

THE PROCESS OF REGIONALIZATION IN THE
BLACK SEA AREA: 1991-2010

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ABSTRACT

THE PROCESS OF REGIONALIZATION IN THE BLACK SEA

AREA:1991- 2010

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M.S., Eurasian Studies

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever

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The thesis examines the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region. The main argument of this thesis is that the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region has not transformed the region from the level of “regional society” to the level of “regional institutionalized community” due to the pressures of extra-regional, regional and sub-regional factors, and the present situation undermines the basis for regional security and prosperity. In addition, the thesis explores the obstacles that the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region faces.

The thesis has six main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter touches upon the concept of region as an analytic unit and the nature of regionalization process. The third chapter explores the role of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in the regionalization process of the Black Sea region. The fourth chapter analyzes the limitations stemming from differing strategies of regional and extra-regional actors in the process of regionalization. The fifth chapter discusses the limitations stemming from sub-regional dynamics that the process of regionalization faces. The sixth chapter is the conclusion.

Keywords: Black Sea region, USA, EU, Russia and Turkey.

ÖZ
KARADENİZ BÖLGESİNDEKİ BÖLGESELLEŞME
SÜRECİ: 1991-2010

Musabay, Pelin
Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları Bölümü
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Bu tez, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Karadeniz bölgesindeki bölgeselleşme sürecini incelemektedir. Bu tezde savunulan ana görüşe göre, Karadeniz'deki bölgeselleşme süreci bölge dışı, bölgesel ve bölge altı faktörlerden kaynaklanan baskılardan dolayı Karadeniz bölgesinin “bölgesel toplum”dan “kurumsallaşmış bölgesel bir rejim”e dönüşmesini sağlayamamakta ve bu durum Karadeniz’de bölgesel refah ve güvenlik ortamının oluşmasını engellemektedir. Ayrıca, tez Karadeniz bölgesindeki bölgeselleşme sürecini sınırlayan zorlukları incelemektedir.

Tez altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm giriştir. İkinci bölüm analitik bir birim olarak bölge kavramını ve bölgeselleşme sürecinin doğasını incelemektedir. Üçüncü bölüm, Karadeniz Ekonomik İşbirliği Örgütü’nün Karadeniz bölgesindeki bölgeselleşme sürecindeki rolünü araştırmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm, bölgeselleşme sürecinde bölge dışı ve bölgesel düzeydeki başat aktörlerin farklı stratejilerinin yol açtığı kısıtlılıkları ele almaktadır. Beşinci bölüm, bölgeselleşme sürecinin bölge altı dinamiklerden kaynaklanan kısıtlılıklarını tartışmaktadır. Son bölüm sonuç bölümüdür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Karadeniz Bölgesi, ABD, AB, Rusya ve Türkiye.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	NATO Annual National Programme
BBCIC	Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center
BDMP	Black Sea Defence Ministerial Process
BLACKSEAFOR	Black Sea and Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group
BSEC	Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSEC-BC	BSEC Business Council
BSEC-URTA	Union of Road Transport Association in the BSEC
BSEP	Black Sea Environment Program
BSFOCS	Black Sea Fiber Optic Cable System
BS-ResPot	Technological and Research Potential of the Black Sea region
BSTDB	Black Sea Trade and Development Bank
BSTIP	Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
BTE	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum
CDC	Community for Democratic Choice
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMFA	BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSCP	Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform
CSO	BSEC Committee of Senior Officials
DANBLAS	Danube-Black Sea Environmental Task Force

