

The emerging security environment in the Black Sea area: strategic options for Romania and Moldova

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„We want Russia to get bored with NATO and NATO enlargement”
Madelin Albright, US Secretary of State, 1996

“Keep in mind that Romania’s approaches are not strictly in the interest of Romania. We have commitments to our European partners, our NATO partners. As a frontier-country of the two structures – European Union and NATO – we have to promote the interests of these structures, not only our interests...: the Black Sea will become secure when it will become internationalized, when the solutions that were adopted at the Mediterranean Sea will be adopted. To become an area of peace it must be taken out from the unique influence of Russian Federation and I am convinced that president Putin will accept a process more or less rapid for the internalization of the Black Sea, given the strategic importance that the extended area of the Black Sea has already achieved.”

President of Romania, Traian Băsescu, Bucharest, July 2005

“We consider the elaboration within PARP of objectives of the partnership for the realization of the national army reform and of measures regarding the amelioration of the capacity of our armed forces to operate together with NATO forces of special expedience.”

President of the Republic of Moldova, Bruxelles, June 2005

I underline that Moldova had a positive and close relationship with NATO during the last 10 years, being member of the Partnership for Peace Programme. This relation, which was encouraged by us, is a part of the vision of president Bush in the case of Europe, which is seen united, free and peaceful...Article 10 of the North-Atlantic Treaty stipulates that any European country that shares the principles of the Treaty, wishes and can contribute to the assurance of security in the Euro-Atlantic area, can become a member of the Alliance, if it is invited to do this by the countries which are already members. Moldova could become a member someday, too.”

Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the USA in Moldova, Heather M. Hodges, August 2005

The analysis provided in this paper attempts to explain the variegation of security aspects and geopolitics in what is called ‘the extended region of the Black Sea area’. The main idea behind this text is that, although the interest for the region has massively increased lately, this far there exist only the *premises* for the outline and implementation of a strategy in this area. The text below has to be read because of this, too: it aims at outlining the premises and mainframe of such a strategy.

The arguments will be exposed in several levels. The first one regards the geopolitical interpretation of the space in question, respectively the fixation of mainframes to a *geopolitical analysis*, which would permit the understanding of evolutions and dynamics that marked this space. We will then proceed to the evaluation of the region from the perspective of *security* dimensions, with the statement of the ample signification that the concept acquired after 1990 and that, naturally, has to be regarded in the case of the respective region as well. After these two steps we will conclude that the need of delimitating the Black Sea area, as a security region, imposed almost with necessity.

Recently, these favorable premises that regard the geopolitics and security of the region were joined by another one, as well as important and with a potential that is impossible to ignore. We are talking about the *European political context*, which makes today, and especially tomorrow, the interest for the Black Sea area to grow – in addition, that the need for a regional strategy to be even more pressing. We will review these political evolutions which announce significant strategic changes at the scale of our continent with direct impact on the region we are interested in.

In the second part of the study we effectively outline the elements that may generate a strategy at the Black Sea, beginning with the premises and eventual similarities that can be detected on the continent. The stress will be put on Romania and its role in the region in the context of its double membership – in the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization and, after 2007, in the European Union. Thus, the pattern is taken over from two older Euro-Atlantic initiatives – NEI and NDI – which proved to be efficient in relation to the advance of the Euro-Atlantic frontier to the North Sea and Baltic countries. The important actors and mainframes of such a strategy at the Black Sea will be evident in this section. In this context, we will also insist upon the strategic options of Romania and the Republic of Moldova in the context of advance of the Euro-Atlantic frontier to the extended region of the Black Sea. A whole section will be dedicated to the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization, the importance, to our opinion, of which is crucial in the present strategic conjuncture at the Black Sea. Finally, we will draw some conclusions and will warn about the threats that can lead to the blocking or canceling of such a project – the most obvious: *the fallacious solution of the Transnistrian conflict* which is looming today in some gestures and declarations coming from the East and West, including from Bucharest.

Geopolitical context: *Black Sea – the space of Euro-Atlantic frontier*

All the significant (geo)political events – evolutions and stagnations – that took place around the Black Sea have, to a greater or smaller degree, the mark of a global geopolitical progress. More precisely, they are determined by the *advance of the Euro-Atlantic frontier to Central Asia*, by the indecision of these institutions to establish the border ample enough to include nations that wish to be part of this space.⁸⁰

Here we are talking about the Euro-Atlantic space, suggesting, between lines, an *institutionalized* definition of Europe. In fact, it is the definition that explicitly and implicitly explains the affiliation to Western institutions, especially EU and NATO. Here the stress falls not on the cultural or geographical Europe, but rather on the institutional Europe. Parenthetically, the oratory of American officials on the subject of “coming back to Europe” has methodically marked these elements after 1990. The idea of America to create an “integral and free Europe” practically meant the expansion of the Western institutional framework illustrated by NATO and EU towards the East. In April 1997, for example, the Secretary of State, Madeline Albright considered that the central reason of NATO expansion “is the correction of the mistakes of the past. If we don’t expand NATO, it would mean that we validate the Stalin vector imposed in 1945 and which was fought against by two generations of Europeans and Americans” (Browning 2002:6). Also, president Bush, addressing to the students from Warsaw, on June 15th, 2001, outlined the idea that the new democracies of Europe must have the chance to join the European institutions, and about the NATO he stated that “we must be interested in how much we advance on the way of freedom.” The idea is clear: the will to eliminate the interior borders of Europe was becoming synonymous to the expansion of NATO (Bush 2001).

Getting back to the “technical aspects” of the approach, it must be said that *frontier* would mean, in the theoretic mainframe used here, the dynamic aspect of a geopolitical evolution, respectively the totality of processes through which a historical expansion, a nation, a civilization or an empire etc. manifests itself. The frontier, as a dynamic aspect, causes and maintains a wide variety of spiritual and institutional processes, which we call *frontier processes*. *The border* is the static, stable (established) aspect of the advance of a frontier. The advance of a frontier is set somewhere, on a border. But this does not automatically mean that, once the border is set, the dynamics of the frontier advance process disappears or is suspended. On the contrary, when we deal with an artificial (political, geo-strategic) setting of a border we as well assist at the perpetuation of frontier manifestations, and the area where such evolutions take place is called *frontier area*.¹ These frontier spaces, respectively those zones that forward – justified or not – claims or affiliation to a certain area and inclusion in the interior of a border to which they do not have, as yet, access, are frequently, geopolitically speaking, areas of *crisis*, of *geopolitical turbulence*, which cannot be decrypted or understood right without taking these aspects into consideration.

This kind of frontier area is the region of the Black Sea today. There is nothing clear there if the advance of the Euro-Atlantic frontier and the consequences that this advance – and especially the setting of the artificial border on Prut – generates is ignored. Today the Black Sea is, geopolitically speaking, an Euro-Atlantic frontier area.

Two geopolitical axes: East-West and North-South

It was sometimes too much spoken about “axes” in relation to the area of the Black Sea, and not only. Nevertheless, the abundance of the discourse had only one effect: left the problems unsolved, and the reader confused or convinced that everything is only a political speech, lacking substance and field relevance.² But the term “axis” has an importance and a signification, and two explanations should be offered at the time of its launching. On one hand, that its significance is firstly *geopolitical*, and only in the second place *political*, and on the other hand, that the sense of the “axis” is not the *West* – as it was abundantly and mistakenly speculated -, but the *East*. The geopolitical signification of the axis results from what is described in the previous section, respectively the advance to the East of the Euro-Atlantic frontier. This advance to the East of the Euro-Atlantic frontier has structured the geopolitical space on two major geopolitical (strategic, economic etc.) axes, namely the **North – South** Axis (Russia – Armenia – Iran) and the **East – West** Axis, which includes, via Caucasus and the Black Sea, the essential energetic resources from Caspian Sea and intended for the Western countries.

The mentioned axes only delimit a region of fundamental security also on the agenda of great common rooms with interests and influence in the region.³ It is not the case to describe here the so-called “extended area of the Black Sea”, because a description was made elsewhere. This area should include all the three Caucasian states – Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan -, the Euro-Asiatic energetic corridor, which links the Euro-Atlantic system to the energetic reserves from the area of the Caspian sea and to the states from Central Asia. In addition, it is about a stable system of the Black Sea North of Transnistria, Odessa and Sokhumi, because a stable system supposes the solution of “frozen conflicts” along the North-East curve and the access to big commercial rivers that flow into the Black Sea: the Danube, the Nistru and the Nipru. At that moment, the concept of extended area of the Black Sea will be so broad and varied that the area of the North Plain of Germany or the area of the Baltic Sea/North (see: Ron Asmus and others: 2004). These political axes have become visible especially after 2000, when in Moscow president Putin comes to power. Finally, the geopolitical context and area has to be marked more frequently by orange landmarks or stakes with flower scent. The result of this geopolitical confrontation is what we see today around the Black Sea. Now let us set the mainframe in which the security problems of the area must be perceived and assessed.

Analytical mainframe of the regional security

Walker Connor, one of the most important American historians, commented somewhere on the main drawback of the domain which is called “international relations”: these specialists tautologically tells us that the states make war because of “state reasons”, but do not bother to explain what does this *raison d'état* mean, who and how legitimates it. And he was right, at least regarding the approach of international relations or the security that prevailed until not long ago. For understanding the significant evolutions from this field, until the matter of identity becomes, for Copenhagen for example, a crucial item on the security agenda, we have to rewind, even if concisely, the movie of the evolution of the domain we are concerned by in this work.⁴

After the World War II, the doctrine of *Ineo-realism* – with stress upon the bipolarity of the system – was dominated. One of the characteristics of this doctrine from the perspective of our immediate interest is the distinction between „*high politics*” and „*low politics*”. The issue of security is related to the first aspect – “security” regarded mainly the “politico-military” problem. The issue of environment, economy, social and “internal” problems belonged to the second field. „*Low politics*” was becoming interesting only in the moment of a direct impact in the diplomatic or military field.

This dichotomy was to enter a crisis after 1990, as well as the definition of “security”. The collapse of the USSR has led not only to a crisis of the world political system, but also to a crisis of the theory that supported it. As Edward Kolodziej shows, the security of the Soviet Union was totally compromised not by the lack of military capacities – enormous at that time -, but because of socio-economic reasons. The observation has decisive consequences, and mainly for the distinction of “*high*” and “*low politics*”, which progressively diminish their relevance. The failure of the “traditional” definition of security opens the perspective of a new debate which does not make itself expected and which in fact undertakes some of the trends detectable already before 1990.

