingdom	106	70	66	61	307	6113
Other countries from EU	168465	156237	120443	123864	132919	742
Other European countries	53	40	36	37	17853	124073
FYROM	26834	24144	18769	19920	230	15162
Norway	1342	810	792	790	809	35
Russian Fed.	31023	28548	21933	22419	20378	2423
Serbia	108384	101955	77438	79210	92759	16683
Switzerland	829	740	580	634	322	350
Turkey	1213	604	895	854	568	88791
Ukraine	644	247	672	703	1319	629
Other countries	78	64	329	368	508	1863
Israel	471	287	53	63	266	370
Canada	20	6	280	272	545	751
USA	6398	3648	10	2495	1318	742

Appendix 2.

Arrivals of Visitors from Abroad to Bulgaria By Country of Origin						
Country of destination	Dec-08	Dec-09	Dec-10	Dec-11	Dec-12	Dec-13
Belgium	1706	1762	1316	1413	1279	1230
United Kingdom	12568	9939	7996	8068	7122	1756
Germany	9019	9796	10032	10976	11218	1268
Greece	104141	83028	69231	67908	68982	3063
Denmark	645	655	682	749	718	670
Ireland	3029	2250	825	726	616	255
Spain	2051	2327	2655	2882	2733	4237
Italy	6035	6258	5063	5317	4889	11508
Cyprus	1529	1393	1405	1393	1316	67323
Malta	1206	921	484	417	370	2795
Netherlands	2268	2361	2487	2509	2823	-
Poland	3474	3738	4109	4291	5029	5152
Portugal	239	261	282	277	220	-
Romania	84253	79457	93876	93778	95211	2834
Slovakia	1631	1741	1870	1998	1623	5081
Slovenia	558	605	620	668	839	214
Hungary	1900	2109	2267	2456	2757	87836
Finland	301	300	325	336	297	1520
France	2791	3051	3182	3136	3739	958
Czech Rep.	2095	2326	2551	2362	2723	2796
Sweden	802	823	841	891	721	675
Other countries from EU	1157	1008	1026	996	867	747
Other European countries	113007	110658	128290	142859	145049	159415
Norway	362	219	320	372	28064	275
FYROM	26362	25214	31473	36283	304	34544
Russian Fed.	8100	8551	9518	13071	17008	15865
Serbia	15688	14683	22347	26785	30032	31750
Turkey	55661	54492	54958	55708	58785	63509
Ukraine	6834	7499	8718	9669	10039	12606
Other countries	5230	4678	6666	5652	5202	7021
Israel	2048	1587	2981	2167	1838	3221
Canada	459	427	588	413	414	451
USA	2338	2303	2739	2562	2565	2824
Japan	385	361	358	510	385	525

Appendix 3.

Arrivals of Foreign Visitors to Romania By Country of Origin in the Period of 2005-2010						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Austria	129	151	218	210	180	177
Belgium	27	27	43	44	37	42
Bulgaria	389	399	818	1114	877	786
Czech Republic	50	52	110	135	101	80
Cyprus	9	9	13	11	8	8
Denmark	15	17	18	17	13	11
Estonia	1	2	4	6	4	4
Finland	4	7	10	10	9	8
France	110	129	185	183	150	131
Germany	354	343	473	522	443	395
Greece	61	64	104	118	90	71
Ireland	6	11	14	15	11	10
Italy	271	278	398	433	375	331
Latvia	3	2	3	4	4	4
Lithuania	4	4	7	10	10	9
Luxemburg	1	1	2	1	1	1
Malta	1	1	1	1	1	2
Netherlands	53	50	79	80	67	66
Poland	62	75	191	277	223	238
Portugal	6	9	15	16	20	47
UK	77	90	118	128	104	92
Slovakia	48	41	120	148	114	98
Slovenia	9	12	29	37	35	23
Spain	29	43	70	71	67	63
Sweden	16	18	25	24	19	24
Hungary	1522	1367	1743	1950	1836	1735
Belarus	34	43	47	37	43	56
Serbia & Montenegro	148	167	171	184	170	244
Macedonia	7	7	9	13	12	18
Republic of Moldova	1435	1490	1110	1429	1043	1216
Russian Federation	49	54	54	63	73	92
Turkey	201	219	284	303	258	265
Ukraine	328	433	720	730	724	672
Egypt	4	4	5	6	4	6
USA	120	130	139	137	119	117
Israel	59	62	105	96	76	81
Australia and Oceania	8	9	14	16	14	13

Appendix 4.

Number of Foreign Citizens Visiting Ukraine Per Country of Origin: 2009-2012				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Albania	427	427	493	528
Azerbaijan	77123	77123	85482	101229
Austria	27512	27512	28094	30032
Armenia	52492	52492	53627	68087
Belgium	13796	13796	14998	16407
Bosnia and Herzegovina	997	997	1014	2976
Bulgaria	27099	27099	31661	45964
Belarus	3058023	3058023	2643988	3091780
Croatia	3575	3575	3432	4957
Cyprus	3913	3913	4428	3992
Czech Republic	46461	46461	51858	51955
Denmark	12051	12051	12601	20498
Estonia	16712	16712	17867	19812
Finland	8020	8020	9764	10832
France	56268	56268	62088	64804
Georgia	36039	36039	35861	40799
Germany	227725	227725	231718	274073
Greece	16926	16926	17364	22760
Hungary	944777	944777	862051	742445
Iceland	532	532	674	708
Italy	79174		86964	89081
Latvia	36602	36602	36936	39840
Lithuania	48907	48907	48677	54636
Luxembourg	865	865	825	858
Moldova, Republic of	4063459		4071785	4849115
Montenegro	2037	2037	1239	1197
Netherlands	31965		33216	52417
Norway	10848	10848	12022	13486
Poland	2089647	2089647	1720104	1404086
Portugal	4857	4857	6783	18883
Romania	910450	910450	735233	791281
Russian Federation	7900436	7900436	9018487	9526695
Serbia	6340	6340	12135	29607
Slovakia	609994	609994	564337	476574
Slovenia	5885	5885	6980	9160
Spain	14021	14021	16441	20628
Sweden	16544	16544	19491	40777
Switzerland	15303	15303	18802	18677
Turkey	66110	66110	76363	117152
Macedonia	2845	2845	2195	3466
United Kingdom	64590	64590	67175	81183

Appendix 5.

Citizens of Ukraine Traveling Abroad by Country of Destination: 2009-2012				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Albania		27		
Azerbaijan	9687	10447	14144	16424
Austria	66995	66423	83365	103207
Armenia	17055	17471	15718	18222
Belgium	6491	3558	9196	12713
Bulgaria	60120	57741	41478	48594
Belarus	1036245	1135094	1581128	1673717
Croatia	11050	20160	24857	27087
Cyprus	14179	12642	20640	26775
Czech Republic	123738	107743	8314	299444
Denmark	7644	8447	4579	10117
Estonia	2971	3671	11107	6136
Finland	6778	8139	69064	11217
France	62819	61193	37576	75396
Georgia	23947	31635	361689	50170
Germany	190050	383325	94240	380554
Greece	39445	63467	1726957	121536
Hungary	1602608	1789308	130283	1759986
Italy	99618	112700	130283	152709
Latvia	12859	15720	22523	22895
Lithuania	2385	4294	5171	8079
Luxembourg	127	70	143	219
Malta	898	2241	1124	1073
Moldova, Republic of	1989372	1889724	2221379	2174173
Montenegro	12851	20700	34013	39349
Netherlands	47706	45375	49444	73069
Poland	2954199	3999602	5102885	5765184
Portugal	11765	12160	12637	11847
Romania	544864	503195	556792	549966
Russian Federation	4982047	5233972	5475455	5941305
Serbia	1139	5101	2593	826
Slovakia	377593	383961	425585	508008
Slovenia	2898	1882	1090	29
Spain	27681	33709	69432	92939
Sweden	4597	4687	12220	10571
Switzerland	18633	21218	27160	33840
Turkey	440245	459061	605592	563184
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	4861	11	30	37
Great Britain	61861	62589	88388	85047

Appendix 6.

Number of Foreigners Visiting Turkey in the Period of 2009-2013					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
USA	614 025	595 507	711 608	714 398	739 494
Germany	3 703 056	3 625 603	4 100 334	4 224 978	4 193 043
Australia	123 546	123 589	143 450	156 540	180 692
Austria	428 967	399 779	425 540	400 706	396 921
Azerbaijan	404 063	441 468	517 859	523 486	568 474
Belgium	426 212	398 038	466 467	462 201	480 148
Bulgaria	1 523 809	1 388 381	1 384 137	1 406 392	1 491 433
Denmark	234 610	247 384	284 934	284 393	350 081
France	741 373	740 053	878 681	875 035	856 172
Georgia	974 111	1 083 550	1 130 846	1 364 945	1 732 706
Netherlands	849 293	824 741	904 993	993 179	1 001 905
United Kingdom	1 937 975	2 131 481	2 009 556	1 934 775	1 963 559
Iran	1 291 592	1 760 733	1 764 788	1 073 779	1 081 626
Spain	318 683	271 310	276 697	255 153	259 067
Israel	252 041	93 265	81 715	87 951	129 414
Sweden	317 514	348 371	463 205	463 166	553 897
Switzerland	233 757	222 459	261 725	292 264	324 850
Italy	563 241	578 614	677 436	645 757	661 663
Japan	146 804	191 116	189 897	196 586	172 469
Canada	143 065	141 513	178 795	167 576	183 993
Russian Federation	2 065 588	2 392 927	2 644 239	2 647 090	3 049 035
Syria	457 099	792 622	868 864	298 455	191 773
Tunisia	53 891	51 160	62 018	76 552	82 190
Ukraine	460 980	455 159	489 140	496 190	598 668
Greece	585 401	635 640	664 199	624 536	674 367
African countries	322 327	269 101	322 010	527 781	599 575
American countries	154 992	122 304	171 915	170 056	227 118
Com. Of Independent States	695 648	662 851	740 953	822 251	938 400
West Asian countries	662 660	696 346	822 771	1 053 894	1 280 151
Other European contries	1 503 457	866 663	952 097	990 570	1 075 917
East Asian countries	179 783	101 760	128 374	148 225	179 860
South Asian countries	93 924	96 676	119 782	118 610	151 882
OECD countries(other)	487 982	1 334 968	1 578 493	1 532 896	1 581 428
Other countries	22 414	131 101	193 575	207 007	224 412

Appendix 7.