DOKAP	Eastern Black Sea Telecommunication Project
EABAM	EU Boarder Assistance Mission
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENP	EU Neighborhood Policy
FTA	Free Trade Area
IBSC	International Black Sea Club
ICBSS	International Center for Black Sea Studies
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe
IPAP	NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan
JCC	Joint Control Commission
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NGC	NATO-Georgia Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
OBSH	Operation of Black Sea Harmony
ODED-GUAM	Organization for Democracy and Economic Development- GUAM
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OSCE/ ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PABSEC	Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC
PERMIS	Permanent International Secretariat of the BSEC
PETRA	Pan-European Transport Area program
PfP	NATO Partnership for Peace
SEDM	Southeast European Defence Ministerial
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TAE	Trans Asia-Europe
TET	Trans-Europe Telecommunication
The EU	European Union
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Black Sea area, located at the junction of the Europe, the Caucasus, the Central Asia and the Middle East has always been a zone of cooperation and conflict. Over the centuries, the area has passed through vital turning points that have shaped its geopolitical and geo-economic importance. As Mustafa Aydın mentions, “during the Cold War, it lay on the frontier of East-West rivalry, and the overwhelming presence of superpower provided stability albeit strained, in the region for more than forty years”.¹ In the Cold War context, in line with the political and military balance provided between two Blocs, a relevant stability dominated in the Black Sea area.² However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the configuration of the Black Sea area and the geopolitical calculations about the area changed. As a result, the relevant stability provided in the Black Sea area became replaced by an increasing uncertainty and instability.³ The newly established post-Soviet states in the area, while trying to adopt themselves to the post Cold War conditions faced severe economic, political and security challenges.

The conditions became hardened with the emergence of territorial conflicts inherited from the Soviet era in the Black Sea region. In this respect, as Dimitrios Triantaphyllou expresses, “in the case of the Black Sea Region, and in particular for the former Soviet bloc countries, regionalism was considered to become the route for overcoming the economic and security vacuum in the region”.⁴ Within this

¹ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper*, No. 53, June 2004, p. 6, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

² Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds.), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 22, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

³ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper*, No. 53, June 2004, p. 6, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

⁴ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 232.

framework, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) established in 1992 with the initiative of Turkey, has constituted “the most comprehensive and institutionalized structure within the region”.⁵

Between the years 1992 and 2001, the Black Sea area and the Black Sea issues did not dominate very much the political agenda of the world. In a sense, the area was left alone to find its own solutions to its own problems. However, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks to the US, the Black Sea area became an important topic of discussion.⁶ The increase in attention towards the area was not related to have a deeper analysis on the process of Black Sea regionalization, the achievements of the process or its failures. The reason to focus more on the Black Sea area was related to its proximity to unstable milieus considered as source of threats for the Euro-Atlantic security. Through the consideration of the Black Sea area, especially by the US, the US, “as more of a gateway in the framework of its Eurasian and Greater Middle East policies”, the Black Sea issues found ground at the center of discussions on the Euro-Atlantic security issues.⁷

After the EU and NATO enlargements towards the Black Sea area, the Black Sea issues gained further importance within the Euro-Atlantic agenda.⁸ While Bulgaria and Romania’s accession to the EU has made the Union a direct player regarding the Black Sea issues, the accession of these two states to NATO has enforced the presence of the Alliance around the Black Sea.⁹ As a result, both developments have fostered the link between the Black Sea regional issues and

⁵Mustafa Aydın, *Europe’s Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper*, No. 53, June 2004, p. 4, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

⁶ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 273.

⁷ Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in the Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 97.

⁸ Ronald Hatto and Odette Tomescu, *The EU and the Wider Black Sea Region: Challenges and Policy Options*, Garnet Policy Brief, No. 5, January 2007, p. 1, http://www.garnet-eu.org/fileadmin/documents/policy_briefs/Garnet_Policy_Brief_No_5.pdf, accessed on 5 November 2009.

⁹ Ronald Hatto and Odette Tomescu, *The EU and the Wider Black Sea Region: Challenges and Policy Options*, Garnet Policy Brief, No. 5, January 2007, p. 3, http://www.garnet-eu.org/fileadmin/documents/policy_briefs/Garnet_Policy_Brief_No_5.pdf, accessed on 5 November 2009.

international politics. This development became an important source of discontent for Russia that has been disturbed by the increasing presence of the EU and NATO in its neighborhood.¹⁰ Overall, in a short period of time, the Black Sea suddenly started to be pursued as a cornerstone of the Euro-Atlantic security.