Barry Buzan is a fundamental author here. His work from 1983, *People, States, and Fear* marks the most pregnant reconsideration of the security problems. The idea that the security must be reduced to the “study of threats, use and control of military forces” (Stephen Walt) – the classical definition-, irremediably enters into crisis. The target of Buzan’s work – the 1991 edition of which will have a greater impact than that of 1983 – is the redefinition of the concept of “threat” and the achievement of a useful connection between “threats” and “vulnerabilities”. Crucial questions now become: “*Namely what must be secured?*”, respectively the *object* of security, and “*Against what threats should the reference object be secured?*”. To a great degree these questions were those around which the security debates are centered from now on. For Buzan, the “security of human communities is affected by various factors in five major sectors: military, political, economic, societal and environmental. *The military security* regards the game in two levels of offensive and defensive capabilities of the states and the perception of states regarding the perceptions of each one. *The political security* regards the organizational stability of states, systems of government and ideologies that confer them legitimacy. *The economic security* regards the access to resources, markets and capital, necessary for supporting acceptable levels of welfare and power of the state.

The societal security regards sustainability, in acceptable conditions of evolution, of traditional language, cultural and religious patterns, as well as patterns of national customs and identity. The

environment security regards the maintenance of the local and global biosphere as an essential support on which depend all the other human activities. These five sectors do not operate separately. Each one defines a focal aspect of in the mainframe of the security problem and a method for ordering priorities, but all of them are linked together by a strong linking network" (Buzan 1991: 19-20). After this Buzan delimits the "international system", the "states" and the "individuals" as "objects of reference" and the military, political, economical, societal and environmental spectrums are potential sources of threat for the respective "objects of reference". However, for Buzan, at least in this work, the main object of reference of any security analysis must remain the *state*.⁵

Besides the roused criticism and disputes – or may namely because of that! -, the book has become one of reference in the study of international relations. A commenter, Ken Booth, wrote in 1991 about the volume: "...remains the most complete and complex theoretical analysis of the concept of security in the literature of international relations until now and, since its publication, we, the rest, still write its footnotes" (Apud Bird and Coft 2001). The 90s mark the appearance of a true reflection school, in which other researchers wish to undertake and continue the model joined Buzan. The group will be called "Copenhagen School". The culmination of these efforts is the work from 1998, *Security: A new Framework for Analysis*, in which the authors continue the analysis of security in military, societal, economic, environmental and political terms. These dimensions operate at different levels: states, groups of individuals (nations), regions or global contexts. The model is willowy and sufficiently subtle to include issues ignored for too long: poverty, migration, human traffic, environmental risks, economic or political threats.

The conceptualization of security has gone further within the school. Ole Wæver, for example, opens in 1995 the problem of security to its approach as the "state's" "discourse", from here comes the ambiguous relation between the two. Wæver talks about the "existential" threats addressed to the states and individuals, from here comes the appearance of the concept of "securing" – with reference to the *object* and *strategies* of security -, crucial in the analyses of this polymorphic school, which comprises researchers coming from neo-realism, as Buzan, or post-structuralists, as Wæver. The importance of the school, despite the criticism over years, is enormous, and not only on theoretical level (see McSweeney 1999). A fundamental fact for our goal is that it was felt in the strongest military alliances of all times.

In 1991, at the *summit* in Rome, NATO decreed – in a language that conspicuously reminds that of Copenhagen School - , that the security now has five dimensions: military, societal, political and environmental. It is the most durable and concrete performance of this perspective: it put its mark on the highest level of global politics. One more reason for being assumed at its real magnitude.⁶

Political context

The political context appears to become a favourable one for a more consistent and efficient approach of the Black Sea's agenda. We are talking about the ⁷change of stresses in the European politics, from the so-called "Euro-continentalism" (*neo-gaullism*) to "Euro-Atlantism". As all commentators of the area have unanimously observed, "during the last years the German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, together with the president of France, Jacques Chirac, have opted for a *neo-gaullist* concept about Europe, which tends to build its political and geo-strategic identity in opposition to the United States of America" (Vieregger 2005).

But the electoral changes outlining in Berlin suggest changes in the *German foreign policy strategy*. This is the thing that interests us the most here. The pre-election polls each time show consistent advantages for Angela Merkel (around 15-20%) before the candidate of the Social Democratic Party. Angela Merkel will be, in the eventuality of her election, the first German chancellor from Eastern extraction from the post-Nazi period. This detail must not be neglected, if we take into account that the Christian-Democrats from the East of Germany regard America much more positively than the average of the country, and share at least reticent ideas regarding the Russian Federation – according to other opinions, the Russian Federation would be the main threat for Germany's security. In addition, Angela Merkel represents a new type of politics in Berlin – a new type of "right", with admiration for the Anglo-Saxon people, especially for the British model. The similarity with the French minister of Home Affairs, Nicolas Sarkozy, from this point of view is important. (Bordonaro 2005).

Signals in this direction were numerous as well. Regarding the presence of Germany in Irak, Merkel is not content by the absence of Germany in the area – in addition, in Berlin and Washington there were

discussions about the positive opinion expressed by Merkel in relation to the American president George Bush and his policy in Iraq. There are many opinions that affirm that an “eventual victory of Merkel will bring Germany to the Kohl period, when Germany was the main partner of the USA in Europe. Secondly, Germany’s interests for newcomers to the EU will be synchronized with those of Great Britain, particularly in the extended area of Black Sea. Even if the Berlin – Moscow energetic partnership will continue, Merkel will be much more cautious with this partnership, in order not to be in opposition with the targets of Washington in the Middle East or Central Asia (Bordonaro 2005).

This is the reason why in Washington “everybody concentrates on what comes after Schroeder”, affirms Stephen Szabo, specialist in European problems at the Johns Hopkins University (apud. Ibid.). If “what comes after” is Angela Merkel with her vision about Germany as an “honest broker” between the different players with an Atlantic community affected by conflicts, she will have to work hard for the amelioration of relations with America. Angela Merkel knows this and probably she will try to do it – even if she hesitates to include clearly this point in the electoral platform of her party.

These evolutions will influence the relation of Germany with Russia, on one hand, and that of Europe with Russia, on the other hand. As it was already said, Germany had a “complex foreign policy”, in which it tried to balance the expansion of the EU to the East and its privileged relations with Russia (Russia as a commercially and energetically strategic partner). However, the complexity of this policy, which is talked about recently, cannot ignore the Paris – Berlin relation as a crucial axis of foreign policy. The most important aspect here is, however, the decrease of the role which the Paris – Berlin alliance will have in future. If the foreign policy of Schroeder or Chirac was one of detachment from the foreign policy of the USA, this time might predominate the *principle of complementarity*, together with the changes from Paris and Berlin. Indeed, while Schroeder is busy with the declaration of his firm confidence in this reliable mechanism, Nicolas Sarkozy, the holder of the Ministry of Home Affairs of France and the potential successor of Jacques Chirac in 2007, has already expressed his feeling that this Franco-German cooperation is outdated. On June 27th, he declared to the French press that “an expanded Europe cannot continue to be alimented only by the power of an engine in cycles” (apud. Ibid.) Therefore, there exist the premises for the re-definition of the foreign policy of those two countries, if not radically, then at least significantly, in case of major changes in Paris and Berlin. The switch of Europe’s foreign policy – in case something like this will be brought about – from “neo-gaullism” to “Euro-Atlantism” will be a good thing for a strategy at the Black Sea and, implicitly, for the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the states in the region.

The East is the epicentre of responses of the earthquake in the EU – or the need for a strategy at the Black Sea

Besides these favourable contexts, we must also approach the elements which make the strategy at the Black Sea an unquestionable necessity. The failures of referenda for the European Constitution in France and Holland transformed for some European commentators into a true “earthquake”. An earthquake the responses of which were most acutely felt in the Black Sea, and Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are the most affected countries (Emerson 2005). But the effect will be felt in Belgrade, the whole South Caucasus and in Moscow, too. Not all virtual or actual partners of the EU have felt the shock in the same degree. *The effect of the shock was directly proportional with the will of the respective states/regions to finally integrate in the EU.* From here comes the idea that the partner states included in the so-called Process from Barcelona do not feel acutely this shock since the Arabic states have never really had expectations or wishes to integrate in the EU (Ibid.:1).

But the situation is different at the Black Sea or in the Balkans. This valve sticking which occurred at the level of Western Europe has short- and medium-term effects and these must be identified. As we have already mentioned, we deal with a gradual effect of the European earthquake. For example Romania and Bulgaria, which have already signed the Treaties of adherence, must pass through the ratification process through the parliaments of the EU member countries. Given the fact that the ratification is made by parliamentary vote, the chances of success are big. Nevertheless, how some commentators suggest, there may be emotions, especially if the integration of Romania and Bulgaria will be delayed until 2008, and the ratification will take place in the middle of the election campaign for the presidential elections in France. Turkey comes on the second place, with the date for starting the adherence negotiations set on October 3rd. The pros and cons debates have begun again, and grey clouds may gather upon Turkey, especially if the elections will accredit the Sarkozy and Merkel couple in France, respectively Germany. The above mentioned are followed by the Baltic states, members of

the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), including Albania and Serbia-Montenegro, with Macedonia being the applicant state. From June 16th-17th, 2005, the Council of Europe has encouraged, this states regarding the adherence to the EU, some significant groups of European level even suggesting 2014 as target year. (ibid.2)

Now comes the turn of states included in the “Policy of Neighbourhood” of the EU, respectively Ukraine, Moldova, and the three states from South Caucasus, the most affected by the “earthquake” from the EU and which now see their chances of integration in more and more dark colours. The shock is even bigger because, in the meanwhile, new regional initiatives appeared, among the most significant being the so-called “Baltic – Black Sea axis”, respectively the “club of Georgia’s friends”, to which have adhered four new member of the EU (Estonia, Lithuania, Leetonia and Poland), together with Romania and Bulgaria (February 2005), the resurrection of GUAM (the Summit from Chisinau in May 2005 being an important element) or the particular interest which Romania, through president Traian Basescu in the first place, show for the area of the Black Sea.

Under these conditions, the question that surprisingly arises today is related to the moment which was reached in the field of relations between these countries and the Western institutional area: *which are the risks that arise regarding the democratization of this area in the context of a blockade of the process of Euro-Atlantic integration?* More concretely: was the critical mass of the democratization process reached in that region to a degree that a blockade/reduction of integrationist processes would not affect the already triggered democratization? (Ibid.:4). Our answer is no! More than that, we think that a slowing-down of the integrationist processes will generate a massive set-back of the democratization of the area and will trigger a short- and medium-term crisis which will be handled with difficulty by the EU. The need of an *update* of European policies and of some signs that the area was not abandoned is imperative. Moreover, the need of an authentic strategy at the Black Sea today asserts more stringently than ever. Before approaching this issue directly, we will mention a few more moments in its premises: what are the precedents on which this kind of strategy could be based?

Elements for a strategy at the Black Sea. The Baltic Sea case.