Number of Turks Visiting Foreign Countries Per Country of Destination in the Period of 2009-2013					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
USA	233372	235389	234228	150960	103753
Germany	474840	549198	425428	383472	315384
Australia	5279	6681	12366	12594	9066
Austria	47012	74449	75511	72423	51387
Azerbaijan	335311	335995	394132	437657	365167
Belgium	51381	48549	52959	38170	8279
Bulgaria	809622	988616	714360	664946	653640
Denmark	9144	6342	7115	6145	4557
France	65687	92981	87408	87207	23025
Georgia	193682	450212	430238	580184	1164100
Netherlands	74817	68508	78414	29856	18513
United Kingdom	70089	95328	59614	66182	24963
Iran	209087	301581	293683	258072	203039
Spain	21639	24871	39928	21596	31223
Israel	11956	12099	4860	5099	20016
Sweden	11554	4610	6088	2446	3714
Switzerland	42333	50328	73471	40117	23053
Italy	124403	138271	191415	247927	232030
Japan	1510	1953	1704	415	3696
Canada	16190	14506	9390	15404	17674
Russian Federation	167871	189827	118563	110359	114966
Syria	517365	653370	1002779	473862	1880
Tunisia	9671	4066	-	1100	533
Ukraine	110811	105231	83151	66813	89474
Greece	277540	428721	345653	447908	598936
African countries	113163	161233	99184	114152	141913
American countries	16315	15265	10108	6258	7058
Com. Of Independent States	75327	95583	118898	158192	137814
West Asian countries	1295397	1081075	1058620	956568	2476282
Other European contries	165696	163205	162183	235223	400301
East Asian countries	13848	33630	13977	23800	6166
South Asian countries	35167	51724	66790	123217	75853
Southeast Asian countries	20463	-	-	-	-
OECD countries(other)	16743	86280	75150	109243	101964
Other countries	2400	23811	34009	20912	14995

Appendix 8.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGNERS ARRIVING IN TURKEY BY NATIONALITIES IN 2010-2012(*) JANUARY- DECEMBER (TOP TEN)			
Countries	2012*	2011	2010
Germany	5 028 745	4 826 315	4 385 263
Russian Fed.	3 599 925	3 468 214	3 107 043
U.Kingdom	2 456 519	2 582 054	2 673 605
Bulgaria	1 492 073	1 491 561	1 433 970
Georgia	1 404 882	1 152 661	1 112 193
Netherlands	1 273 593	1 222 823	1 073 064
Iran	1 186 343	1 879 304	1 885 097
France	1 032 565	1 140 459	928 376
U.S.A	771 837	757 143	642 768
Syria	730 039	974 054	899 494
Others	12 806 311	11 961 488	10 491 331
Total	31 782 832	31 456 076	28 632 204

(*):Provisional Data.

Annex 1. Transcript of the interview with Mr. Nikolaos Emirzas, Regionals with other international and regional and international organizations and institutions including EU and UNDP, Executive Manager at BSEC, September 2014

Interviewer: So I only focus this conversation about the BSEC and its role and engagement with either with the European Union or with the processes related to the region building in general. So... umm the first question as a startup would be what is the difference between BSEC region and the Black Sea region?

Respondent: Well, in BSEC... eee we have in our legal documents the terminology BSEC region, which means the region of BSEC] or of the BSEC member states. There is also a terminology which is widely used, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the BSEC legal documents which is the wider Black sea area and we refer the wider Black Sea area, why? Because BSEC has the participation of twelve member states, not all BSEC member states are littoral Black sea countries. So you have Russia, which goes up to the...eee to the Pacific Ocean but also you have Albania, Serbia, Greece, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia who are not littoral states of the Black sea. So to cut the answer short, this is a big difference for us in BSEC, of course according to us BSEC is centered on the Black Sea region but BSEC deals with the wider area, because the BSEC member states are not only literal Black sea states, but indeed countries that belong to a wider Black sea area.

Interviewer: Umm...Yes!

Respondent: One remark, and this is not only political. I mean, countries like Moldova...eee...like Azerbaijan, like Armenia, have clear...or like Greece, have clear and long standing ties and relations with the Black sea littoral states and I would even say historic ties...and even states that are further away like Albania and Serbia are also very much concerned about what happens in the Black sea and also have access, even geographical access, to this area for instance through the Danube.

Interviewer: Umm...now let try and focus on the Black sea region. Umm...what kind of entity was this region before the Black Sea Synergy? And what role the synergy played?

Respondent: You are referring to the European Initiative - Black Sea Synergy?

Interviewer: Yes!

Respondent: Well...eee, the most developed let's say regional initiative was indeed the Black sea economic cooperation initiative in 1992, which was transformed in the 90s into a full-fledged international organization. Now...(pause) the European Union had a number of policies in the area, mostly bilateral. It was with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in the beginning of 2007, that the decision was taken to develop more focused policies in this area, The initial idea behind the Black sea synergy was to have a kind of framework policy dimension. This did not happen. This did not materialize for the internal reasons of the European... (pause) Union. What we had in 2007 was, one would call it, a traditional European regional policy, that meant to bring together local actors from the region to tackle, to cooperate and to tackle regional challenges. Comparing what was before, and what was after on regional cooperation, I will dare to say, that not much changed with the Black sea synergy, in essence that the Black sea synergy since 2007 had very limited results.

Interviewer: Ok, with that in mind, then...we and you have previously mentioned that there was already an existing structure BSEC...umm...so with that in mind, why was there the need of Black sea synergy with BSEC already on board?

Respondent: Ahamm...well, to be clear BSEC is an independent organization. It is guided by the will of its member states. Black sea synergy is a European policy guided by the will of the EU member states. Of course, membership may be overlapping, but the political mandate is clearly different. Eeee...(pause) At the same time, it is a fact - and this has been discussed and proved on the table many times - that many of the objectives that BSEC has set over the years, before 2007 and after 2007 and recently also overlap with the objectives set from the European Union in the region.

Interviewer: was it an overlap or was it a duplication?

Respondent: Well...(pause) there is a lot, bad...bad publicity about overlapping, but one should view this also in a positive way. Overlapping means that, two or more entities have set the same objectives. This is a necessary and essential starting point for any kind of discussion and any kind of cooperation. Eee...the problem is that there are different political views behind each set of identical or similar objectives. And this is what has set the...(pause) the efficiency of the implementation of BSEC – EU cooperation in general through the Black sea synergy to a very low point. Eee... in particular after 2008 but even before,

it was apparent that the Black sea synergy did not deliver the wide, very wide extent of the promises it made in 2007.

Interviewer: Ok...and BSEC, if I may say, is also often accused in not being very efficient organization, especially when it comes to hard security in a certain ways, not that much soft security, but hard security of political issues. So...aaa... what would be your response to these kind of accusations...aaa...and in general what is the role of BSEC in the Black sea region building.

Respondent: Well...eee...(pause) to start from the start, hard security issues and political issues are not on the BSEC agenda. Eee...BSEC is an economic organization, it deals with economic issues. The *ratio* behind this is very banal: through economic cooperation, through enhancing the economic interaction, perhaps, we prepared a ground for political solutions, [unclear] and try to create, like our charter says, prosperity, peace and stability in the region. The counter argument is also very banal; in order to be able to proceed in a meaningful way on economic cooperation...eee...you need first to have thought about ending the main political issues that divide the people around the table. BSEC is a very unique organization and by its existence, and...the kind of singular example, in essence that it brings together, it continues to bring together countries which have many different issues on the political level. There are actually member states who do not even have diplomatic ties between them. And this applied in the 90s when the organization was created, unfortunately it is still actual today, there are still very important political differences between the member states. And this, one has to admit it, has negative consequence on the ability of the organization to proceed its projects, its objectives in a practical way. Eee...all the more so, because the organization is an intergovernmental organization, in other words, because economic cooperation in BSEC, in our part of BSEC is carried through...eee...economic cooperation through the national administrations, which naturally enough, have to take into account the wider political environment,. There is a very strong [unclear] output, though, through BSEC Related Bodies: there is the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, which is very effective in its own work, because it's much more clearly, let's say, economically focused. There is a business council which is...has also its own input, where you have business people cooperating. You have the International Centre for Black Sea Studies, which is

academic cooperation and again you have a wider spectrum cooperation and of course, the last not the least you have the parliamentary cooperation which oddly enough is not, is often not as directly politicized as intergovernmental cooperation.

Interviewer: For the scientific purposes, if we assume that the [unclear] strong foundation in the belief that through the economic prosperity you can really lead to peace and stability. Umm...would...would it be right to say that BSEC as an organization didn't invest enough in this cooperation...umm...in the area of economy or just welfare...strengthening the welfare states?

Respondent: From a structural point of view and this is the work of the organization, the organization has the [unclear] from the structure of the member states, with the initiative of the member states, with the support of the member states to say that BSEC is fully fledged organization is saying very little indeed. The organization has more than eighteen, nineteen specialized working groups for instance...eee...we deal with everything from public administration to trade and from energy and environment to SMEs and banking and finance. So the institutional framework is right here. And there are working groups that are parts of the organization sectorally speaking which work better. There are those who work less effectively. This is depending not only on the wider political climate, there you have the micro climate also. You have the relations between national administrations, you have the role of the most active member states...eee...you have, as in every, I mean human endeavor, those who are initiating things and you have to...more or less, higher or less degree of ability to follow up etc. So you have success stories in BSEC, not in every area or sector...eee... but it is the interaction...eee... between the member states within the BSEC working groups that is determining these success stories besides the wider political environment. So you cannot really say that BSEC has achieved or not achieved...eee...something. We could refer to specific cases, but one has to take into account these dynamics, internal dynamics in the working groups of BSEC.

Interviewer: Ok, talking about different areas and success of the organization you said in the areas. Let's take the cooperation or the intention to cooperate in the area of sharing statistics.

Respondent: Aham!

Interviewer: There was an agreement to have a special unit or the centre under the BSEC to gather all the respective countries and statistic would be shared and then had to be an agreement to have the information collection in the same way to make it wide methodologically. When you go to the website, and I am sure you know better than I do, there is a link to the ‘turkstat’, you go to ‘turkstat’ link and it says, well actually in 2003 we, yes initiated that but then we dropped the idea, because nobody practically showed up. What would be your...aaa... feedback or comment on that particular thing? Why is it so hard for countries to share the data?

Respondent: No. It’s not that the countries do not share the data because you have the same ‘Eurostat’, OECD statistics for different issues, so they share. The first thing is how productive it would be to duplicate this sharing by creating a special BSEC structure to do essentially the same thing. At that time in the 90s it seemed...eee...a good solution, a good initiative and one of the member states the Republic of Turkey had [unclear] assumed this role providing the resources in order to gather all this information and further disseminate it. It was at the time when many of the countries in the area, I repeat that you are talking about the early 90s, did not have access to...international organizations. International organizations also did not have access to their own data, in essence their statistical methods [unclear] differed widely with the accepted standards. So at the time it was a practical thing to do. In the course of time this proved to be less interesting to the member states. The national statistical administrations said – ok, so we are sending this data and we make them public ourselves and often in English. We send it to ‘Eurostat’ for the EU member states, but we send it to other international organizations also, why should we duplicate this again and again. So, it is for this reason that the center is inactive and it is for the same reason that the dedicated working group on the exchange of statistical data has not...I think...met since 2000, 2001. So it’s actually a [unclear] remnant of the past, which for let’s say administrative reasons still appears in...in our [unclear]website as a structural framework still existent but actually it’s...it’s an empty... shell [unclear].

Interviewer: That’s a very interesting argument, but I could not find any explanations like that on the website (laugh) it immediately redirects you to ‘turkstat’ (laugh).