The “Colored revolutions” held in the Black Sea area at the beginning of the 21st century raised hope for democratic achievements in the region.¹¹ The analysts that carried this expectation looked at the issue only through the lenses of Euro-Atlantic security and they evaluated the “Rose revolution” occurred in Georgia in 2003 and the “Orange revolution” in Ukraine in 2004 as “incentives for democratic reforms” for the sake of Euro-Atlantic security.¹² While doing so, they raised the importance of democratization for the enhancement of security in the Euro-Atlantic area. In this regard, they did not pay attention to the process of Black Sea regionalization from the perspective of possible democratic achievements in these countries.

After the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia over South Ossetia in August 2008 and the Russian recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, once more the area became at top priority of the Euro-Atlantic Agenda.¹³ The conflict has been a vital turning point for the region since not only it highlighted that “the frozen nature of the South Caucasus conflicts was a chimera” but also it reminded to the international community that “the limits of Western policies in what

¹⁰ Ronald D. Asmus, *Developing a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Istanbul Paper, No. 2, 2004, p. 17, http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/special/Istanbul_PAPER2.pdf, accessed on 28 September 2009.

¹¹ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 8, <http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2008/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

¹² Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p. 9, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

¹³ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds.), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 24, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

Kremlin views as its sphere of influence”¹⁴ In this regard, as Nona Mikhelidze points out “it posed new implications and challenges not only for Georgia, but also for the wider Caucasus and beyond”.¹⁵ After the 2008 armed conflict, once more, the role of the Black Sea issues for the Euro-Atlantic security system became questioned without paying attention to the process of Black Sea regionalization. In this regard, since the end of the Cold War, it has been more focused on the impact of Black Sea issues in the Euro-Atlantic area and although the Black Sea area has been in an important process of regionalization, there have been limited efforts to analyze the features and the phases of the process.

In addition to the limited focus on the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area, there are different views on whether the Black Sea constitutes a separate region or not. Some of the views are concentrated on the argument that “the Black Sea area does not constitute a separate region arguing that it is not seen as such from the outside (by the international community), nor from inside (by the Black Sea countries themselves).”¹⁶ Not sharing this argument, Mustafa Aydın underlines that “all regions are made in the minds of people (intellectual, political, and governmental elites and business communities)”¹⁷ Whether or not the region exists geographically in the first place is not the question of our thesis. With this perception, the thesis argues that the Black Sea does not refer to a geographic area but to a region-in-making that pass through a regionalization process.

On the other hand, which states should be considered as “Black Sea states” and how to name the “Black Sea region” are other frequently asked questions.

¹⁴ Nona Mikhelidze, *After the 2008 Russia-Georgia War: Implications for the Wider Caucasus and Prospects for Western Involvement in Conflict Resolution*, Background paper of the conference on The Caucasus and Black Sea Region: European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Beyond, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, 6-7 February 2009, p. 1, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai0901.pdf>, accessed on 25 December 2010.

¹⁵ Nona Mikhelidze, *After the 2008 Russia-Georgia War: Implications for the Wider Caucasus and Prospects for Western Involvement in Conflict Resolution*, Background paper of the conference on The Caucasus and Black Sea Region: European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Beyond, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, 6-7 February 2009, p. 2, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai0901.pdf>, accessed on 25 December 2010.

¹⁶ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 59.

¹⁷ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 59.