So far, despite the initiative launched in 2004 by German Marshall Fund, by institutional networks or by the debates with this vector (Asmus... 2004), there does not yet exist an authentic strategy at the Black Sea. The field political and geopolitical realities are and are not the most favourable premises for such an adventure that had already entered the horizon of expectation of at least the countries bordering on the Black Sea. The divergent interests, the sometimes contradictory affiliations make this region with few collaboration traditions, historically speaking, hardly to place under a single efficient institutional cupola. In 2003-2004, the years when the mainframes of the future strategies were being created, the Black Sea presented itself, institutionally speaking, in this eclectic form (Aydin 2004:21)

Participation of countries from the extended area of the Black Sea in international and regional organizations⁸

	BSEC	EU	NATO	OSCE	GUAM	CIS	Collective Defence Treaty from Tashkent	SECI	Stability Pact	WTO World Trade Organization	Council of Europe
Albania	X	SAA	EAPC	X				X	X	X	X
Armenia	X	PCA	EAPC	X		X	X			X	X
Azerbaijan	X	PCA	EAPC	X	X	X				O	X
Belarus	X		EAPC	X		X	X			O	
Bulgaria	X	A	EAPC	X				X	X	X	X
Georgia	X	PCA	EAPC	X	X	X				X	X
Greece	X	x	x	X				X	X	X	X
Macedonia	AC	SAA	EAPC	X				X	X	X	X
Moldova	X	PCA	EAPC	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Romania	X	A	EAPC	X				X	X	X	X
Russia	X	PCA	EAPC	X		X	X			O	X
Serbia & Montenegro	AC	SAA		X				X	X	O	X
Turkey	X	NNA	X	X				X	X	X	X
Ukraine	X	PCA	EAPC	X						O	X

For integrating these countries with diverse affiliations – some of them contradictory! – is needed imagination, commitment and persistence in the project. There are no standardized formulae and no guaranteed solutions. Among the projects circulated and implemented on the continent, with relevance for the area of the Black Sea, we consider that two deserve the most profound attention, exactly for offering a number of suggestions for what should be a Euro-Atlantic strategy at the Black Sea. Their acronym is NEI and, respectively, NDI.⁹

The Northern European Initiative (NEI) is a political strategy launched by the USA in September 1997, during the second mandate of President Clinton. The fact that it was so little written about it and that it was discussed relatively seldom, makes it one of the most interesting American initiatives, especially for the expanded area of Black Sea. Its origins are found in an article of RAND analysts, Ronald Asmus and Robert Nurick (the first will become the Second Secretary of State, USA), appeared in 1996 in *Survival* periodical (Asmus and Nurick 1996). The target of the article was to find a solution for solving the problem of Baltic States and of the relations with NATO regarding the expansion to come. The relation between NATO and the USA was evident in this case. In 1998 the US-Baltic Countries Charter is signed, and NEI becomes an option of future.

The adherence to NATO in 1999 has not included the Baltic countries, only Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic. The exclusions were made firstly thanks to Moscow's opposition, generating the idea that the expansion from 1999 may be cited under two aspects: on one hand the USA are favoured by the expansion and Russia by blocking the Baltics. In this case some had spoken about passing from geopolitical games with a null sum to a "win-win" game situation (Tassinari 2004: 198-201). NEI tended to be placed somewhere in between. The idea of cooperation with Russia in Northern Europe is a geopolitical event and change of attitude. The cooperation covers many of the fields that are part, after the NATO Summit in 1991, of the category called "soft security". The NEI agenda is based on 6 priorities: *promoting commerce and business, promoting the rule of law, building the civil society, energy, environment and public health*. The applicability area was, as we mentioned: Baltic countries, North countries and Russia. The target was not any more a formula of "games with zero sums" type, but a "win-win situation". Nevertheless, the articulation of NEI with NATO, from here the inherent *realism* of the project, is an essential element for the comprehension of the American strategy in the area. (See Browning 2001 and 2002 also).

The initiative has never disappeared with the political changes at the White House. In October 2003, Bush launched the so-called *Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe* (e-PINE). This new American initiative was built on the NEI experience and regarded the continuation of the basic pattern and philosophy – in addition, it claimed a possible export mechanism in other similar areas. What this policy really meant was seen later: a temporary and softer substitute for the actual presence of NATO in the area (Tassinari 2004: 200). In essence, it is about the illustration of the fact illustrated concisely by Colin Powell: "NATO is the fundament of our relations with Europe. It is something inviolable. Weaken NATO and you will weaken Europe, that will weaken America" (apud. Browning 2002). In conclusion, NEI and its "eyeball", e-PINE, have opened new paths of action and collaboration for the North dimension of Europe, especially between the Baltic countries and Russia. No matter what were the initial intentions, the interpretations were almost never similar or convergent, from this result the syncopes and malfunctions.

The *Europeanization* of this collaboration on Northern scale of the old continent will not delay and will get the allure of an applied and consistent policy, even if even it is not free of syncopes. NDI or the EU *Northern Dimension Initiative* was launched in 1997, but its roots are more distant (Tassinari 2004: 201-204). In order to understand the premises of this European initiative, two previous elements must be brought into discussion: the regional policies that had begun to be promoted in the „Baltic Sea Regional Initiative“. In 1995 was launched the idea of a regional mainframe of dividing Europe into seven regions, one of them being the region of Baltic Sea. The *Baltic Sea Regional Initiative* is launched in 1996, and the two initiatives become, as we were saying, the premises of the project to come.

NDI is launched in September 1997 through the discourse of the Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen - Finland's initiative remains since one of reference regarding the international relations. In his speech, he stated: "a policy dedicated to the Northern Scale must be based on the definition of the interest of the Union in the area". It must be mentioned that, for understanding this initiative and its success "the Finnish label that existed in the periods before the project was submitted and

implemented must not be neglected." (apud. Tassinari 1994: 205) How it was well observed, the EU was now becoming not an actor, but *the actor* in the area. The European dimension of the initiative was outlined in the speech of the same person: "the Northern dimension of the EU is not a regional initiative, but regarding the politics of the whole Union."

The plan forwarded by the Finnish minister confirms this modification, because the initiative pursued five main problems: *economical cooperation, infrastructure, natural resources, environmental cooperation, frontier cooperation*. In essence, it is about the non-military security issues exposed in the initiative of the EU Commission in 1996. Regarding the relations between this project and the expansion of the EU, the Finnish prime minister has outlined not only once the fact that the two are not at all exclusive: "in fact, NDI is always ahead, supporting and completing the expansion process."

The initiative from 1997 has caught attention rapidly, because it already came from a constituted horizon of expectative. Rather fast, it achieves recognition of EU scale. In November 28th, the Commission issued a Release regarding NDI. The three Northern presidencies of the EU are constituted in favourable factors of promoting the project. There were organized Ministerial Conferences on this issue and a Plan of Action was forwarded, which was supported at the Council of Europe in June 2000. The Plan of Action followed the initial project of the Finnish minister, and indicated clearly a series of priority targets, namely the environment, energy - more specific, the access to the immense resources of the Russian Federation -, the human and scientific resources, health, criminality prevention and the issue of Kaliningrad. the financial aspect was to be regulated by the community framework: TACIS, PHARE and INTERREG.

As the commentators of this project mentioned, the main problem is that the ambiguity of the Plan of Actions was, equally, the force and weakness of NDI. The addition of Russia to the program was an element that made the project less efficient and introduced syncopes. the ambiguity functioned, because it was left at the discretion of the parties to decide the limits or the depth of implication in the relation with the Russian Federation.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the openings offered by the Plan of Actions must not be underestimated, and the energetic dimension of the project - that generates the importance of the Russian Federation - was significant initiative in a moment in which Moscow was not important of the oil market it has nowadays. the thing that lacked more was, according to Fabrizio Tassinari, the "lack of political view". The lack of clarity and foresight of Bruxelles - there is no fixed budget, administrative flexibility, lack of centralization - made that the project not reach the ambitions of its initiators.

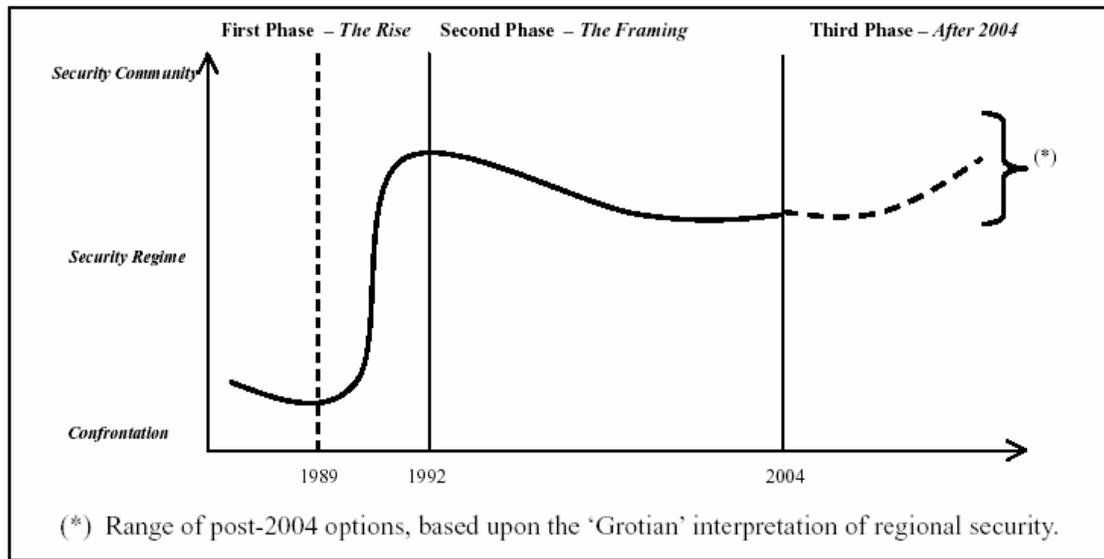
Nevertheless, the project was not abandoned, and at the European Council in Bruxelles from October 16th-17th, 2003, during the Danish presidency, was adopted the Second Plan of Action, for the period of 2004-2006 (Ibid.:213). The Plan of Actions was centered on five sectors: economy, human resources, environmental problems, trans-frontier cooperation. This time there were accentuated two points rather ignored previously: regional cooperation and the addition of Russia (one of the targets was Kaliningrad.)

The result of these projects is not the object of this study. It is sufficient to remind here that the Baltic countries were included in NATO during the second stage of expansion and, after that, in the EU (2004). Which was the contribution of these projects is too soon to be told. There is no sufficient proof for evaluating such a thing. But it is certain that they had an important role in these evolutions and - because of this! - can be used as patterns for other areas. The area we suggest is the extended area of the Black Sea, which nowadays needs a "Finland" the most!

Black Sea - comparative analysis

The extended region of the Black Sea can be understood the best in a comparative context, the comparable elements being the two European seas already included, even if partially, in the Euro-Atlantic area: the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea. Generally speaking, Fabrizio Tassinari identifies three analytical framings for the description of cooperation at the Baltic Sea from the fall of Iron Curtain until the Euro-Atlantic integration of the three countries, as it can be seen in the image below.