Respondent: Yes! When I first got involved with the organization in 2006, 2007 you could still have access at the time but the data you could find there were not even data that were circulated by the member states...I mean disseminated or sent by the member states but...eee...data that the Turkish authority by its own initiative and thanks to its own network had been able to locate, because as I told you...the working group had not met since 2001, 2000-2001.

Interviewer: Aaa...one of the ways to...to analyze the progress of the dynamics of the organization or any other entity is to let the numbers speak. I understand the argument of the individual countries that they are already or anyway collecting its information and sending to different other organizations, but these organizations not necessarily analyze these data from the perspective of cooperation within the Black sea or within BSEC as such. So...would it be a strong argument for BSEC to stick to this initial decision and look at progress or not?

Respondent: There had been also other initiatives. In 2005-2006 there was a project financed jointly by Greece, Romania and Turkey in the OECD to prepare this kind of economic outlook like the one, which is very successful for Africa and for... eee...South America, an Economic Outlook centered of the Black sea. And with a lot of trouble etc, etc this was published for one year or two years. I am mentioning this because the...perhaps this could enter as a remark in your wider calculation. At the end of the day...

[Interview stopped: respondent is talking to other person in the room].

[Interview resumed]

At the end of the day it proved that it was not interesting for the clients, the users, the end users of such a report, a report centered of the Black sea. So there you have to ask the question, packaging the countries of the Black sea or the wider Black sea area or the BSEC exclusively as Black sea countries, how appealing is it from a marketing perspective.

Interviewer: That's a very good argument. Thank you! Going back to the relationships between BSEC and the European Union...aaa...up until 2006 EU would say NO to any kind of participation in the BSEC activities, than with the idea of the Black sea synergy and related things it changed its mind. So I would like to hear from you the dynamics, what were the changes in this dynamics before

the Black sea synergy and after and how effective in reality or efficient were those partnerships?

Respondent: I would not say that before 2006 the European Union was not interested in BSEC. There were at that time relations, there were...eee...there was a political dialog, there were contacts, but it is true that it was in the moment and in the context of the Black sea synergy adoption which is in essence the moment when Bulgaria and Romania became members of the European Union that Brussels also thought more thoroughly the idea of establishing institutional ties with BSEC. it was in 2007, the same year that Black sea synergy was adopted, the application...of the European communities of the time through the European Commission for...eee... being granted the observer status in BSEC. So now there is also an institutional relation which means that we can have representatives of the European commission in our meetings, sectoral or otherwise, so we can have institutionally not only occasionally a continued flow of information about the activities, about working groups, working groups, seminars and otherwise and this provides a better and more stable framework of cooperation. Now...eee...still we are in a process of I would say enhanced political dialog in essence that there are some ad hoc cooperation in activities in essence of events. There is no material cooperation in projects but I am quick to add that in BSEC for some reasons we have already referred to [unclear, background noise] is not yet project oriented organization. It's not an organization that receives and develops projects or helps in the implementation of projects. We are in the process of creating a project management unit within BSEC and perhaps little by little this could help our project management capacity to grow but at this moment there are no BSEC projects. There are big projects, big frameworks of cooperation but you cannot go to a sight and see a BSEC construction, a BSEC building or something like that, or BSEC investment or something like that. There are such kinds of concrete achievements through the bank which is part of the BSEC family or through the International Centre for Black Sea Studies which is academic cooperation and it's also related body but not on the intergovernmental part. What you have so far is big number of limited projects which were financed until 2010, 2011, 2012 through the BSEC project

development fund and from 2009 until 2013 through the BSEC Hellenic development fund.

Interviewer: What role does Russia play in BSEC - EU relationship?

Respondent: Well, Russia is very important member state within BSEC, but Russia plays an important role from the part of Brussels also. I mean how BSEC is viewed from Brussels is linked to the way Brussels views Russia and it is the ups and downs of this relation in...in the recent years 2008 the August crises, now in the middle of the Ukrainian one which has a very definite consequence of how...eee...Brussels view BSEC and the region. Eee...The big advantage of BSEC is that it brings together countries which are EU member states, countries which have various degrees of relations and aspirations towards the European Union and also countries like Russia which have a special, even a strategic partnership with EU. It is difficult from the stand point of Brussels to bring all these on the same level. This is a very technical issue but it's a very important one, we talked about projects, BSEC has the view of having regional projects...and principal projects that involve all member states. If EU for instance were to be involved and leaving aside the political issues. If EU were to be involved such a BSEC project involving all the member states it would be a bureaucratic nightmare because money for each segment of this project which would be implemented in each different country would necessarily have to come from different parts of the EU budget, different programs, different frameworks etc. So...so even on this level this variety and diversity may create a problem, but at the same time it's a big...it's a big advantage. So to come back to the core of your question - Yes! The EU-Russia's relation certainly effects how we are viewed as BSEC for Brussels this is obvious in our context but again I will make a difference between wider political...level and the more specific sectoral ones with all the ups and downs you cannot really make a difference when you have the participation of people from science and technology for instance, or from environment and other things...eee...(pause) at the technical level. So in essence, my remark on the cooperation between the member states internally the difference between the political environment and sectoral cooperation also applies for our relations with the EU decisions.

Interviewer: There is also an opinion that because of this triangle EU-BSEC [unclear, background noise] there is no consistency or not even a good enough

cooperation between BSEC and EU visions or actions in the region and everything comes from the fact that initially Russia didn't want EU in the [unclear] then with the Romania, Bulgaria...aaa...EU membership it was obvious that it could not [unclear] any further, so then Russia decided to have EU engagement only through BSEC, but EU didn't want to be limited to BSEC because within BSEC Russia due to its voting system and decision making approaches then Russia would be a key decision maker. And because of that...aaa...in the year of 2007 meeting for the ministerial ended up with two declarations one EU statement and one BSEC and yes there are lots of commonalities but then again there are lots of differences. So if from the very beginning we have these maybe not clashes but not good enough coordination how can this impact the region building in general?

Respondent: This is actually a real question, there is no clear answer. This depends on the priorities of those involved but to get the...the details right – Yes! In 2008 in 14th of February 2008 there were two meetings, one meeting on the launching of the Black sea synergy and another meeting concerning the cooperation with the EU which was a BSEC meeting. In the BSEC meeting there were all 12 member states, in the meeting on the launching of the Black sea synergy there were Brussels, the member states of the EU and 11 out of the 12 BSEC member states. It was not a BSEC meeting. So, there were two different meetings in format, discussing in essence the same thing - cooperation with the EU. Now the Black sea synergy, and this is the second point, is not about BSEC. It is regional cooperation. Because BSEC is an important organization in the Black sea area and in the wider Black sea area and even more it is mentioned in the Black sea synergy, but whatever the implementation of the Black sea synergy were to be after 2007 BSEC, it would had been an element, perhaps an important element, but certainly not the most important and even certainly not the only element...eee...and in essence... of course the fact that BSEC - EU cooperation didn't evolved as it was hoped for the time later on in the overall implementation of the Black sea synergy but I would venture the remark that the problems of the implementation of the Black sea synergy are... were wider than the problems, and more fundamental, than the problems of BSEC-EU cooperation. Black sea...BSEC is not the only partner of the EU in the region, this is a third element. There are also other regional organizations,

other initiatives, other forms of co operations, which all have their advantages and all have their problems. Sometimes they helped by the fact that have more centered and more specialized in variety of competences, sometimes they are also limited by the fact that...they are [unclear] of expert level. But this is a different story, anyway the involvement of the EU after the 2007 in the region and this is the third, the fourth element was not carried on through the Black sea synergy, actually it was mainly carried through another European initiative in the area, which was very successful and still is a very successful mainly – the Eastern Partnership.

Interviewer: There is a belief that for any kind of region to present upon apart from the [unclear] parts or the boundaries, there should also be the normative foundation and often this normative foundation turns out to be an organization. Definitely European Union is always referred to as a successful case...aaa...and some think that BSEC can in future, not now but in future can play such a role. What would be your opinion about that...for BSEC to be the...the institutional back of... of the Black sea region.

Respondent: I will not agree because I think the dynamics not within BSEC, but the dynamics outside BSEC will not allow, not in the foreseeable future but ever BSEC to become the strong let's say center star around which let's say the allegiances of the member states would revolve...eee...which is not a bad thing in itself...even the regional identities are not necessarily, I would argue that, they are not necessarily carried to the regional organizations which are the champions of this identity. You have a regional identity which are...geographical, racial, cultural in a wider sense which are very strong without the existence of a regional organizational or some kind of...structure or even despite the clashes between the agents in these countries and it can provide the number of...of examples in the Balkan peninsula, in South America, in Africa and elsewhere...anyway...in Asia...anyway. The role of BSEC in my personal opinion, where BSEC can be very helpful is as a middle-man between the existing main gravity points, which is European Union on one side and Russia on the other with Turkey having, I will not say intermediate role, but let's say the intermediate planet between these two bigger ones. There is a wider; there is a very wide area of ...things and the initiatives that can be taken in the region and create many issues that are not

tackled right now, where you need regional cooperation and where do not have neither the expertise nor the framework nor even the project either from the European side or from the Turkish or from the Russian one...eee... to become important. And BESEC has this terrific advantage of having created, having available the framework, the expertise, the political will which despite the wider political environment it here and it's you know chartered in our modalities of work which can help, which can help materialize a lot of... a lot of project in the area either through BSEC exclusively or in cooperation between BSEC and other regional structures or between BSEC and the European union and other international or regional structures.

Interviewer: Ok, and this is going to be my last question. In...in the declaration of 2007 February meeting the main statement talks about the important role that BSEC contributed to the strengthening the sense of ownership and identity of the people of the region and...actually at this identity part is from the most difficult ones when it comes to...to a regional analysis to be unpack and analyzed. And I tried my best to see what other organizations, or parties or stakeholders leading this direction, so far I could find only the statements or the declarations, so what could be your either recommendation where to look for farther... just information about the contribution to the identity evolvement or the sense of ownership...or...or how BSEC did that or have been doing or has been doing that?

Respondent: Well the medium is a part... is our activity, the activities of our working groups, the fact that we bring together national administrations, people across the region and it is also depending on the outreach that these events may have. Sometimes more limited, sometimes it is limited only within the national administration, but sometimes it has a wider impact. There are areas which are so technical where it's not a [unclear] which are kind of considered as part of areas where the social scientist would say we have here identity building. Even if there is a bigger issues transport, project like the Black sea highway aiming to link through a big highway of countries in the area. Partnering with is the technical one is the diplomatic one that this provide [unclear] on the other let's say end of the spectrum you have the working group on communication the working group on...

[Interview stopped: respondent is talking to other person in the room].

[Interview resumed]

...on the other end of the spectrum you have engagement, you have culture, you have tourism, where you have areas of cooperation which are let's say more issues, more [unclear] to what, what one would call identity building. You have common projects, you have cultural roots, you have other things...eee...but if BSEC is bringing something and...which is a question and very fundamental is the fact that it exists that countries which are almost at war, which have no diplomatic ties or whatever have in BSEC a constant forum now for almost twenty, twenty-two years of meetings, of discussing and of being able to table their own proposals to inform about their own national developments and perhaps this has happen quite a few times, of developing also concrete ideas of regional cooperation.

Interviewer: Thank you so much! (laugh)

[The End of the interview]

Annex 2. Transcript of the interview with a former senior official at the BSEC and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), December 2014

Interviewer: Thank you very much for finding some time in your busy schedule for an interview with me, I appreciate this a lot.

Respondent: My pleasure

Interviewer: I would like you to help me with getting a better understanding a role of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Respondent: I think, first of all you need to understand when and how it started. Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Kremlin was still searching for its new role within the new international system, Turkey's by that time president Turgut Ozal proposed the idea to create the organization which would unify the wider Black Sea countries. That was an attempt to strengthen Turkey's leadership role in the region and beyond.

Interviewer: In the regionalism literature some scholars believe that for any region to be present an institutional foundation is needed. Do you think the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation could play such role in the Black Sea region?

Respondent: No. If we think about the composition of the BSEC, we will realize that Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan (and this is an incomplete list of course) will truly have some difficulties to reach the agreements due to their bi or multilateral disagreements and challenging relationships with one another. Of course Armenia deals well with Russia and Georgia deals well with Turkey and Ukraine for example but overall the group of states is very diverse and there are too many disagreements. Such environment does not allow the organization (as well as some other factors) to be transformed into an efficient institution, not to say anything about its transformation into the normative foundation for the Black Sea region.

Interviewer: and yet it stays as an organization and is still alive, why?

Respondent: it's simple, because it does not hurt anyone and also because its existence still provides a platform where representatives of different countries can meet and discuss various important issues. So, keeping this space might still be helpful.

Interviewer: How about the other entities which are not the members of the BSEC but have an observer's status.

Respondent: yes, there are some, including the EU and the US, but again we need to remember that Russia and Turkey are the key powers there. I can even say that due to my efforts years ago when we tried to grant the United States an observer status at BSEC, first attempt was not successful due to internal organization issues and we had to try for the second time. We did and still do believe that US' presence at BSEC could enrich the dialogue and discussions as America supports development of countries in this region in the direction of democracy as well as cares of its security, however the fact that granting the observer status first time had faced challenges speaks for itself.

Interviewer: what can you say about the role of EU in the Black Sea region building?

Respondent: well, EU had several attempts to contribute to the development and stabilization of the situation in its eastern neighborhood. Especially after the Romania and Bulgaria EU membership the Black Sea became the EU Sea. Accordingly there were some attempts like the Black Sea Synergy and others, but again the area that we talk about unifies so many and such diverse countries that it's very hard to see them as a single entity or a region.

Interviewer: Thanks a lot for your time and a very interesting interview.

Respondent: Welcome.

Annex 3. Interview with Prof. Managiota Manoli, University of the Aegean, November 2014

Interviewer: What would be your definition of a region (characteristics, criteria for a region to be present)?

Respondent: A region's definition is vague. There is no single definition of what a region is, as there are several different types of regions. In other words, there is not a single definition to fit all cases of a 'region'. In terms of IR, an international region is socially constructed by its elite (political or/and business) as such. Thus for a *purposeful* region (i.e. region as an actor in IR) to exist, the main feature is the willingness of its elite to act as such, i.e. the willingness of the elite (business or political) of an interconnected area to act collectively as a regional actor on the basis of organized interests. This is however not an exhaustive definition. Therefore, the other important element of a region is that of a common 'identity'. Identity is also socially constructed. As a feature it is not always present in a region, and it is not a prerequisite for a region to exist. However, when it exists, it makes a region a powerful agency.

Interviewer: Do you consider the Black Sea as a region? Please, explain your answer?

Respondent: The Black Sea is a region as defined through the existence of regional institutions (specifically BSEC). It is actually a special category of a region, called 'subregion'. Subregionalism is a type of regional cooperation which, however, does not fall into the traditional categories of alliance formation and economic integration. It takes place in a not clearly circumscribed geographical area and its primary feature is its relevance and dependence to a broader regional process. It does not aim at 'integration' of its constitutive parts, rather its main purpose is coordination of actions.

Interviewer: Which insider and outside powers do foster the intra-regional dynamics? Please, explain your answer

Respondent: Internal Powers: trade, economic inter-dependences and vulnerabilities (functional interdependences). Outside: The region's place close to European Union (European integration dynamics). In terms of state actors/organizations:

Internal powers: Turkey. It has initiated the largest number of regional institutions. It is a trade hub for the region and has a central role in mobility/contacts among Black Sea people. Outside powers: EU. It has provided the funds and know how on building regional networks.

Interviewer: Which insider and outside powers do impede the intra-regional dynamics? Please, explain your answer

Respondent: Internal Powers: armed conflicts and mistrust (several protracted conflicts, wars, interstate mistrust among almost all pairs of Black Sea countries). Outside powers: NATO. The expansion of NATO has probable provoked conflict and mistrust among key Black Sea actors, undermining collaboration on ‘soft security’ and confidence building. Internal Powers: Russia. Russia does not abide with multilateral practices in its neighborhood (near abroad) unless they are Moscow centered and of a vertical nature. In addition, Russia’s policy does not define Black Sea as a separate regional entity. The unity of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean as a single exit to the so called ‘warm waters’ is a keystone in Russia’s Black Sea policy.

Interviewer: To what extent do citizens of the countries of the Black Sea area feel connected to one another (areas of most/least connectedness)? Please, explain your answer

Respondent: I think that the best researcher to reply to this question is Prof. Charles King who is the best analyst of modern history of the Black Sea. Still, my own opinion based on limited research on this topic is that people who live on the shores of the Black Sea feel connected through their ‘Pontiac’ element. Still, this element is fading by time. There is no more connection in terms of culture/identity (or ‘regionness’) among people beyond the littoral areas.

Interviewer: How Russia’s being a Black Sea littoral country without the EU membership aspiration aligns with the idea of the Black Sea subregionalism?

Respondent: The notion of Black Sea ‘subregionalism’ does not imply a pro-EU stance. Subregionalism indicates actually an ‘inferior’ regional process, a weak, shallow one that displays great degree of dependency to wider regional processes. In the Black Sea case, regional cooperation efforts are structurally embedded in Pan-European dynamics. This means that any (integration or disintegration) dynamics in Europe (e.g. EU, OSCE, etc.) bear a heavy impact on the Black Sea cooperation processes (positive or negative impact). The

anchor(s) of change is (are) not inside the subregion but in the wider region (at the given time frame). Consequently, Russia-EU relations are a fundamental ‘maker’ of Black Sea subregionalism.

Annex 4. Transcript of the Interview with Prof. Mustafa Aydin, Rector of the Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey, September 2014

Interviewer: So, one of the first questions, that I would like to ask is what would be your definition of region in general, what should be the minimum criteria or characteristics for the region to be considered present?

Respondent: Ahh...(unclear) I think it's the idea of a region. There should be an idea of a region...aaa...among two sets of people for inside and outside. From outside it's usually intellectuals, academics, experts or even politicians. If you think that the certain geography, geographical area is a region that's an idea and the same goes internally within the region people are starting thinking - Ok this forms a region, I think that's, that's the minimum that we have to look for. Aaa...you didn't ask for other (unclear) I mean, I don't believe in arguments that, in order to become a region you have to have set of criteria to fulfill. Recently the people are talking about and I think you explicitly said that as well. They look into the level of integration rather to call a geographical area a region. This is just a recent dimension – the level of integration, integration is very recent...so it's...European Union is just...new dimension, last fifty years, let's say less than that and any other region you look at it's still very new (unclear). This is very intellectual, very academic. It's nice...that...you know look at other regions in history...(pause)...Mediterranean...and it was called Mediterranean - why? How much was the integration. Ok Romans controlled the most of it...but does it mean...rather it could mean integration...and it was totally different. Palestine was different then the Rome itself etc (unclear) was totally different then it was in Anatolia. Same goes for the most other regions when they started to be called regions they were not integrated, integration usually came later. So my minimum is to have an idea of a region and then other will follow...it might or it might not...

Interviewer: When does the idea...aaa...take its...woods, is it inside? is it outside?

Respondent: I don't know which presides which, but yea...it almost simultaneous, sometimes I think it comes...it can come from outside...if you are talking about today as well you have to look to the biggest power of United States or the global power the United States. For them, and it always been the same for many countries, it global outreach for many centuries. It's easier to classify world with regions...just for policy making reasons. So US comes out (unclear) wider Middle East or wider Black sea and so for them the reason is easier (unclear) dealing with certain amount of countries. (Unclear) is presided by the idea of region within the region...aaa...it's not always the case, I am doubtful and it's not always the case...you know for the US creating new regions did not come from the...but sometimes regional people start talking about themselves as something...Mediterranean and Black seas...(laugh) or Central Asians...sometimes this happens officially sometimes unofficially...as in the case of Central Asia it was unofficial. I can pinpoint a meeting of the heads of the...heads of the countries of the Central Asia today, five of them came together after the end of the Cold War and they decided they should be called, the region should be called Central Asia.

Interviewer: I see...

Respondent: Because there are number of names from the Russian times, Soviet period etc...but that's an official (unclear) but otherwise it's usually academics, intellectuals, writers or whatever start using the world for region and it captures the imagination I think so. In Black sea region, again it was both I think. Officially in 1991the leaders of the countries came together and they...they signed the declaration (unclear, very low sound) and they said that OK they are going to form Black sea economic region organization, so called it a region. This is an official, but unofficially...(pause)...you know, again it was before and after this official idea... in ancient times when you talk about Jason and Argonauts, they go to the Black sea region after the Golden Fleece, so there was this idea and also during the...Hellenic period, there were these Hellenic, or Greek settlements around the Black sea and they had actually, a very integrated economic zone there among themselves. And...during much of the history Black sea was kind of a integrated area, then after the Greeks (unclear) by that time and came the Ottomans they kept it as a unit for centuries, then came the Russians and they actually treated it also as a unit.

This is the history part and the second part is of course after 1991, the official idea and everything. Then you see the books and articles and journals started to come up using the world Black sea region. So it both presides and comes after the official use. That's why I think (unclear) Black sea is a region, but it's integrated or not it's something else just like South-East Asia, it's not integrated, you know there are countries and the states that people hate each other, there are countries and states that don't recognize each other, there are possibilities of warfare...China and Japan, China and Korea etc...

Interviewer: But how can it be...how can it be possible for a region to be present without the level of integration?