Figure 28: Baltic Sea Region cooperation from post-Wall to post-enlargement Europe



The first framing coincides with the appearance of what Tassinari calls "*regionalism from below*", namely a natural regionalism, historically located, revived and now promoted by a small number of Scandinavian intellectuals.¹¹ This group had an extraordinary logistic importance, because they were the voice that expressed and systematized number of field initiatives in this direction. They have become real "regional actors" and have indicated the potential for the subsequent regional construction. "The common experience, the new feeling and life altogether characterized the North, they told, can be reformulated with regard to the Baltic Sea also"(apud. *ibid.*:274). The Baltic Sea has a sufficiently rich history, own myths and mythologies capable to generate a consistent regional identity. The idea of debates was not opposed to the state initiatives that intended to build a regional identity, on the contrary, a "*top-down*" approach was welcome, but with complementary function, but never as a main accelerator of the project. The intervention of institutional actors marked this first stage, and the creation, in 1992, of the *Council of the Baltic Sea States* (CBSS) has finished it. For the "founder parents" of this institutional structure, this formula was "a symbolic step for building a new, united Europe."

The second framing, which lasted until 2004, is characterized by foreign and security policies that may be put under the title of *Europeanization*. In fact, at the Baltic Sea there existed three categories of states situated under this regional cupola, with different agendas. Namely, the "Old Europe"(Germany and North countries), the "New Europe"(Poland and Baltic countries) and Russia. Given the institutional location or different interests, the three agendas every time similar, especially regarding security problems. In Tassinari's opinion, there can be identified two discourses that regard security problems. The first was prominent in the first half of the second framing, and regarded the expansion of NATO and the EU. Its terms were confrontational, traditional, namely hulling a geopolitical game of null sums. The Baltic region (BSR) was placed in that period at the border of two "quasi-empires", the EU (plus NATO) on one side and Russia on the other. For the first camp, the expansion of the EU and NATO meant the expansion of the Western military complex to the East and the achievement of a more secure and securitized Europe. For Russia this was a loss, a invasion of the "near vicinity"and threats for its own security.

The second discourse more probably marked the second half of the second framing and was identified as "dimensionalism". Here are included NDI and NEI. Together with these initiatives was introduced a mainframe of increasing the interdependence by securizing the non-military aspects, a different one in relation to the first framing in which the stress fell on the military dimension. This dimension was accentuated in the third framing, *post-2004*, in which the discourses related to security/securization went together with the political one. It must be outlined here that the security problems related to environment, for example, were extremely important. From this point of view, the Baltic Sea is an exception, not a pattern. The gravity of the environmental problem in the Baltic Sea has forced this

regional collaboration. (From this point of view, the similarities with the Black Sea are obvious, and one of the "engines" of a collaboration at the Black Sea should be the problems of environment - disastrous in the region.)

The Baltic and the Mediterranean Sea

There is a significant literature that tries to compare the type of cooperation at the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea (Maestro 2001). Firstly, it was outlined that both are "closed seas". Both regions "benefit" from the presence of EU states - France, Italy, Spain, and Greece etc. in case of the Mediterranean Sea -, applicant countries - Turkey and the Balcanic area - or non-member states - Northern Africa or the countries of Middle East. In addition, in both cases the presence of the EU regarding the coordination and activation of the regional collaboration was massive.

Beyond similarities, it seems that the differences still prevail (Tassinari 2004: 282-283). The experience of regional collaboration has not gone through the same chronological order - if in the case of the Baltic Sea the post Cold War period was that in which the collaboration has practically begun, in the case of the Mediterranean Sea the things were clarified long ago from this point of view. "Tabula plena" is the syntagm used to mark this case. Secondly, the initiation and promotion of the region of the Baltic Sea was inspired by what happened at the Mediterranean Sea. NDI was inspired by what was called the "Barcelona process", the framework through which the EU is involved in the Mediterranean Sea starting with 1995. The differences are important here also. Thirdly, the Mediterranean dimension of the collaboration was deficient with regard to the collaboration of actors from the region. The reasons are obvious: the extraordinary diversity around the Mediterranean defies any tentative to put all the actor under firm control. It is more natural to speak here about sub-regions, as the Adriatic, Egee Seas etc.

The Baltic and Black Sea

Even if more quantitatively and qualitatively limited, there still exists literature that tries to compare the Baltic case with that of the Black Sea (Vahl 2001: 9-10, Emerson 2001). The latter is also surrounded by states with diverse affiliations: future EU members - Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, non-member states - Ukraine, Georgia, Russian Federation. For now, the poor collaboration at the Black Sea has taken shape in the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, about which we will discuss in one of the following sections.

The differences greatly surpass the similarities. The EU presence is incomparably reduced, the same as that of NATO. If in the Baltic case the security problems accentuated the non-military aspects, namely the *soft-security*, in case of the Black Sea the challenges are (also) of other nature. The so-called "frozen conflicts" from the region bring forward concrete threats and of *hard* type (Tessarini 2004, 283). The region starts to catch the Western interest by an initiative that was little talked about (it is true that it did not have a resultful path.) The so-called *Eastern Dimension* is one that begins to make its way to the agenda of interests of the Euro-Atlantic political actors and regarded the "new" EU neighbours, namely Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Russia etc. The initiator and main "sponsor" of the initiative was Poland, a country that entered the EU in 2004. Poland has discussed about these issues since 1998, and in 2003, a "non-paper" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland starts to circulate in the Western common rooms. The Polish suggestion invoked the experience of NDI, specifying that the ED does not intend to become a competitor of NDI, but rather complementary with it. It should be built on the experience of the Northern Dimension and on that of the process from Barcelona" (apud. *ibid.* 284).

The regional differences are significant, of course. The so-called "frozen conflicts" from the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh, the dictatorship from Belarus, the poverty from Ukraine or the Republic of Moldova, the massive dependency on Russia of the states from this region etc. In addition, unlike the other cases, the regional idea of the Black Sea has appeared only sporadically and inconsistently at the local elites.¹² Unlike the region of the Baltic Sea, that from the Black Sea includes countries that have no immediate chances to adhere to the EU. The Polish suggestion indicates from this point of view the fact that these countries must not be denied this possibility. The door has to stay open, irrespective of the fact how far is this perspective. It is interesting to apprehend that "the ED strategy regards four East-European countries, among which Poland does not figure. This is a different situation from that of Finland, for example (or even that of Poland), which was included in NDI" (*ibid.*: 285). The philosophy changes: "it is not about inclusion or participation, but about the identification of one another and securization, which NDI (in part) and the region of the Baltic Sea wished to get over. Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus are threats that have to be solved, problems that

must be settled, unlike the challenges that would arise if their incorporation was regarded". In addition, as it was noted, the Polish non-paper referred to the Russian Federation only *en passant*, without discussing the distinct status of this country or the enormous influence regarding the other countries. The influence of this initiative, which did not explicitly regard the Black Sea, was reduced.

Romania - Finland at the Black Sea

The premises set at this point are, of course, as a rough guide. With regard to the capacity of exporting the "Baltic pattern" or its compatibility with the Black Sea, things must be taken with precaution. If there exist similarities between the region of Baltic Sea and that of the Black Sea, however, they are more probably of morphologic or geopolitical nature.

The main difference relies in the different degree in which these regions were affected by *Europeanization*.¹³ The Baltic Sea is by far the most privileged region, because the other regions were almost not at all affected by the expansion from 2004. Secondly, there are no "hard" security problems at the Baltic Sea anymore, which would slow down the processes, which is not the case of the Black Sea, where these are priorities. Thirdly, the aspect of "inclusivity" has dominated the cooperation at the Baltic Sea since its very beginning, was visible and efficient, while in the rest of the cases, especially in the case that interests us here, this element was not present. (Tassinari 2004: 286). The conclusion, according to which the Baltic Sea is an exception in this context, and not the rule, seems to be right.

Nevertheless, the "Vicinity Policy" of the EU, which regards states from the mentioned region (as well) in concrete Plans of Actions (2004) cannot be ignored (Emerson 2004). It is a step, and a significant one. Besides this, however, there gathered a series of evolutions that make things impossible to stay at this stage. The idea of a strategy at the Black Sea, which has some consistent premises, as we have already seen, has become an imperative today.

Firstly, in order to avoid a project crisis in this area, specified by the skepticism settled at the level of the EU population and also at the level of some important political leaders, the EU will have to *upgrade* its integration policies so that it would compensate the European effort regarding the adherence to the union of the countries from the area. The CEPS researcher, Michael Emerson, considers, for example, that such a reevaluation based on the idea forwarded by Romano Prodi, according to which the spaces must "accept anything, but not institutions", is necessary, reiterating the mainframe already launched by the former Chief of the European Commission: I. *Politics* - democracy and human rights and education; II. *Economy*: macroeconomy, market economy and economic networks; III. *Security* - justice and home affairs and foreign security (Emerson 2005: 5; see also Emerson 2004). In addition, it is suggested to change the name from "Vicinity Policy" to "*European Integration Policy*", which would better suit the interests of the respective governments and states.

Which would be the role of the Black Sea area in these evolutions? As we have already seen, without being fully assimilable, the Baltic pattern offers some suggestions. We must start off from the idea that the Black Sea is today the only European natural "outskirt" which was ignored by Bruxelles (Aydin 2005). The resurrection of this problem in Bucharest, especially together with the integration of Romania and Bulgaria in the EU, may reopen the file. The old existent structures and with influence at the Black Sea must be re-calibrated and coordinated, and some of them adjusted to the realities. The case of *Economic Cooperation at the Black Sea* is the most important. The actual format of BSEC is insufficient, and Romania has to fight diplomatically for its change and adjustment. In the autumn of this year, Romania will receive the presidency of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which "is extremely important from the point of view of promoting our strategy on the extended area of the Black Sea"(president Basescu, September 2005). This institutional framework is insufficient.

The EU was initially invited by the BSCE, but refused to participate, and Russia has then declared the high officials of BSEC that "the active implication of the EU will *not* be well received". In May 2005, the USA was denied the status of observer, *what placed America somewhere below Slovakia, a country that has the status of observer*. (Russia is considered the country that blocked the implication of the USA, a fact that infuriated 8 post-Soviet countries at the Black Sea, which publicly declared that the USA must be admitted at the debates. Turkey did not comment on the event, even BSEC is its "product" and it could have influenced the decision. In addition, the amelioration of relations between Russia and Turkey will make BSEC more and more unfunctional.