Respondent: I don't associate being a region with the level of integration, you don't need to be integrated, it's a region you know, it's an analytical tool, as an academic for me it's an analytical tool...I look at the region it gives me...I mean of course you look into...it's simplified, you just simplify when doing analytical analysis. Eee...of course you look into the foreign policies of these countries, rather these countries' economies (unclear), rather these countries' people (unclear) foods or whatever, you look all of these. I would...I would argue that none of them are you know predominant...has to be and the integration is not that important. Again, South-East Asia, there is the case, the example, there are warfare, conflicts, non-recognized entities, they don't integrate...they have not integrated economically...(laugh)...but when I look from this part of the world it's a region. There are similarities, there are differences but it's an analytical tool. The same for the Black sea...I don't subscribe...integration is one way of looking at region formulation, and it's specifically the European way of looking and it is recent European way of looking it after the European Union you know...this is a new idea, it started in 1980s, 1990s so we could doubt rather it's the best one...(laugh).

Interviewer: Ok, great! So in the globalized world why would somebody or a group of people come up with the idea of region...cause you, you mentioned that first it comes with an idea...it's just a very interesting approach.

Respondent: One reason I think is for simplicity of analysis. If you are, you know faraway place, across Atlantic or in the United States it's easier to with regions than with small countries. You put them into (unclear), into groups (unclear). It has

always been the case, like Middle East. The idea of Middle East came from Great Britain or United Kingdom during the First World War and the Second World War and it didn't mean anything to the people in the region...but it made sense for them, you know they had the first army, (unclear) and the Middle East, so they had three armies. So it makes sense for them. So, this is I think the main reason from an outside to look at the geographical area as a region. From inside it's... more you know...psychological...(pause)...it's more human than logical. It's same within the countries. While in Turkey for example we have Black sea region, Mediterranean region...(laugh)...Eastern Turkey, central Anatolia...(unclear) and we all imagine the differences between the people who live there. Not differences of ethnicity or not differences of religion not even differences of language that much (unclear)...you know other cultural differences. You would say that people living in the Black sea...I am talking about Turkey, Black sea area of Turkey would be a quick temper, easy to get angry, but they are truthful, they eat certain kinds of food, they speak the Turkish language with certain accent and etc. In the Mediterranean we would argue that people are more laid back, not easy and etc. How much of this is real or how much is imagined is difficult to get. But this is all same people ethnically, religiously, language speaking, you know the most dividing thing. I think it's same between the countries within certain region. They would feel some sort of a difference from those people from outside the region. I think that's...I don't know why they do feel it, it's very difficult...more sociological, more anthropological analysis is needed here (unclear) political science...(laugh) but that's how it becomes.

Interviewer: Very Interesting! You were talking when bringing the example of Asia, that there are differences as well as similarities, so if we don't want to talk the language of integration let's talk about some similarities and differences when it comes to region in general and maybe the Black sea. So what would be the areas in the Black sea region the so called...let's call it a region that you would consider the most...mostly integrated or with lots of similarities and the areas or fields where there are more like differences.

Respondent: I think Ok, most of these things are quite relative and they change in time. Let's take economy. When you take the picture or photo of the Black sea economy today you would see that it's not integrated, or not integrated

enough. But again this is relative, according to what it's not integrated enough if you compare it with Europe. But I think...it's on the same level of integration like North Africa...or might be more integrated than some other region. And again, if you look this is the picture you get if you look moment in time, a photo, but if you take a film let's say from 1990s up to today it's getting more integrated, I am still talking on economy. So there are levels of integration and you could argue that economic level of integration of the Black sea region today is not sufficient. But it doesn't mean that it does not have it. And if you look in time it's improved. And within that region of course there are more...there are areas or the countries that are cooperating more economically than the others. Turkey is in the Black sea region. Let's state Turkey as an example here, Turkey and Greece it's not integrated you know according to the European levels but our trade is huge, the investments of both sides are increasing and its people going you know in each other's countries, you know people working in other countries, tourists (unclear) so these are all levels of integration economically. You know the Greeks buy Banks in Turkey, Turks you know do buy marinas in Greece, so these are the things. And this is a... I choose two most difficult partners in the region, Turkey and Greece for years, and all these problems etc. Now they are doing it. Aaa...(pause)...you can look between Turkey and Azerbaijan they are much more in cooperation. You can look between Turkey and Georgia; even there is a border which is open. There is a airport inside the Georgian territory serving the Turkey, so these are...it's unique, only other example is in the middle of Europe...

Interviewer: And do you take these examples as examples of the regional integration, so to say integration or the bilateral country relationships?

Respondent: It's more, more bilateral than the regional of course but it creates integrations...not integration but cooperations in certain part of the region...(pause). You know when you look at the picture there are several hindrances for farther economic integration. The one is the...the real one problematic is that we have a very successful example of a integration just onto door that's the European Union. That's the biggest obstacle for the Black sea to integrate more within itself.

Interviewer: Ok, interesting...

Respondent: But it's a huge pulling effect, all regional countries, except Russia, and I would believe they would also wanted that, they do not have that kind of option, all the regional countries wanted to be integrated within the European Union. Let's assume that happens, let's assume all these wishes happen, so what happens? Then there is the integration of Black sea economically except Russia. So being integrated within Europe or expanding European Union to cover all Black sea means that there would be an economic integration within the Black sea region as well. So there is this willingness (unclear) but this also hinders these countries taking steps to go along their (unclear). If you want to be part of European Union, there are regulations, there are rules that you have to follow, one of them you have to enter in the customs union, agreement with the European free trade area...and it also forbids you to do the same with other countries without the European Union. So, you know if these countries eventually want to be the member of the European Union, they avoid doing the same thing with other regions; the same is with the Black sea. So this is one real hinderer that nobody really talks. Of course there are others, mostly political and strategic, all these problems and conflicts and etc. They prevent certain level of further integration. Russia is also a very important factor. I think they don't want, they don't prefer an integrated Black sea, they prefer more divided Black sea, or more bilateral relations within the Black sea because it suits them it's a big country. I am sure they would have preferred integrated Black sea with the Russia...

Interviewer: Ok...(laugh)

Respondent: Yea...with the Russia being a big power and own the region. The others don't want that. So that's also another powerful...obstacle for further integration in the region.

Interviewer: You very smoothly and naturally moved to the next question that I was going to ask. What are the biggest or very powerful players within or outside the region that have an influence on the dynamics of the Black sea region, you started talking...yea...

Respondent: Oh...that's easy! EU, Russia, Turkey and the United States...that...oh, not that order. I think it's Russia, EU, Turkey, United States that's the order.

Interviewer: And do they have more positive or negative, more integrating or disintegrating...

Respondent: It's mixed...I mean it's always mixed, if you start with the EU it's positive because the rhetoric of integration...but it's negative because of its pulling effect as I said before and also it's has been negative for (unclear) until very recently, because the EU chose or insisted to deal with the countries individually until very recently when they started to develop Black Sea Synergy and EU neighborhood policy. Until then they chose a policy that would deal individually. But even today with all these policies they still do deal with countries in the region individually. They have separate relationships with Turkey, a negotiation partner, they have separate agreement with Ukraine, separate agreement with...actually the way that EU behaves is...actually does not...the rhetoric is yes, integration and regionalization etc, but in practice they do it otherwise. Amm...for Turkey...I think Turkey is mostly for integration. Right from the beginning and still it's not pushing as hard, but I think it's still for the integration because it benefits Turkey anyway, it's economy...it benefits and there is not much Turkey would lose (unclear). US is you know is looking into the issue more in political level or more strategic level, so I think they would prefer, encourage and support the integration of the countries in the region except Russia...(laugh). So they would like to see all the countries coming together creating a more deeper integration but keeping Russia somehow on the border line. But I think economically they would not mind Russia to be inside, because that would hide Russia also. The most problematic is I think the Russia in that terms, they are pushing other form of integration they created the CIS, they created the economic zones, so they put pressure on creating that kind of a integration within the organization not in the Black sea. So if you are outside they will want... and I think in the Black sea region it's one of the biggest obstacles of further integration is Russia, they don't approve it, because they have the big, one of the... not the biggest but a lot bigger economy in the region, the biggest military power in the region, I would say the biggest political power in the region and they are the member of the all organization that cover all region of BSEC which is...it's not the majority decision maker (unclear) so block every time if there is an idea of bigger integration.

Interviewer: Talking about Turkey...aaa...there is mainstream discourse that Turkey sees itself more and more as a Middle Eastern power or the Middle Eastern leader

expanding the boundaries. What would be your assessment of this opinion and how would that comply with the Black sea region, Turkey being a Black sea regional power?

Respondent: I don't know what Turkey sees itself...I think it's too complicated in reality and it's again for the simplicity sake. The analysis uses these words. Most of the Turkish elite and in fact the academics argued for years that Turkey is the European country. And this was easy. But others in the minority have always said oh Turkey is also a Middle Eastern country or a Mediterranean country. And today and in 1990s you know it was argued that Turkey was you know kind of Caucasus, Black sea Central Asia or Turkey. Now it's the turn of Middle East (laugh). I think it's not that simple. You cannot ignore if you are living in this country, you cannot ignore being European or being Middle Eastern or being Caucasian, These are different regions that Turkey borders or touches. You can ignore of course but it's at your own hell. You ignore it, something happens and comes back to bite you. So Turkey cannot ignore...what's true is that Turkey has been focusing more on the Middle East in last ten years, but previous ten years was focused on Caucasus and the Black sea. As if even it made Turkey only Black sea or Middle East or Caucasus country. I don't think that current focus of Turkey on the Middle East would make Turkey only Middle Eastern country. I think Turkey plays with its regions and identities as the issues press themselves onto the Turkish agenda. This is the weakness of the Turkish policy making. We have not yet been able to dominate or to push the agenda from the Turkish perspective. In this country you can make policies (unclear), in the Balkans, in Europe, in the Middle East, in Caucasus no matter what but Turkey has not been that powerful country yet, so the regional issues, development affects Turkish policy making. So in last ten years when you look at it the Middle East is huge problematic area the security wise, economically, politically, so it pushes more and more into the Turkish agenda and because the government having the affinity in the Middle East way of life, religious life so it also has an effect so Turkey is gravitated in that sense. I am not sure rather this is sustainable you know for long term (unclear).

Interviewer: Wonderful! And one last question from my side. What would be your understanding or explanation of the senses of ordinary people who live in

those countries that are perceived to be the Black sea region countries? Do they feel connected to one another? Is the region...regional aspect part of their identity?

Respondent: No! I think this kind of identity or belonging into a region need to be cultivated. it cannot come just by itself. You know even (unclear) Anglo Saxon people...for most prospective and most areas they are very close. But the idea of Anglo Saxons get strongly cultivated, otherwise it (unclear) they fought it, in which war? (laugh) the war of American independence...and it's been cultivated in the 20th century pretty much. I think in the Black sea region it's not cultivated. In Europe do you think the idea of being European came by itself? No. I mean the idea was always there for centuries (unclear) people didn't feel that they were Europeans. For centuries they were Christians or then other centuries they were actually Western Christians the (unclear). They even discriminated (unclear) Christians. Then you know...they didn't have an idea of political unity or the people didn't felt the sense of being European, even after the European Union. I think the idea of being European for the ordinary people came from mid 1980s almost very late in 1990s with Erasmus program ...allowing people to move freely. I was living in United Kingdom in late 1980s and there was a discussion at the time to build a channel tunnel. And I was you know in connection with all the British families talking to them and old ones, old generation they were afraid that if the channel is build the French or the Germans might come from the tunnel with their tanks and etc one day. And then they loved the idea of being isolated from the continent (unclear) they were afraid. Now, if you go now there and talk to the people they would say...yeah, the channel it's great, because they have traveled through it France and everything they buy alcohol or whatever they communicate so this is cultivated in being European and it's not the same across the European Union. Not everybody would feel the same European. So in the Black sea region it's not cultivated at all. I mean it's very fragmented...things have been done sure, there has been you know created Black sea festival, there is an attempt to bring the mayors of Black sea towns and attempt to bring the Black sea rectors together but they are all few and scattered and they are not on the level of people yet. And of course the infrastructure does not support it either. So there is no sea line connection

between Ukraine and Turkey, Georgia, Romania whatever...even the air connection is not that...if you take out Turkish airlines it's not connected region much. So this takes more time and sustained effort from states to cultivate that kind of an idea.