Under these conditions, the initiative must be taken urgently. As it was already suggested, Romania and Bulgaria could be committed to what was called by a commentator the “Black Sea Forum” (Emerson 2004: 6), namely an institutionalized framework based on the initiatives described above and eventually co-sponsored by the EU. All members of **CEMA** should adhere to this mainframe, plus, mandatory, the United States of America. What should come after this is a Plan of Action at the Black Sea, supported financially by the European Union. The relation with Russia should be negotiated in this new mainframe – situation similar to NEI or NDI. An important point of the agenda must be NATO, which under the conditions of relative recoil of the EU in the area must take over the Euro-Atlantic integration. It we should resume the several ideas that are now on the market and expect a regional actor – a Finland! – capable of giving them coherence, these would be the following:

- The crisis of referenda from the EU are to be compensated with fresh initiatives, because the risk of dropping from the processes already initiated by the Euro-Atlantic area should not be underestimated in the conditions in which the *critical mass*¹⁴ for integration has not yet been produced in the majority of countries from the extended area of the Black Sea;
- The EU has to *upgrade* its policies in the area, respectively to pass from the “Vicinity Policy” to the “European Integration Policy”;
- The need of a new strategy at the Black Sea is imperious. Romania (together with Bulgaria, eventually) would have to take an initiative and try to formulate an inspired coherent project probably inspired by initiatives of NEI and NDI type; the idea of a “Forum at the Black Sea” in which the EU and USA will be represented at the end top, must be brought, together with the BSEC members, to discussion more frequently and applied.
- NATO has to become a fundamental actor in the region, especially in conditions of a relative temporalization of the EU expansion in the region (Emerson 2004: 7).¹⁵

Therefore, the strategic directions of Romania, together with its European integration, must stay oriented especially towards the Black Sea, because only this way it can bring significant ideas and contributions to the table of foreign policies of the EU. The Black Sea is, as Gheorghe Bratianu said during the inter-war period, the actual area of Romania’s security.¹⁶ It is now appropriate to write some words about the (geo)political actor who needs, in our opinion, to take over a good part of the initiative on this area in the conditions when the EU, respectively NATO has pushed the stop button. Anticipating, we already suggest that the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization should be the only main strategic option for the Republic of Moldova.

NATO and the Black Sea

Besides the suggestions made above, there exist some concrete *external* and *internal* solutions that make the adherence to NATO of countries from the region imperious.¹⁷

Failure of the EU constitution and its effects for the East area

One of the effects of the blockade apparently reached by the EU is *the spiritual state of the population* from the “grey area” of the adherence, namely those states that have made revolutions (or evolutions) (also) for contiguity, then for integration in the EU. Faced by a refusal, we can expect that, gradually, they would go back, i.e. to where the “colourful revolutions” got them out from for a big period of time... Signs of satisfaction in this sense were already recorded in the capital of the Russian Federation. Alexei Makarin from the Centre of Political Technologies in Moscow declared on June 7th, 2005, according to RIA Novosti, reacted this way after the failure of the EU referendum: “in this situation, Russia has an opportunity window. Unlike the EU and the antagonisms between the states from which it consists, Russia exercises only one political will. Russia offers its neighbours concrete and lucrative economic projects, not only hope of integration in a far future. In the same time, Russia asks for much less in return from its neighbours. On the contrary, every step towards the European integration, even the most primary, is accompanied by numerous economic and political conditions. This is why, after the wave of colourful revolutions, the pendulum can go in the contrary direction. The labour parties from Georgia, the Progressive Socialists from Ukraine and the Rodina Movement from Moldova, which support the integration with Russia, could benefit from a big chance.”

This opinion was not the only one. According to *Russia up to date Agency*, under the title of “The failure of the European Constitution – a chance for Russia”, Alexander Dughin, geo-politician, the leader of the Euro-Asiatic International Movement, created on the basis of the pro-presidential movement, “Euro-Asia”¹⁸, publishes a significant article in *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* at the beginning of

June. The voice of Dughin is not the only one in this matter, but he is probably the most articulated. We give his text for indicate a clearer style of thought and approach.

In Dughin's opinion, "the European integration represents a geopolitical process, result of two rather different vectors. The increasing confrontation of these two vectors was the factor that generated the present European crisis. The problem resides in the fact that, in the first stage – 60s-70s, the process of European integration was prepared exclusively in the mainframe of Atlantism strategy – under the control of the USA and in the interests of NATO." We are talking about the consolidation of the Western world before the "Soviet threat". This was a stage of a strategic plan in the spirit of dual logic of the "Cold War" – "*capitalist Atlantism versus socialist Euro-Asiatism*". The stagnation of this NATO version of Europeanism still exists today. This phenomenon can be named "Euro-Atlantism". In this process, "a primary role comes, as always, to the United States and their close ally on the Old Continent, Great Britain, as well as to the newly entered states (not without pressures from the USA) from the East Europe and Baltic region. The Euro-Atlantism anticipates the NATO subsequent expansion to the East and follows the traditional line of the "Cold War" geopolitics, even if one without ideological significance."

The *Euro-Atlantism* insists on accepting former soviet republics, now "orange" – Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, to NATO and the EU. It stands for the admission of Turkey, makes pressures on Moscow with regard to "human rights" and Chechnya, attentively and tolerantly observes the separatist tendencies from North Caucasus and Povoljje. The Euro-Atlantists count on liberal ideology, called on to make the European economy and socio-political system closer to the ones in the USA.

Rejected by the French and Hollandaise, the project of European Constitution was elaborated by Euro-Atlantists and reflected their major priorities – equality in rights for all the countries, orientation towards the acceleration of including the CIS countries and Turkey in the EU. After the collapse of the USSR, another vector was observed in the European Integration, embodied in two giants of Europe – France and Germany. These two countries, with the most evolved economies and industries, with profound social (anti-liberal) tendencies. During the European integration, around the Paris – Berlin axis there gradually began to form a second alternative – the identity, nucleus of "another Europe". This phenomenon can be called *Euro-continentalism*. The essence of Euro-continentalism resides in the fact that the unified Europe is not thought of as a satellite of the USA and not as part of the Western world in the middle of vertiginous globalization, with a unique system of values, but as a geopolitically and historically independent subject with its own agenda, interests and with its own cultural, social and economic specific. The Euro-continentalism refuses the logic of "Cold War" and anti-Euro-Asiatism, especially because the ideological motives are history. In the opinion of Euro-continentalists the "community of values" between Europe and the USA means less today, and the difference in interests of the Middle East and Eurasia is, in its turn, more and more evident.

As a conclusion, Dughin states: "Totally unexpectedly, after its colossal failures in geopolitics in the post-soviet area, Moscow has got a chance. The strike made by the French to Euro-Atlantism is especially advantageous for Russia. From now on, the chance of fast integration in the EU of the "orange" opponents from CIS has fallen out, the Euro-Atlantism has weakened and, in consequence, the positions of Russia consolidated. Now Moscow has only to correctly and efficiently use the failure of its opponents." The Republic of Moldova must evaluate correctly the situation created and to decide firmly the direction it will follow in the far or near future.

Internationalization of the Black Sea

President Traian Basescu has recently appreciated in a public intervention that the Romanian-American partnership is based on two elements: legal and active military presence of the American forces at the Black Sea "by establishing new bases in the Black Sea area" and the *internationalization of the problems of this area*, which is one of the mechanisms that guarantee peace in the area. We can mention here a comparison with the Mediterranean Sea, former area of conflicts, until its internationalization was achieved and the final establishment of the VI American Fleet and other forces in the area. This would be the solution for the Black Sea, too. Today, the Black Sea is under the control of the Russian Federation (with its 6 bases), but the latter does not assure the type of internationalization of the Black Sea that would generate stability and democracy in the area by itself. (Dungaciu 2005).

There would be something more to add to this topic. It regards an extremely interesting news. Lenta agency announced, on June 12th, 2005, that the Italian vice admiral Ferdinando Sanfelice di

Monteforte, commander of the united military marine forces of NATO in Eastern Europe, warned that, in 2006, the „Active Endeavour”, antiterrorist mission that is carried out for several years in the Mediterranean Sea, will expand to the Black Sea, too. Here the position of the Russian commentator after hearing the news is interesting, too. This is what the cited agency writes: “The way of carrying out the *Atlantization* of the Black Sea will be seen by the way in which the *Active Endeavour* operation evolves in the Mediterranean. On the background of this operation there was applied, for the first time, article 5 of the status of NATO: on September 12th, 2001, on the day after the attack on WTC. Formally, *Active Endeavour* has begun on October 26th, 2001, at the same time with the issue of the formal order, in the Southern perimeter of the Mediterranean. At that date, NATO ships have proceeded to the actual course of the operation, supporting the international campaign against terrorism. Officially, Russia cannot forward any requests to the Organization. With the exception of Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine have an exit to the Black Sea. Even if they are not member yet, Georgia and Ukraine strongly support NATO. As to Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, they are already members of the Alliance. Russia is practically alone. There is only one thing left for it: following the British saying – *If you can't beat them – join them*, to sign for the mission. This way, Moscow will be able, to a certain degree, to protect its interests in the region.

And let's not forget that there is the problem of Crimea, of Sevastopol Ukrainian harbour – the main base of Russia's fleet from the Black Sea. According to the same comment, Kiev is so eager to join NATO as Tbilisi is, and they will undoubtedly try to use *Active Endeavour* in their own favour. “It is more that sure that the presence of the Russian fleet in Sevastopol will stop after 2017. If until that date Ukraine and Russia will keep the same political direction, in 2018 Sevastopol will become a NATO base.” The “internationalization” of the Black Sea is a process from which the Republic of Moldova won't stay away. The access to this process crucial for the area can be made only by the firm and total opening to the process of joining the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Why NATO? Home arguments

Integration in the EU and NATO cannot be seen as two different processes, at least at first. The idea of NATO as a *political project* is essential. This is the reason why, for example, the declarations of some Ukrainian officials according to which “if we would take care of Ukraine's military aspect it would have the possibility to join NATO in 2-3 years” must be read with seriousness. Ukraine does not have clear chances for joining NATO this soon, and the elections from 2006 may be decisive. The reason? NATO is not only a *military project* (Iceland, NATO member country, has no army, and North Korea, even if one of the most advanced armies in the world, with this regime, will never join NATO), but a *political one*, as well. The democratic values, in the first place, must be defended and *politically* exported. So, at least for the first instance, we can talk of *complementarity* between joining the EU and NATO.

Therefore, we refer to the “*non-military*” functions that NATO carries out and which, although left aside by some authors, are crucial for any regional evolution. These functions are extraordinary important, especially in the area that belonged to the USSR and where societies had not found the balance necessary for a functioning adequate to their objectives. These societies lack the *mainframe* in which they would function adequately. Now we come to the crucial function that NATO could fulfil: that of *rationalising* a society. The obvious *systematic* crisis suffered by the states in the area – crisis of functioning of the institutions, democratic deficit, elite selection etc. can be passed over only by *changing the rationality regime* of the system in its integrity. These major modifications – as in the case of Romania and Bulgaria, for example – are not taking place (only) in the interior – they happen much faster and more efficiently when the *mainframe (form)* of the evolution of processes is established from the exterior. NATO could function as such a *mainframe*, the most plausible by now and that could generate the necessary change of the system of functioning (social, political, economic etc.) of the states from the area of the Black Sea that have not yet integrated, including the Republic of Moldova. More than that, the Republic of Moldova and the other states from the region do not need to direct their projects of Euro-Atlantic integration only towards the EU. They have to try alternative solutions as well, and the most accessible today is NATO. In addition, it is more realistic as well, in conditions in which the EU seems to be more aggressively going to the *closing* of the doors and not their *opening*.