Interviewer: Within or outside the region?

Respondent: Within the region. States within the region have to politically decide to do this and they should do it. In Europe there has been a policy between France and Germany... there has been bilateral policy of teaching German to the French youngsters and French to the German youngsters so they would be integrated more and understands each other. There is nothing such in the Black sea...you know it's... In Turkey we have Cervantes Centre, British Council, Italian culture, French culture they are teaching their languages and culture to the people. We don't have Romanian, or Ukrainian or Georgian, or Russian you know centers or these kinds of cultural centers.

Interviewer: Maybe there is a reason all these other centers are more like 'lingua franca' related centers for Romania, or for I don't know Georgian why would people...

Respondent: It's a...an attitude, Turkey has started to create (unclear) recently, in last...I think in last ten years we have created this something called Mevlana Program and (unclear) which is (unclear) they teach Turkish language or the culture. It's not necessarily I mean ok...(pause)...English is (unclear) people want to learn English, same could be said about French and Spanish. How about Russia? Why they don't do it for example? Why they don't have Pushkin centers everywhere and teaching...and they do sometimes (unclear). How about Turkish? Why they did not do it until the last ten year? I know many people...I visited Ukraine and at (unclear) University there is Turkish studies department and huge number of people like to learn Turkish same in Georgia, in Azerbaijan, even in Armenia and in this county you know even in this country I opened, we offer Armenian language course for our students and for the people outside they are always full. So if you don't do it, so this is the, I am talking about the Armenian language, it's a tiny county up to two million people it's not a 'lingua franca' but there is an interest but it's not been done officially and it's not cultivated. The idea...there has to be an idea that you want these people to be integrated, to know each other so you put money into

it and you force it. And that's what European Union did, or France and Germany did. But in the Black sea this idea, political idea is not there. So then we turn and start complaining that people don't feel their Black sea. They cannot. How can they do it? The only thing that unites them is the sea itself which is not very holiday wise anyway (laugh) and the fish called (unclear) (laugh) how can they do it if they don't connect with each other.

Interviewer: Well, thank you! That was a very, very inspiring interview and I am absolutely very sincere and you gave me (unclear) thoughts. Thank you!

Annex 5. Transcript of the Interview with the Black Sea region expert at the Centre for International and European Studies, Istanbul Turkey, September 2014

Interviewer: Ok, I will start with the first question which is about your definition of the region. Which particular characteristics or criteria should be present for any region to be considered present in general?

Respondent: Well I think the definition of a region is a definition which has been around for a long time...aaa...a group of countries bound by geography, more or less defines a region, so that the basic criteria and I think it was (unclear) back in 68 or at some stage had talked about this not... fundamentally has not changed...so geography defines a region and countries around a particular geography...finding of their interests to see that common space as a region. So this is the basic, basic criteria for region for me.

Interviewer: Does it mean that the proximity matters for countries to be considered as one particular region representatives?

Respondent: Absolutely!

Interviewer: Aaa...what about cultural or political regions then?

Respondent: Well, you know there is a literature on this. There is particular book by Andrew Hurrell and I can't remember her name and they talk about regionalism...

Interviewer: Fawcett...

Respondent: Hm?

Interviewer: Fawcett...

Respondent: Fawcett...aaa...they talk about regionalism and historical perspective and in particular you have different types of allegiances of regions or it forms, regions being formed are criteria other than geography and I think one of the most telling examples of particular in the post Cold War era...no, sorry...during the Cold War era was (unclear) for example, which always (unclear) not defined by geography but...I think this is sort of an overstretch example because everything else historically and in particular when the regions have taken holds since the end of the second World War geography has played a role. So when (unclear) organizations are different types it's within Africa, within part of Asia, they are within Latin America, so geography, the Caribbean, North America and of course Europe. So...and therefore geography also helped defined some of the cultural characteristics, right? You said cultural and what's the other one?

Interviewer: Political!

Respondent: And he political one in a way...(pause)...because proximity does influence even if the system of governance are difference, proximity does influence the political, how would you say...direction of the formation of the region.

Interviewer: But there is in the mainstream scholarly work around regionalism there is perception that...aaa... this idea of geography or the proximity being one of the (unclear) for...in particular group of countries is very outdated but on the other hand there is a eclecticism in the definitions that make the whole idea of regions or regionalism very reluctant, and so some even question rather it's possible to study regions because of that particular reason. What would be your response to...to this mainstreamed vision about region and regionalism?

Respondent: I think...I think the way that regions have developed and have taken the hold especially in the post Cold War era it's bound, it's related to geography...it's related to geography. We talk about Black sea region, what defines a region first of all is a geography, the proximity. We talk about the Baltic Sea region, it is the geography. We talk about Europe or the EU, or the process of European integration. It is Europe geographically that defines it. So I am not so sure I think regions, we talk about EU-Mediterranean region, so which is a compound thing. Again, both Europe from Europe and Mediterranean are related to geography so I am not so sure that one can have more eclectic perspective on that.

Interviewer: Neil Macfarlane in one of his articles says that there are countries that culturally belong to one region and politically belong to another. What would be...how does it help with defining a particular region or having the minimum set of criteria and how can we study this kind of regions then?

Respondent: So...what countries are you talking about?

Interviewer: Aaa...we can let's say take the example of the...NAFTA and let's say Mexico...might belong to culturally to different part of the world while...let's say politically and economically it belongs, it's unified with Canada and United States.

Respondent: Yea but even that argument (unclear) I mean if you think about the way the US has developed and you think at the states neighboring Mexico and when you talk about Texas, California, New Mexico and so on, culturally they are closer to Mexico then they are to...one would expect the Anglo-Saxon United States.

Interviewer: Yea...and what other criteria you might suggest to have along with just...geographical proximity to be present? We have boundaries for the region, ok...is there anything else?

Respondent: Common interests...common interests and that for a region is usually... are formed around issues of...of common interest which is linked to economics which is linked to what the whole game as we call it low politics...so that's how most regions are defined. Rather you think about the European experiment, or NAFTA as you mentioned or event the Black sea region, even historically one which Charles Kings...writings on this...from the time of the ancient Greeks on, it is common interest or the competition for resources or whatever but that does start with economics, so I think this is how, this is a another one of the main characteristic of the region. Yea!

Interviewer: And considering as you mentioned...would you consider the Black sea area a region and why?

Respondent: Would I consider the region and why...you know...(pause)...I've been straggling with this one, I've been straggling with this one because I think intellectually and practice because of so my work linked to BSEC and ICBSS and so on. I would like to view it as a region because it justifies the fact that you have a group of couture trying to work out their problems together or trying to come up with the common vision or deal with what I said low politics...aaa...because these are the issues that are to the interest and to the

benefit of all and so when I accept the fact that regions are the political constructs they usually formed as I said a. geography plays a role but b. they are formed at the particular moment in history when countries say it's in their interest to (unclear) together, right? And so you've had let's take the Black sea, you've had an experiment, an ongoing experiment in regionalism since the end of the Cold War and part of that ongoing experiment is expressed institutionalizing through the BSEC, which is the one organization for all the countries of the region never mind how many it's five, six, ten or twelve or whatever are somehow linked, alright? Aaa...but then so, one can create an argument and say – yes, (unclear) differences, (unclear), and by the way lot of these arguments are the same when we analyze the European Union, we talk about the variety of things, ok what binds the countries together, old member states, new member states, big member states, small member states and nevertheless you can still have a construct and you say, this sort of justifies the fact that something called the EU exists and it's growing (unclear) it's problems. In the Black sea region the common interests are not value based as they are in the EU but they are there and that is why we have an organization and that why the director generals for international economic affairs and most of ministries deal with that, right? and the other representatives to the BSEC...so, lifting barriers of trade, transport, communication, working together, tourism, cultural projects and so on and so forth. But because we've gone through the period of, now it's twenty two years and plus since the family of BSEC twenty four years, plus the end of the Cold War, you also have to ask the question rather this process is actually working. Ok, besides the process it's something that having defined let's say 20 of working together they don't have much to show for the work, but they are still trying to meet and work and so on. And you have a very well defined institutional set up right? with an assembly, and business council, think tank, a bank and so on and difference working groups, but...but on the other hand one of the reasons we have this experiment and it was trumpeted as such by the member states had to do with the fact that that it was you know the one which always uses the word being inclusive, it includes all the countries but that is also the part of the problem with it and ultimately the process that's ongoing the process of regionalism is not strong enough or powerful enough to deter other processes

that are happening that have an impact on the region. And you have come to a point when you have an organization of twelve countries, where you have set of countries with politically on war with each other. So you always had Armenia and Azerbaijan, you always had Armenia and Turkey, you are on war since 2008 in particularly Georgia and Russia, now you have Ukraine and Russia and of course Albania and Serbia periodically over Kosovo. So, it's like most of the member states are somehow cut at odds with each other and based on very real political issues which (unclear) of the work of this organization, which therefore makes one doubt rather regionalism is actually working and therefore Black sea is a region or not. So they are still going on through this while one can say we all know that there are organizations (unclear phrase) they usually stay around or they wither but it's very difficult to turn of the plug. Here is not exactly like this we still have some dynamics, we still have some dynamics with regionalism, but all these other things are happening simultaneously, products of the post Cold War environment, remnants of the post Cold War environment, new issues that have an impact on the region in particular the emergence of terms such as Energy Politics and so on, plus the impact of the democratization, so it really fundamentally raises the question for us to what sort regionalism is developing and rather it has a future, that is why still more than two decades after the end of the Cold War when you read number of scholars they still raise that fundamental issue, what sort of region is this? So it's not just a question, as I said of membership in the region, but is it a region, is it a bridge, is it...what else can it be. Because there are doubts what it actually can it be, even though it still continues to be a point of reference for the stakeholders and lot of the extra regional stakeholders.

Interviewer: In the beginning you were talking about the importance of geography and proximity so we need to have boundaries in mind whenever we are talking about any region including the Black sea region, even if it is the region under construction. Aaa...later you were talking about the BSEC and the BSEC member countries and their interrelationships. So would you consider the Black sea region and BSEC region, the term that is also used in the scholarly work, as the same, so would you put the sign of a quality between them?