NATO – a strategic course of the Republic of Moldova

When, in 2003, during the big manifestations of protest organized by the CDPP, in the Great National Meeting Square were fluttered – for the first time in the Republic of Moldova! – the flags of the North-

Atlantic Treaty Organization, the reactions were contradictory. Some were amazed, other saluted them tacitly, and the majority stood concernedly, not say a word, expecting the consequence with fear. To the relief of the latter, the continuation did not take place. Not a political debate – as yet the CDPP is the only political party that continuously supports the adherence of the Republic to NATO -, not a public debate have not taken place in the Republic of Moldova. The journalists, political commentators, analysts etc., with rare exceptions, have kept the silence with regard to the subject. The very recent political signs have broken the ice and have promoted comments that appreciated the NATO option positively. This is very good, even if regrettable afterwards.

The debate is more necessary today, when it becomes more and more clearly how fluid is the situation of the Republic of Moldova from the security point of view, how little it depends on itself and how much on others, who do not necessarily wish its good. The AP OSCE resolution (Washington, July 1st - 15th 2005) plus other so-called plans of solving the conflict from the East of the Republic of Moldova have already provoked the stupefaction and irritation of the political leaders from Chisinau.¹⁹ This was well deserved - to *systematically* ignore the declarations of the parliament from Chisinau from June 10th, this year and to force Transnistria into elections when Chisinau walk more and more firmly towards the EU and NATO means, for a short term, to *write the electoral campaign of separatists* - the "Nazis from Chisinau unite with the Nazis from Romania and join the camp of American imperialism!" -, and for a long term, to *place the whole Republic of Moldova under the direct and indirect control of Tiraspol* and its protectors; more than that, to definitively block the Euro-Atlantic adherence of Chisinau. This causes the imperativeness of a discussion of this kind.

Republic of Moldova and NATO - significant steps towards a decision that was too long delayed

A fast review of the documents issued by NATO clearly indicates the fact that the functions, attributions and effects of joining the Alliance are today different from those resulting from this deed before 1989. The assumptions are total, the actions of the Alliance as well. Hence the insistences of the Western officials that the *political* dimension of joining NATO is crucial, or the stress on "unconventional threats" which threaten Europe or NATO from within the area of the Black Sea: drugs smuggling, illegal migration, arms and human traffic etc.

The Republic of Moldova is already a part of the security system at the Black Sea and must realize this fact as fast as possible. There are already signs that she had done it. On September 9th, 2005, an important official of the American State Department has announced that the expansion of NATO will not be possible before 2008. The adjunct undersecretary for European and Asiatic problems, Kurt Volker, has declared that the candidate countries are not yet ready for joining NATO. The candidate countries, Albania, Macedonia and Croatia hope to adhere at the end of the next year. The American official has mentioned, however, that the "situation is not favourable for an expansion of the Alliance this year or the next one."

The news is not at all favourable for a country like Moldova (unlike Ukraine, which had bigger requirements), which anyway had not signed the necessary documents for a so complex association. In addition, it is a sign that the doors of the alliance are not closing and that, in 2008, new members can join the North-Atlantic Treaty organization. It is a tacit invitation that must be ignored by Chisinau, continuing the series of positive measures taken until present. They exist, and *the actions made by the political leaders of the Republic of Moldova with regard to the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization are extremely significant. A significant event in the post-soviet history of the republic and was not properly outlined.*

From this point of view, the most important event taking place in this period is by far the concrete and solid approach that Chisinau continues towards the North-Atlantic Alliance through the Declaration from August 17th of Martin Fedor, Secretary of State at the Ministry of National Defence from Republic of Moldova, that came after the conclusion of the Moldo-Slovakian agreement of military collaboration, in which the representative of a NATO member country has spoken about the creation of a mixed military contingent of Slovaks and Moldavians is *essential*. On their way towards the Alliance, all the states have made their way through bilateral cooperation - Romania, for example, has made up a common battalion with Hungary, a NATO member country at that time. The event from August is, in fact, a top of an iceberg for a series of positive evolutions of Chisinau on the direction of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Chisinau, for example, has requested political support and assistance of NATO for elaborating an individual plan of actions of NATO-Republic of Moldova partnership and its implementation in parallel with achievement of Republic of Moldova - EU plan of actions. In the his speech from Tuesday, June 7th, in front of the North-Atlantic Council, in Brussels, president Vladimir Voronin has declared that the Republic of Moldova has irreversibly optioned for its integration in the EU and, despite an unfavourable geopolitical conjunction, attributes a major importance to the development of relations with NATO. "For the Republic of Moldova participation in the activities of the Council of the Euro-Atlantic partnership and of the "Partnership for Peace" Program is not an academic exercise. The actual problems we deal with - terrorism, aggressive and intransigent separatism, organized crime, human traffic, corruption, smuggling - represent a threat to the democratic essence of our states and can be solved only together", has declared Voronin, mentioning that for the Republic of Moldova the cooperation with NATO represents the best method to join the international efforts regarding the creation of a common security system in the Euro-Atlantic area and of consolidation of stability in the world. President Voronin sustains that the Republic of Moldova want to value to the maximum the potential of cooperation offered by the Partnership for Peace and the Council of the Euro-Atlantic partnersip and, at the same time, to increase the dynamics of its relations with NATO. "We consider the elaboration within PARP of the objectives of the partnership for the achievement of the reform of the national army and measures regarding the amelioration the capacities of our armed forces to operate along with the NATO forces to be of a special utility.

On June 7th, 2005, the collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and Romania in the military field has constituted the main subject of the discussions from Monday between the Minister of Defence, Valeriu Plesca, and the Ambassador of Romania in Chisinau, Filip Teodorescu. According to the Press Service of the Ministry of Defence, there were elaborated all the premises for such a collaboration – the parts have agreed that this can be achieved within the Partnership for Peace Program, and "directly" as well, the bilateral Agreement signed by the military institutions from Chisinau and Bucharest being the legal basis. This year, on June 18th, upon his return from the Reunion of the Ministers of Defence within the Euro-Atlantic partnership, the Minister of Defence, Valeriu Plesca, has declared, in an interview given to "Europa Libera" radio, that in the future *the adherence of Moldova to NATO is not excluded*. When he was asked if the conclusion of the individual Plan of Actions for the Republic of Moldova – NATO could constitute a first proof of the intention of authorities to give up the neutral status of the Republic of Moldova as a first step towards adherence to NATO, Plesca answered that the conclusion of a document of this type does not mean the adherence to a military-political bloc, but, at the same time, *does not exclude this fact*. In the opinion of the Minister, this fact "remains in the attention of the future of our country, civil society and especially of the political elites, which have to mark out the European policy of the Republic of Moldova."

In addition, the official visit of the Minister of National Defence of Romania, Teodor Atanasiu, in Chisinau, on June 21st, this year, has become a new stage in the more efficient achievement of the common plan of cooperation between the armies of the two states. In other words, the cooperation of the Republic of Moldova with NATO, because this is what means the relation of the Republic of Moldova – Romania in this respect. At the end of July, this year, a delegation of the Republic of Moldova, lead by the Minister of Defence, Valeriu Plesca, has visited the USA, where they have met representatives of Pentagon. The discussed issues were: the Moldo-American bilateral collaboration, problems of global and regional security, the fight against terrorism etc. According to a press release of MD service, Plesca has had meetings with the vice-regent adjunct of the Secretary of Defence of the United States, Gordon England, and with the adjunct of the assistant of the Secretary of State in politico-military problems, Robert Loftis, for identifying the "priorities of the net year's collaboration" and for marking out the "ways of achieving this goals within the Moldo-American military relations".

On August 4th, 2005, President Voronin has assembled a meeting with the participation of the decisive factors within the Government and Parliament, dedicated to launching the process of elaborating the Individual Plan of Actions of the Republic of Moldova – NATO Partnership. According to "Moldova Suverana" official publication (No. 124 of August 5th, 2005), "the chief of state has reminded the participants of the meeting that he has requested the signing of an Individual Plan of Actions of Partnership (IPAP) with NATO on June 7th, this year, during the participation to the meeting of the North-Atlantic Council in Brussels". Vladimir Voronin has announced that, recently, "he has received a positive answer to this intercession from the Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who informed the government of Moldova about the decision of the North-Atlantic Council to sign such a document with our country already in the first semester of 2006." The president has exposed in detail

a series of arguments in favour of the elaboration and implementation of the Republic of Moldova – NATO IPAP. The participation to the NATO “Partnership for Peace” Program, since March 1994 and until now, “has brought Moldova numerous political, economic and security benefits and determined the approach between our country and the Alliance.”

In an interview given to “Moldova Suverana” periodical from August 17th. 2005 (no. 130), the Minister of Defence, Valeriu Plesca, has reiterated these ideas:” the experience and the positive results of cooperation within the Partnership for Peace, the expansion of the Alliance up to the borders of the Republic of Moldova, the conclusion of the Moldova – EU Plan of Actions, the increase of the political dimension in the activity of NATO – all these dictate the necessity of passing to another stage of the political dialogue and cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.”

The interventions of the minister have the look of a true campaign. He has come back to this issue in Moldova Suverana again (No. 138 of September 1st, 2005), stating: “In my opinion, the parallel achievement of the two plans, Moldova – NATO and Moldova – European Union, will accelerate the achievement of our main objective – joining the EU... Together with the beginning of the elaboration of the Moldova – NATO Individual Plan of Actions, the Ministry of Defence has practically become one of the main bodies of state, on which depends the success of this action. Starting from this point, a special section of Euro-Atlantic integration, which will deal exclusively with this problem, was created within the already accomplished reform of the central body of the military department. It will coordinate and elaborate all the basic documents in the military field which will be stipulated by this plan.” From the perspective of evolutions from the Republic of Moldova with regard to the North-Atlantic Treaty, these declarations are extremely spectacular. They must catch consistency as soon as possible. On the other hand, some unofficial voices coming from the top of the government try to accredit the contrary, namely that these signs do not mean what some would interpret as: “So, what does Moldova want? To join NATO? Categorically not. Voronin did not want, does not want will not want us in NATO. The CDPP adepts, i.e. those of Iu. Rosca, would want us in NATO. But the power is in Voronin’s hands, who, since 2001, has wanted to unite the countries. (Moldova Suverana, July 2005).

Organized into a comparative grid, these last voices have more probably a strategic importance than an actual one and have the appearance of muting certain declarations which may irritate internal and external groupings for which the NATO option of the Republic of Moldova is unacceptable (as it was, probably, in the case of the Baltic republics, too...). We have to wait and see which opinion will be the winner and in what direction will the actions of Chisinau authorities be going.

Conclusions

In any debate regarding the positioning of a country in a security area, the reaction of the population, society, leaders of opinion remains the crucial factor. From this point of view, *a more consistent debate in Chisinau on the matter of security options of the Republic of Moldova imposes itself*. Today, it is obvious that the so-called “neutrality” is an anachronism without importance and value. The alternatives must be researched, and the only viable option – NATO – is one that was not explicated and debated enough. The decision must be based on a serious debate, not on political labels and patterns apodictically formulated. The media and the civil society must open a dialog through the afferent channels at the end of which the security option of the Republic of Moldova would appear more clearly. Today it is not clear at all. The pro-European declarations of the leaders are not necessarily a warranty –*the critical mass for the North-Atlantic option was not yet reached* in the Republic of Moldova.

Not a single country of those saved from the former soviet camp has joined the EU without first joining NATO. It is not difficult to understand why. NATO integration is a process. This very process is the one that modifies almost radically the institutional configuration of an area (changes at the administrative, human, selection criteria levels etc.). This means the capacity of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization of rationalizing the social systems. The present state of the society of the Republic of Moldova, crushed by corruption, systems of relatives in selecting and promoting any kind of staff (political, administrative, academical level), the institutionalized and state corruption, administration and allegiance of the sub alternates by through files and blackmail etc. does not have yet any relation to the functioning of a society which wants to join the EU. Because of this, the initial integration into NATO was a fundamental condition - and still is! - for the subsequent integration into the EU of the societies from the East of Europe, including the Republic of Moldova.

The idea of NATO as a political project is crucial. The democratic values must be protected and politically exported in the first place, as we have already mentioned in our analysis.

The situation in Ukraine must be avoided, where the discrepancy between the political elite and the population with regard to integration into NATO is today almost impossibly to be managed. If the acceptance of integration into the EU exceeds 50% at the level of population, NATO receives the agreement of approximately 20% of Ukraine's population, despite the favorable declarations of the political government. Today, the political parties avoid approaching the subject, because of obvious reasons. It is one of the effects of the Kucima regime, who, even if making significant steps towards the approach to NATO at some moment (at least in comparison with the Republic of Moldova that systematically sabotaged the process - see "Partnership for Peace"), has not done a national debate from it (let us add that namely this approach of the Ukrainian army to NATO was one of the elements that assured the success of the Orange Revolution - a pervert effect that was not sufficiently taken into account by the Ukraine!).

Now we are assisting a paradox in Ukraine: civil society, the only one that can freely talk about NATO, does not have the right to debate over the subject, and the political parties do not have the electoral motivation. This kind of evolution must be a lesson for the Republic of Moldova - the debate regarding the North-Atlantic Alliance must start now, especially because the political support of this organization today is more consistent in the Republic of Moldova than in Ukraine. The difficulties met now by the Republic of Moldova in its efforts of orienting towards the EU and - especially - towards NATO must be evaluated with calmness and lucidity. The internal effects of the declarations favorable to NATO of the president Voronin and of the Minister Plesca cannot be unobserved. And they were observed! The breach introduced by these in the (still) compact bloc named PCM could be fatal for the unity of the party after a period of time. One thing gets more obvious: *with regard to the Euro-Atlantic integrity, the enemies of declarations similar to those cited above are not in the opposition, but in...the governing party.* (#The Talibans of the Communist Party are sufficiently numerous. The pro-NATO declarations are as Damocles sword above the head of the president of the republic. The bet is the party's unity and the political position which Vladimir Voronin will adopt in future.)

Instead of conclusions: the Transnistrian conflict – aim of the strategy at the Black Sea

This study aims to open a debate that has been delayed for too long. In consequence, it provides as yet more questions than answers, and does not aim to conclude anything. Nevertheless, there are some specifications to be made, and they regard the risks that have accumulated in the present in order that the problems of the Black Sea to be left without solution for a significant period of time from now on. The risk refers to the mistaken solution of the "transnistrian conflict", the meaning of which becomes today more summoning. The bet of Transnistria is, in fact, the bet of a strategy at the Black Sea. Before showing what should Bucharest do under these conditions, in our opinion, we will review some significant evolutions in the Transnistrian file, taken place in the capital of Romania.

The Cypriot solution for the Republic of Moldova?

After the publication of the report made by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Ion Naval, How we can help Moldova to help itself, SAR Policy Brief No. 16, Bucharest, August 2005, it is the turn of "Ovidiu Sincai" Institute to publicize a Report of political analysis: Transnistria: Evolution of a frozen conflict and perspectives of solution, Bucharest, September, 2005. Both materials have something in common, namely the so-called "Cypriot solution" for solving the Transnistrian conflict. Among other things, the last Report affirms that "the actual integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union can be made applying the same mechanism used in Cyprus. The part from the West of Nistru will be integrated into the European Union, the rest will be under an international protectorate of the UN." The resurrection of the "Cypriot solution" as a kind of *deus ex machina* is surprising for Moldova. Firstly because those who forward it suggest, even if tacitly, that they had discovered the "solution" and finally deliver it to a public in Romania, Moldova and further on, who was giddily wandering, without a saving clue.

This is wrong, too, at least because of several reasons. (#We do not have here the pretension to exhaustivity, so we will leave aside the confusions existent in the two reports, including that illustrated by comparisons with areas with which Transnistria is incomparable: Cyprus, Kosovo etc.) The first is related to deontology. It is incorrect to suggest pretensions to originality. In reality, the comparison with Cyprus was made two years ago, in Chisinau or other Western environments. The one who has given it the most eloquent form was Nicu Popescu, in the capital of the Republic of Moldova, who published in 2004 a text called "Cyprus' lesson for the Republic of Moldova" (Eurojournal.org, Moldova AZI etc.)

In the mentioned article, Nicu Popescu has written about five lessons that Moldova can learn from the Cypriot case with regard to the combination of two processes that overlap, namely the European integration and the regulation of a secessionist conflict. (#1. a divided state can join the EU. Therefore the argument that "as long as Moldova is not able to solve the Transnistrian problem - the adherence to the EU is impossible, is not valid, at least formally;

2. The process of negotiations with Transnistria is not so important as the economic transformations in Moldova and the approach to the EU, which in time may positively influence the process of Transnistrian regulation as well.

3. Democratization, reforms and Moldova's approach to the EU are the keys of success for the problems of Transnistria;

4. "Rush ruins the deal": South Cyprus concentrated on its own development in the first place, and after more than two decades has come back to the table of negotiations in a position of force and has dictated to a greater degree the conditions of reunification.) In Bucharest, within a more ample discussion dedicated to the plans of solving the Transnistrian issue, was mentioned and commented this text as well. (See Lumea, no.12, 2004).

The text had the beneficial role of an accelerator for a necessary debate, and some of the questions forwarded then were left without answer even until today. Together with the resuscitation of this idea in the reports that were already mentioned you can feel the atmosphere of a remainder with at least two years ago. The reason: none of the questions forwarded then by the critics of the Cypriot scenario are not approached nor solved today. In addition, in the absence of clear answers to these questions, the plans from Romania risk to turn against the interests of Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

What does Transnistria mean?

To speak in terms of a "Cypriot plan" of solving the conflict means to ignore the fact that the premises of the two situations are radically different. In case of the Republic of Moldova, the off cut between the two entities is today deprived of any criteria, with the exception of that related to the military power. Those who suggest a Cypriot solution must firstly define what does "Transnistria" mean and how do they "separate" it from the rest of Moldova (even if temporarily), in comparison with which there are no significant ethnic or religious differences. Even the data of the census - questionably - organized by the Transnistrian "authorities" and broadcasted this month indicate a structure of population in which prevail the Romanians/Moldavians with approx. 32%, followed by Russians 30% and Ukrainians - 28%. In addition, there is a significant religious homogeneity, over 80% declaring themselves Christian-Orthodox.

Where comes then the differentiation from the rest of the country? Those who suggest a "Cypriot plan" probably think about "historic" territorial off cuts - Transnistria would be the region from the left bank of the Nistru. This kind of suggestion has nothing to do with the reality. Today, the territory controlled by separatists makes significant bites from the right bank of the Nistru, so that this river is not a border anymore. What will happen to Tighina, for example? Where will be placed this important city in the opinion of the supporters of a Cypriot plan: in the Moldovan part, thus towards European integration, or in the "expanded Transnistria", thus the territory will be "frozen"? What if it is chosen that Transnistria should stop on the Nistru frontier, how will it be done? Through military actions for pushing the separatists "home"? This would cause armed conflicts which on one hand would be unacceptable for everybody, and on the other hand would finally mean exactly the recognition of the separatist regime, since you want to push them to "their place", that is beyond the Nistru! If it was opted for negotiations with the separatists for "vacating" the right bank of the Nistru, which is occupied by Smirnov, it would get to recognition again. If only the passing of smirnovists over the Nistru is negotiated, then you have legitimized the regime from Tiraspol and recognized the independence of Transnistria. This is exactly what the promoters of the "Cypriot plan" want to avoid...And what if the negotiations will regard the status of the whole region controlled by separatists, what sense does the "Cypriot plan" have?

Romania is not the "Greece" of Moldova

The plan elaborated for the Southern part of Cyprus was subsidiary based on the presence of a firm and strong actor who would promote that area towards the EU, by lobby actions, international pressures, plans and projects of economic, social and other type of development. That actor, crucial for the comprehension of what has happened in the case of Cyprus was Greece - NATO and EU member state. Without it, the solution would have been impossible. Is Romania a Greece for Moldova without Transnistria? Obviously not. It had not been and it does not seem possible in the near future

as well. Under these conditions, to speak in Bucharest about a "Cypriot plan" means not to understand the profound springs and the main "engine" of the present success of the Southern part of Cyprus. In addition, it means to completely abandon Transnistria on one hand, and on the other to leave the Republic of Moldova (minus its Eastern part) without a solid partner on the presumed way of European integration.

Why shall we neglect the diversity of the population in Transnistria?

The "Cypriot plan" abusively suggests that there is a homogenous Transnistrian "public opinion" that would be identical to that of the puppet regime from Tiraspol. Since everybody thinks in soviet terms, refusing with hostility any approach not only to Moldova or Romania, but to the Euro-Atlantic area as well, everybody should be abandoned and ignored until they "reconsider their position". The idea is both mistaken and unacceptable. On one hand, as we already mentioned, it suggests homogeneity of the population from the territories occupied by Smirnov et. comp., which does not really exist. Secondly, it ostentatively and impermissibly ignores what those people believe or say; and they are not few. Some of them even try to speak Romanian publicly as well...

To ignore this population and its diversity, to ignore methodically the opinion of a population of 500-600 thousand people means not giving a penny for the democracy you promote so much. And in order to find out this opinion, you do not need the "Cypriot plan", but the democratization of the region, which cannot be actually made without its demilitarization and decriminalization... Thus, we come back to the Strategy of the three Ds or to the Law adopted by the legislative body from Chisinau.