Respondent: Yea, I mean...

Interviewer: Or in other words what are the countries that you have in mind when you are talking about the Black sea region...

Respondent: Ok, I tend, tend to support the EU definition which is the ten countries. I think that Albania and Serbia are a bit far edged, on the other hand the presence of Albania and Serbia reminds one of the many identities that countries have, rather they are political or rather they are geographic. So country like Turkey or country like Greece, are not only considered to be Black sea countries even though some (unclear) Greece, they suppose to be South-East European countries and so on and so forth. Turkey is also a Middle Eastern country, an Asian country, so Romania, Bulgaria they are both, right? So it brings that and also tells you region not being in a vacuum. But I would tend to say it's a ten counties (pause) the twelve minus Albania and Serbia because I think there is much more logic in terms of how they work and what sort of interests they have to...as a region.

Interviewer: There is also an idea that Black sea region is not a region but a sub-region. And with that in mind whatever unifies that countries within the sub region is mainly the idea of becoming the EU members, because of the sub-region is part of wider regional project which is the European Union and once it happens, whenever it happens, this idea of sub-region can even disappear. What would be your comment of that?

Respondent: Yea, but I think the terminology of Black Sea region is something that presses the European Union. It's not...it's very interesting the process of regionalism in the Black sea did not develop or was not influenced by the European Union. The European Union was a late player to it, and late addition to it. Unlike the Baltic Sea region for example where the EU, the commission was a player from the beginning, while in EU-Mediterranean region that EU shaped and that's why we have EU-Mediterranean region, It was the regional actors themselves that came together for variety of reasons. So the process of regionalism start before the EU started playing an active role active in particular since 2007 but more active since 2004, but this process had been going on for over decade anyway. So I am not sure ultimately the process of regionalism in the Black sea implies membership per say and it does for certain countries even if you look at BSEC agenda I think and (unclear, seems like a person's last name) that you spoke to is responsible for the relations

between the EU and BSEC and his is trying to promote this and this is something that BSEC has been trying for over a decade, fifteen years or so to promote but...even within that even though it's a state objective for all the member states, if you talk to the officials of each member states they have different perception of what it is, for some it means the eventual integration, for other it means a some sort of an enhance relationships. So I am not convinced that, that is the motivating factor. If I remember it also has to do with the founding of the organization. The two big countries decided that with the end of the Cold War they had to redefine the security interests and therefore create something, in particular, with security in mind keeping their hegemonic or (unclear phrase) over the region, in terms of maritime security and other issues...in fear that others might come and (unclear) that base, right? and more or less they managed to do this. And so you've had an organization (unclear) the regions being formed based around the (unclear) of Russia and Turkey and eventually the others. So I am not sure again that the EU processes is the dominant factor, countries would like it the fact that you have three EU member states now in BSEC, obviously if EU wants this and then you have countries like Georgia and Moldova and Ukraine also influences it that want an inclusive relationships, plus Serbia in that sense and plus Albania, but it's not I think not necessarily the vision of all members states.

Interviewer: Can you identify particular areas within which those countries when you have in mind when talking about Black sea region are the most and the least integrated? And how can you explain that?

Respondent: (Pause) particular areas that are the most and the least integrated (pause) explain your question...

Interviewer: It can be like, I don't know...economically they can be more integrated or politically more integrated then in the area of environment or culture or education...

Respondent: Yea, I don't think...that there are any areas that are really integrated, I mean integration occurs...it's interesting, for example in terms of electricity and the electricity grades as integration but those are the remnants of the Soviet Union and again it has to do with some countries the post soviet states, doesn't have to do with the others. So there is an integration that has been there because you had an empire that integrated the countries and the regions of the empire and

that has continued and of course that integration creates problems trying to define electricity overall for the region, right? Aaa...there is some integration...and that is something that I didn't really study much, but I would assume that there is an integration in terms of transport again, rather it's non transport, even maritime transport upon certain groups of countries and again because of historical links. But on other issues I don't think there is much...their intentions are there, but there is not necessarily much.

Interviewer: Where do you find those intentions? Is it in declarations, in official statements, how would a scholar track those intentions?

Respondent: Yea, yea...I mean, you know, one can look for example at...especially if you take again the BSEC is in its working groups. The working groups define this and some of them are pretty old, so for example one of the oldest working groups the one on energy is the one that has produced the least results for obvious reasons. So the intention is we need to work on this but ultimately the reality says that it's very difficult to work on this. So...(unclear) we have seventeen or eighteen of them, I can't remember right now, is indicative of the intention to try to integrate and how these have multiplied over time, right? You've (unclear) on tourism now, you've (unclear) on governance, again...the intention, you form them and then if you've studied the organization you also realized that games that are in plate, which countries want to have a chairmanship to dominate the agenda, rather it's to move it forward or not to move it forward. So this is one way of doing it...I think most of the declarations rather it's the foreign minister ministerial or the periodic summits don't say much. If you follow them they basically say the same thing, with same intentions...aaa...there is again from the beginning, there is the BSEC economic agenda which has now been (unclear). Again it's a text of intentions as opposed to will concrete projects.

Interviewer: Regional dynamic are believed to be driven by powers, either within or outside at the regional boundaries, so...which particular countries...would you think of as either the barriers or the driver of this process?

Respondent: (Pause) I...knowing the region the way I know right now, I would think that even though I just said before the EU came late to the process, I think the EU not as a country but the EU as an organization, as an idea is one of the drivers of regional dynamics. And therefore it influences, has an impact on its member

states in that sense. I am not sure necessarily that, that the founding members especially the big countries contribute that much to the process. They just want to have as I said to control the process, to control the direction of the organization. So periodically they seem to make, what's the word I am looking for, they seem to sit down and compromise on certain issues but nevertheless nothing comes out of it, because for example, some of the work that has been done has been legal work which is making reforming the procedures of the organization. There are actually provisions in the chart of the organization which has been modified in many times to allow for many processes just like the EU of reinforce cooperation of group of states can advance you something provided the others agreed to. But this has never been applied in practice, so you show that you are making a compromise to move a process forward but you try to control and make sure it doesn't move forward because it might not be in your interest. So I think the very countries that lead the process toward the formation of the organization and regionalism are the ones that created the biggest impediments. I think it's obvious by their nature by their size and so on. The EU has because it has an influence on its member states and on a group of countries that aspire to come closer to it and if not joining it. So in that sense yes, the EU is the driver as opposed to the barrier, but again because its message has an impact only on particular number of countries it ends up then creating the barriers with the other side.

Interviewer: Ok, two more questions. One is about the citizens of those countries that are often considered to be Black sea region. So you think they feel connected to one another under this umbrella or the big idea of regional citizen so to say?

Respondent: You would know better, I am not sure, I am not sure even though it's interesting so may things have happened that cultural (unclear) I think you also have Black sea games and other things trying to connect them, Black sea music festivals but...but this things if you think they happen in another parts as well. It's only normal the way you would have music festivals and games and do they identify one as belonging to this part of the world or I am not sure, I am not sure there is necessarily...that has been successful. I am not sure it's important or the relevant for the citizens, which also implies that the political elite try to drive up the process and try to justify the existence of Black sea regionalism through their foreign ministries, which is a top down process have failed somehow to influence their public opinion as to why there is a need to

maybe try to work together on some of these issues. So, I do not see that, I am sure there are studies out there I am not aware of that probably look at the impact on (pause) how the citizens of these countries perceive the Black sea and rather there is a spirit of 'Blackseanness' or whatever.

Interviewer: Ok, so the last question. You are originally from Greece and you live in Turkey. Both countries are often considered to be Black sea region states. How big priority is this regionalism for the governments of these two countries?

Respondent: Not big at all! Not big at all (pause). You know again one has to go back to the founding of the organization. Why it was founded, why states joined it. Country like Greece, first of all was asked to join because it was the only EU member state at that time and because Turkey was so actively involved Greece felt it had to be in there just like other countries have joined to have an influence on the process. Now, how much, how much time is actually spent on the foreign ministry dealing the Black sea issues very low. There is only hided interest when the 6 month before the Greece has supposed to assume the rotated presidency and during the six month of the presidency itself. But otherwise even if you see the terms of representation I think the most countries usually have ministerial and ended up being countries representative deputy foreign minister which is being the case with Greece many times, likewise with Turkey... likewise with Turkey even though it was the driver for the organization. I don't think it's the major part of the agenda. I think one of the issues that has always been discussed and I think it's also been discussed at the highest level but it's never been implemented that is very basic idea at least once a cabinet meeting, once a month would be good but once a year there would be a cabinet, agenda for cabinet meeting to talk about the Black sea. I don't think any country does that. And Greece and Turkey are the exceptions in that sense.

Interviewer: So with all of that you have just shared with my to have it in mind one, very quick question once again. Is Black sea a region? Yes or No...

Respondent: It's in the process of being one but I am not sure if it can actually succeed in being one.

Interviewer: Ok, thank you!

Respondent: Ok!

[The End of the interview]

Annex 6. Interview with Octavian Milewski, a political scientist specialized in post-Soviet area studies, former project coordinator affiliated to the International Fund for Cooperation and Partnership of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, September 2014

Interviewer: How would you define a region?

Respondent: A region is a geographical area that is organized or can self-organize while bearing unique characteristics. They (characteristics) can be social, cultural, political and/or economic. The most important characteristics of a full-fledged region are commonality and constructive interdependence. There can be narrow commonality and broad commonality. In the former case it should be shared by the elites (broadly speaking) and in the latter by the peoples (in plural) of a region. A region becomes a region as such when the national societies develop a set of deep, comprehensive and multilevel connections which are sustained by organizations and intergovernmental or even supra-national institutions. A basic requirement is also the imagining of the region as an area of common political present and future especially by the elites. But, the utmost important characteristic of a region must be that none of the regional constituting countries conceive of attacking each other for whatever reason. Thus, it is peaceful and de-securitized relations that condition the making of a region.

Interviewer: Do you consider a Black Sea area a region? Please explain your answer

Respondent: Black Sea cannot be considered a region if I depart from my definition. Black Sea region is more a projected intellectual program based on a set of historic “traces” rather than a commonality of features and social-political elements of commonality. We should not attribute to regionality the qualities of a security complex which is in great part a rationalized or theoretical illustration of reality and not a grounded based formalization of practical life. In the best case the BSR is a low intensity regionalizing formation that needs a number of generations in order to reach a level of knowledge and awareness about each neighbor country that will create momentum for regionalization. The approximately one decade long intellectual debate on the BS that we have had until present is far from enough to trigger regional political image creation. Regionality is also an attribute of development through inter-dependence, but at this point interdependence is still very low.