The problem of refugees from the Eastern part of Moldova

Beginning with 1992, the Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova - qualified by the Council of Europe as "zone de non-droit" - was left by approx. 100 000 - 130 000 people, Romanians in majority. It has been estimated that more 50 000 thousand people have left the right bank of Nistru still occupied by the separatist forces. In addition, the Russian Federation has encouraged the transfer of thousand of allogenes, especially Russians, to whom there are distributed or sold, through "Sherif" company (belonging to Smirnov family), the houses left by the Moldavian refugees. (#A considerable part of these colonists come from the extra-European area of the new Middle-Asian countries.) The problem that appears in the idea of a Cypriot plan which supposes the dumping of the Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, is what will happen with the refugees who are practically invited to the integration into the EU on one hand, and separated the area where their material goods, relatives, friends etc. are. What will happen to them?

A Cypriot scenario is tardy and useless

If two years ago a suggestion of "Cypriot scenario" for the Republic of Moldova had a certain sense, at least for attracting the attention of the West around this "frozen conflict" or the revitalization of debates on this issue and that seemed to take an extremely dangerous direction of a federation that would have definitively blocked Chisinau in its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, today this kind of suggestion has no reason. It comes late and does not move anything from its place.

Now the problem is not the non-involvement of international instances, but the manner in which they do it. A plan of Romania for Transnistria seems to come too late. The OSCE, as well as the EU, the USA, Ukraine or Russia seems to be decided to "solve" the conflict. The problem is how? If things go in the direction they are evolving now, we will find ourselves again in years 2001-2003, meaning in the middle of anti-federalization fights that took place in Chisinau or Washington and where the supporters of certain federalization projects with grave consequences for the Republic of Moldova have been forced to give up because of the rejection of the Kozak memorandum. Then the civil society from Chisinau has carried out an extraordinary action of early warning and has succeeded - not easily! - to convince the great European capitals not to accept the federalization of the republic. The pro-federalization camp was numerous: it was found in the OSCE, in Washington, Kiev, Moscow, Tiraspol or Chisinau. Those who opposed were practically in the same places, in Chisinau - in the streets or in the democratic press, in Washington and in Brussels. (#See this issue in detail in Dungaciu 2004b.) Finally, the clarification was made, but today there is the risk that the status of Transnistria will be discussed again above the citizens of the Republic of Moldova or the legislative initiatives of Chisinau. (the most important of which is the "Law on the basic stipulations of the special legal status of the establishments on the left bank of the Nistru - Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova".)

The Transnistrian stake is the stake of the credible and pro-Western strategy at the Black Sea

Here Romania could eventually intervene, too. Not in suggesting "solutions" that no one takes seriously, but warning that a failure or mistaken strategy in Transnistria blocks the entire process of elaboration of a strategy at the Black Sea and, in consequence, ruins the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the states in the area. The Transnistrian stake is the stake of a coherent and credible strategy at the Black Sea. If the "solution" will be made without taking into consideration the elementary norms of democracy that the West wants to introduce in the area, then there will be given the signal that the region is abandoned and left to reside in the situation it is encountered today. The consequences are extremely negative and it is upon them that the regional actors, including Bucharest, must concentrate, because the failure of the policy of expansion of the EU to the Black Sea will generate a period of instability at the EU frontier from several reasons:

1. The public pressure of generations from limitrophe countries oriented to the West and which do not have the nostalgia of "welfare of the former USSR" any more, these grew, educated themselves with the "European idea" (to which they attribute even more significations) and which cannot be turned back any more since the aspirations had been unleashed. In addition, these generations do not longer speak Russian satisfactory, because the significance attributed to the Russian language is not the same.
2. Even in case of a massive tilting over to the East of these states abandoned by the Euro-Atlantic area, the inter-state collaboration with the Russian Federation will not be possible: the failed state status of these countries impedes them to collaborate efficiently and normally with Moscow - the elites with (economic) connections in the capital of the Russian Federation will totally and immediately control these states, because the economic/political separation in these weak and non-functional states does not function at least as it does in normal states. As soon as they are abandoned they will become Russian colonies, not states capable of economic or political collaboration with the Russian Federation - a thing that would be normal desirable fro any state.
3. The appearance of "torn countries" in the area - discrepancies between generations and flaws within population as a consequence of blocking the access of these states to the Western area - and the perpetuation of the state of insecurity in the region.
4. Because of this there will appear waves of emigrants and a constant pressure at the doors of the EU, doors which countries like Romania will be called to block. It will be a true "impossible mission".
5. The securitization of energetic routes is crucial; the EU cannot base on an area providing energy in case the routes of combustible are not politically secured. In case of politico-economic abadon of the area, securitization is an illusion.

Getting back to Transnistria and keeping in mind the above mentioned, it becomes clear that what we call today "frozen conflicts" will perpetuate and that they can be solved only by global strategies at the Black Sea, intelligently promoted by local actors and introduced by international actors. If the West follows a "solution" that would legitimize the Transnistrian regime and the foreign military presence in the area, then this will become a clear sign that what happen with the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea will not happen to the Black Sea, i.e. the Euro-Atlantic integration of this area. the "frontiers of freedom" will transform in frontiers of failure and crisis.

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¹ The conceptual mainframe used in this analysis was developed in another work. See Badescu, Dungaciu 1995. Only in case if the setting of the border of advance to a frontier process is natural, thus organic, the frontier area stops its existence. The typical case here is, for example, the advance of protestant frontier in Europe. This advance stopped, organically, at the border of the orthodox area, so the setting of the protestant border happened by itself (it is not adequate to mention here why the things are namely this way).

² The way in which those assigned with the explanation of the significance of the presidential declaration have acted contributed only to increase the climate of confusion and to diminish the prestige of the subject.

³ For a general presentation in terms of security context, see Herzog 2000; for a presentation of foreign policies and conflicts in the region, see Bertsch and others...2000; for a geopolitical analysis of the area, see Thual 2004.

⁴ Here we will use McSweeney 1996, 1999, Terriff...1999; Bird and Croft 2001. See Dungaciu 2004 as well. For an excellent analysis of the evolution of the security problems in the 20th century, see Hough 2004.

⁵ Critiques were present, of course – why not the “individual”? -, and this option of Buzan was attributed to his “neo-realist” past.

⁶ Romania, in its turn, is today in a NATO member state, obliged to conform its security apparatus to the requests resulting from this adherence. We refer to the elaboration of *national security doctrine* and, accordingly, to the definition and elaboration, depending on this doctrine, of all the logistic apparatuses – military forces, special services, legislation, intellectual and academic centres, research institutes, conferences, publications, encyclopedias etc. – for putting it into practice, with all its components. In addition, all the complexity of the security problem is one of the elements which make the Black Sea, including the Republic of Moldova, a target of maximum interest for Romania.

⁸ X – Member State; A – Accession Country; N-NA – Non-Negotiating Accession Country; AC – Applicant Country; EAPC – Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council; O – Observer State; PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; SAA – Stability and Association Agreement.

⁹ We will base our analysis on the most ample work that exists today on this subject, respectively on that of Fabrizio Tassinari: see Tassinari 2004. In addition, for the problems of Baltic countries and security in the area, see: Lieven 1993, Bildt 1994, Brundtland 1994, Asmus and Nurick 1996, Conference... 1996, Lejins and Ozolina 1997, Burke and Cilluffo 1997, Puheloinen 1997, Jopp and Arnsfeldt 1998, Brzezinski and Larrabee 1999, Browning 2002.

¹⁰ For the perception between the Baltic countries and Russian in matters related to the security problem see Jaeger 2000.

¹¹ It is an aspect that never existed in the Black Sea, which was and still is important in the economy of developing a cooperation process in the area.

¹² In Romania an exception is the temporary appearance of the consistent publication named EUXIN, Magazine of Sociology, Geopolitics and Geo-history, Editor: Euxin group, trimestrial publication, no. 1-

2, 1997, p.328. In the program of this publication it could be read, among other things, that: "The gordian knot of NATO is the euxinian society, with its limits, its multitude of relatives and its invincible Orthodox Christianity. Euxin wants to answer this challenge which makes the Euxin Griff a centre of the world Romania a trio confinium of the three big regions of problems: Atlantic, Russian and German."

¹³ One of the broadest - but worn out - definitions of Europeanization would be the degree in which the domestic/home changes were caused the European integration.

¹⁴ When we affirm that *the critical mass for the North-Atlantic option was not reached yet* it means that we are not at the moment of reaching the institutional and human (functioning of institutions, level of education and orientation of the persons from the political and civil administration, economic, cultural or social trade, political agreements etc.) after what *the process of Euro-Atlantic integration becomes irreversible* or, at least, that *it is impossible to come back to the former Soviet area (CIS etc.)*. This aspect – reaching the critical mass – is the thing that differentiates most firmly the Republic of Moldova from Romania or Bulgaria for example. (If this critical mass is reached with the sincere agreement of the political leaders who generate it or without their agreement is of no importance, after all.)

¹⁵ Before elaborating a strategy, the Bucharest has to proceed to immediate action of *early warning* regarding the Transnistrian issue. The initiatives circulated nowadays risk to compromise not only the solution of the conflict, but even a Euro-Atlantic strategy in the extended area of the Black Sea, a part of which is the conflict from Transnistria (we will be regarding some issues in the last part of this material).

¹⁶ For an evaluation of Bratianu's analyses dedicated to the Black Sea see volume I of Badescu, Dungaciu 1995: 103-110; Dungaciu 2004a: 292-298).

¹⁷ Including the Republic of Moldova, because the perpetuation of the "neutral" status of this country – artificial anyway, given the fact that foreign troops are still on its territory, despite its own will – is a mistake. Of course, the management of this process must be made with determination and intelligence and with an eye on the events from the East region of the republic (Transnistria).

¹⁸ Alexander Dughin was one of the founders of the National-Bolshevik Party (the holder of the party member card no.2, and no.1 was reserved for the leader of national-Bolsheviks, Eduard Limonov). The "Euro-Asiatic" ideology of Alexander Dughin is based on the priority of the state's interests, counteract of the world globalization and "fighting Americanism".

¹⁹ Beginning with the so-called Iuscenko Plan and continuing with those that put the idea of elections in Transnistria in the focus, before the demilitarization and decriminalization of the area. In addition, here comes the intolerable passing-by of what the parliament of the Republic of Moldova has already accepted, namely the organic Law on the principles of solving the Transnistrian difference, adopted on July 22nd by the Parliament of Moldova. A stupefying example took place at the beginning of September, when the representatives of Ukraine, Russia, OSCE, the USA and the EU have approved the suggestion of starting the preparations for creating an international mission for organizing the free and democratic parliamentary elections in Transnistria. Vladimir Ogrizko, prime vice-minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, has made a statement about this during a press-conference in Kiev, specifying that the respective decision was adopted in conformity with the result of negotiations that have taken in place in the "3+2" formula, in which participated representatives of Ukraine, Russia and OSCE on one side and the USA and EU on the other. The priority issue of the negotiations was the organization of free parliamentary elections in Transnistria. The official from Kiev has declared as well that the Ukrainian MFA is satisfied by the course of consultations, which was also attended by the EU representative for Moldova, Adriaan Jacobovits de Szeged. The Republic of Moldova did not participate in the discussions!