Interviewer: Could you please list those areas in which the Black Sea Region is most integrated? Please explain the answer

Respondent: Sincerely, I don't see too many areas in the BSR which can rise to the real value of the meaning. Maybe to a certain degree we can speak of tourism, especially as concerns the shores and resorts of Turkey and Bulgaria. The rest of the countries are absent from the mental

map of the BS neighbours. Maybe to a certain degree the Georgian BS shore is an attraction for Armenians. So, generally it is summer tourism that generates most of the integrative elements. For Moldovans it is Romania that comes first, although Turkey and Bulgaria are also a preferred destination. To a certain degree there is energy integration, or rather said interconnection, but it doesn't create the feeling that it adds to the degree of integration of the region. It is more of a pipeline inter-connection for geo-economic reasons. Same can be said about trade in general. It doesn't aggregate into more awareness about each other. But we shouldn't forget that around two-thirds of the intra-regional trade is done by Turkey and Russia, which are forming a sort of super-structure of the region due to their close relationship on matters of region-building. Equally, for some countries Turkish FDI is very important, such as the case of Georgia. Also if we could detach some sort of NGO interconnection then there has been a low profile platform creation in the BSR. Yet, the fact that the donors are Western Europe based, the agenda may be often not fully BS oriented although implemented by regional NGOs. In a particular way, I would say that the region is objectified by negative geo-political phenomena, such as the de facto states, protracted conflicts and arena of revived great power geopolitical rivalry.

Interviewer: Could you please list those areas in which the Black Sea Region is least integrated? Please explain the answer

Respondent: One such least integrated aspect is knowledge. The countries (I mean elites in the broader sense) don't know and don't really want to know much about each other. There are a few centers and universities which have departments for Black Sea area studies. Those that exist are underfinanced. Foundations that a few years ago used to finance small scale projects are not interested anymore in funding research on and about the region. The few NGO platforms for communication are simply not enough to create momentum for more knowledge and more initiatives. It is more of a desired future than reality. Transportation. Even if there are millions of tourists in the region, the main bulk of which go to Turkey, the region is poorly integrated from the point of view of airline connections, Turkey serving as a hub. There are no direct connection linking the western shore to the eastern shore just as there aren't almost any connections between the western and the northern shore. Maritime connection for passenger is even in poorer conditions. Equally, it is very hard to imagine a travel by car from Bucharest to Tbilisi, Baku and even Kyiv. After the Ukrainian-Russian war, the northern shore is virtually closed, to say nothing of the Northern Caucasus. Given that now virtually 15-20% of the Black sea shore is "closed" by the de facto states (Abkhazia) and annexed territories from Ukraine by Russia without internationally recognized infrastructural capacity the situation will be even

direr. Marine biology and ecology. These are two closely interconnected spheres which are totally ignored by the states and societies of the Black Sea region. Few consider that protection of the fragile eco-system of the BS starts with the river basin system of the west and northern shore of the region. There is virtually no concern for the flora and fauna of the sea, while debates and deliverables are performed generally by not so numerous NGOs and university departments with modest funding.

Interviewer: Which outside / inside powers and/or players could you name as integrating / disintegrating Black Sea Region? Please explain the answer

Respondent: Outside. Russia is the main “dis-integrator” of the region. As an anti-regionaliser it acts as a functional outsider. (not as a geographical member of the region) Its imperial policies have destroyed recently even the modicum of regional narrative that has taken root in the beginning to mid-2000s. Any form of security community or even economic benign interdependence is opposed by Russia. That is why I consider it a functional (it promotes policies of destruction and creates a general climate of insecurity) and an anti-functionalist (it opposes institutional interstate functionalism as for example the EU as an ideal type is) outsider to the idea of regionality in the BS. **Inside:** The rest of the actors, be they outsiders or insiders, have a constructive role to the idea of regionality in the BS. Turkey could be considered to a certain degree a strategic middle power with will to integrate the region. However, the strategic interests in relation with Russia are such that regionalization is totally secondary to Turkey. For reasons of survival Turkey de facto pursues a policy of defensive condominium in the BSR. Ukraine has been more of a rhetorical interlocutor for reasons pertaining to its structural internal weakness. Romania has been mainly a rhetorical regionalizer as it lacks the resources and capacity to develop its project. It attempted to put the BSR on the agenda of the EU, but the economic crisis, the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 and then the Russian-Ukrainian war put a full stop to any illusions Romania might have had related to regionalism in the BSR. Bulgaria has been missing virtually from the debate for reasons of identity I would say. It had never had a strong attachment to the sea and its shores around. It rather staked its policies on the western Balkans and its south. There is Georgia and its neighbours left, but their tradition to think the region through the prism of regionality is quite low. It is only relatively recently that Georgian political elites started to search for opportunities through the BS neighbourhood. Georgia also suffers from incapacity to fully control its northern shore and loss of control of the exclusive maritime waters.

Interviewer: Do citizens of the Black Sea Region countries feel integrated with one another? What triggers/suspends this?

Respondent: They certainly do not. Poor connectivity between certain countries is the cause. There are mini-clusters or bilateral preferences which confirm the divides in the region. For example Romanians visit Bulgaria a lot, also Turkey, while the rest of the BS countries are totally missing from their mental map. For economic reasons, the South Caucasus countries are absent from the destination of Moldovans, yet the common past under the Russian empire gives more than enough commonality feeling to these peoples. The Romanians and Bulgarians are mainly oriented toward the west. Their mental map is constructed on a west-centered world, while the “East” is often associated with wrong images of underdevelopment and *otherness*. Ukrainians have had a strong potential until recently, but the annexation of Crimea by Russia has dashed all hopes. In general, the human level connectivity in the region is quite low between the regional countries, tourism aside. After all, we cannot expect to have a different situation after many centuries of imperial domination in the BS, wherein the local centers were focused on the relation with the metropolitan center and not to interconnect between each other. The concept of BS region as a common shared space is a very new one for them. We cannot expect for more after hundreds of years of divisions.

Interviewer: To what extent Black Sea regionalism is a priority of the government/MFA of your home country? Please, provide some details of evidence if possible

Respondent: It so happens that I have two home countries. One is Moldova, which doesn't care too much about regionalism in the BS. It actually doesn't have the resources, but also it doesn't have the geographical attributes to be a full-fledged regional member. It is a regional dweller only through the river Prut which flows into the Danube. This gives it access to the Black Sea. Moldova also doesn't have a usable identity which would offer it the possibility to present itself as a Black Sea country. It is a young state, but even if it refers to its past there is nothing to sacralise since during its medieval heydays it had just a short period exit to the Black Sea. In fact, the BS shore was at that point a fully Ottoman affair. As for my second country – Romania, the situation is different. Romania has been a champion of BS regionalism. However it was more a rhetorical champion. It basically participated in every institutional or organisational format that has dealt with the BS. It even tried to propose its own initiatives, by which it displeased the two insider stakeholders, i.e. Turkey and Russia. I mean the Black Sea Forum (2005) which was the only edition of this regional platform. Aside from this, Romania has been a promoter of regionalism that strongly backed the US position, but has been lacking the resources to substantiate its rhetoric. Another modest success of Romania has been the Black Sea NGO Forum which until present has been held 6 times. It is a UNDP and RO MFA sponsored avenue of networking and initiatives for the regional civil society. It is one of the few

constructive regional platforms left on the level of civil society. Its future is, however, uncertain. It should be also told in this context, that there have been parallel formats initiated by extra-regional countries that positively spill over into BS regionality. Thus, the Eastern Partnership, initiated by Poland and Sweden, is the most successful post-Cold War western regionalizing platform for the countries of the post-Soviet area. To its detriment, Romania has perceived the platform with a certain reservation. In the view of Romania's leaders, EaP rivalled the Black Sea Synergy and BS Strategy. The latter two have become useless in the last years due to changes in the geostrategic climate on the continent, which influenced the region in general and Romania's lack of perspective in particular.

Annex 7. Interview with Charles King, a Professor of International Affairs and Government at Georgetown University

Interviewer: What would be your definition of a region (characteristics, criteria for a region to be present)?

Respondent: I have to confess that I don't find "region" to be a particularly helpful analytical tool--at least in any definition other than something like: a defined geographical space that someone, somewhere considers to be a region. I think one of the problems with the study of "regions" in general is that political scientists or IR theorists want there to be an essentialized "there" there, but the definition of "region" always depends on the purposes for which an analyst is deploying the term. So, "North America" is a region in a trade/economic sense but certainly not in an identity/cultural one. "Sub-Saharan Africa" is a region in a geographical sense but not in a political or economic one. "The Balkans" is a region in a cultural sense--in terms of objectively shared cultural traits, such as cuisine and dance forms--but not in the sense of a common identity or politics or even economic ties.

Interviewer: Do you consider the Black Sea as a region? Please, explain your answer?

Respondent: Sure, if by "region" we simply mean some geographical unit that it's useful as an analytical frame. It's certainly not a "region" if we mean a common identity, or particularly strong trade or security ties, or other definitions. And I think *where* a region is often depends on *when* a region is--so, for example, the Black Sea in, say, 1300 was most certainly a region

in an economic or even political sense, by 1500 it wasn't, by 1800 it was again, by 1900 it wasn't, and so on.

Interviewer: Which insider and outside powers do foster the intra-regional dynamics? Please, explain your answer

Respondent: Of course, the United States and the EU are the major outside powers, although obviously the EU is both inside and outside, in a way. The Russia-Turkey relationship was important in the early 2000s, but I think that is less critical now. By "fostering dynamics," I understand the powers outside the region that have some ability to influence developments within it, and in that sense it is really only the United States that plays that clear role. Although now that I look at your question again, I think you're asking about which countries/powers enhance the sense of regional cooperation in the zone, and I think that answer is probably none. There was great hope for this in the early 1990s, led by the Turks, but that has since dissipated for a variety of reasons. The most important of those, I think, was the increase in prospects for EU and NATO membership for some countries around the Black Sea. These institutions were the real prize, of course, and when countries perceived that they were more or less on track for membership (in the case of Romania and Bulgaria), enthusiasm for other forms of regionalism waned.

Interviewer: To what extent do citizens of the countries of the Black Sea area feel connected to one another (areas of most/least connectedness)? Please, explain your answer

Respondent: This is of course very limited all around the Black Sea, but I'm not sure we should be concerned with this. Neighbors frequently know very little about one another. Americans in general have very little idea about the history or values of Canadians; Canadians know very little about the culture or history of Mexicans. The same thing goes, for example, about any binary around the Black Sea: Romanians and Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Turks, Georgians and Moldovans. A common identity really doesn't have much to do with either security relationships or trade ties, I think, so we might be expecting the wrong thing if we believe that one flows from the other. In fact, I'd say that it's the institutions that build identities, not the other way around.

Interviewer: How Russia's being a Black Sea littoral country without the EU membership aspiration aligns with the idea of the Black Sea subregionalism?

Respondent: I don't think that having the aspiration for EU membership is either a determinant or a detriment when it comes to regionalism around the Black Sea. Turkey, for example, was a major proponent for regionalism in the past, even though its EU prospects/aspirations were always dim (and now dimmer).

Interviewer: Can BSEC play a role of the institutional foundation of the Black Sea area contributing to its regionness?

Respondent: Short answer: no. There is simply not incentive for countries to empower BSEC. It will continue to be a discussion forum--and that's a good thing; more opportunities for countries to meet and talk is always good--but it won't become more than that.