Mustafa Aydın underlines that the Black Sea basin embraces 19 countries covering almost 2 million square kilometers.¹⁸ Charles King puts forward that “if the criterion for membership is a border on the sea itself, then the Black Sea region is much smaller, including only six littoral countries”.¹⁹ He adds that “if the criterion is membership in a political organization, then the region is rather larger, including the twelve countries of the BSEC”.²⁰ How to name this region-in-building is another topic of discussion. Recently, American researchers and politicians started to name the region as “the Wider Black Sea Region” or “the Greater Black Sea Region” with capital “W” and “G” for wider and greater as well as capital “R” for region, and they include “six littoral states together with four states in their periphery such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Greece in their definition.”²¹ Especially, American think tank, the German Marshall Fund of the USA, mostly uses this nomination in its publications.²² On the other hand, the EU authorities name the region as “Black Sea region” with miniscule “r” and it refers to same countries as the Americans do while referring to the Black Sea states.²³ Meanwhile, the BSEC consider all its member states as the Black Sea states and use the terminology of “wider Black Sea area” with

¹⁸Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper*, No. 53, June 2004, p. 5, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

¹⁹ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 5.

²⁰ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 5.

²¹ Halit Çapat, *Kopenhag Okulu Çerçevesinde Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Kavramı ve Karadeniz’de AB-ABD Güvenlik Algılamaları*, Unpublished Master Thesis, T.C. Kara Harp Okulu, 2008, p. iii.

²² Halit Çapat, *Kopenhag Okulu Çerçevesinde Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Kavramı ve Karadeniz’de AB-ABD Güvenlik Algılamaları*, Unpublished Master Thesis, T.C. Kara Harp Okulu, 2008, p. 67.

²³ In the Communication from the EU Commission to the Council and the EU European Parliament, No: 160, published on 11 May 2007, entitled *the Black Sea Synergy- New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, it is indicated that “The Black Sea region includes Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova in the west, Ukraine and Russia in the north, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the east and Turkey in the south. Though Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Greece are not littoral states, history, proximity and close ties make them natural regional actors”, p. 2, 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, accessed on 12 February 2008.

minuscule “w” or “Black Sea region” with miniscule “r” in its official documents.²⁴ Believing in the appropriate character of this usage since it is more comprehensive, while analyzing the process of Black Sea regionalization, the thesis will use the “Black Sea region” or “(wider) Black Sea area” interchangeably and “the Black Sea states” will refer approximately to the current member states of the BSEC.

In this study, I analyzed reference books, articles, legal documents, reports, policy papers and news regarding the Black Sea area and its regionalization process. In order to explore different aspects of the Black Sea regionalization process, in this study, as the conceptual framework, I used “the new regionalism approach” that brings a new approach to the regionalism studies. This approach provides the opportunity to look at the issues concerning regional cooperation and integration from a broader perspective including dimensions such as security, economic and political development, democratization, institutionalization, as well as identity formation and cultural harmonization.²⁵ In this regard, it covers important elements of the prominent international relations theories regarding regionalism studies.

In the literature view of Black Sea region, the study finds out that there is a limited number of academic studies concentrated on Black Sea issues. The policy papers prepared by think tanks or research centers on this issue are much more common. Moreover, it is difficult to find a full-fledged study focusing on the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area. In this regard, the book of Charles King, publicized in 2005, entitled “The Black Sea: A History”, is among one the few analyses. The book is based on a historical analysis of the Black Sea region. It covers a wide range of issues “from time of Greek trading colonies to the modern regional powers including environmental, economic and political issues” whereas it reflects “the characteristics of the Black Sea, the states and people that surround it today”.²⁶ After making “a deep analysis on religious communities, linguistic groups, empires,

²⁴ For instance, in *the Declaration On the Occasion of the Fifteenth Anniversary Summit of the BSEC*, it is written the “wider Black Sea area”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/declaration-on-the-occasion-of-the-fifteenth-anniversary-summit-of-the-black-sea-economic-cooperation-istanbul-25-june-2007.en.mfa>, accessed on 15 February 2008.

²⁵ Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 365.

²⁶ Charles King, *The Black Sea – A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.3.

nations and states of the Black Sea region”, Charles King argues that “throughout the history and today the Black Sea has represented a bridge more than a boundary”.²⁷

In the book entitled “The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building” edited by Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, wide range of issues such as region building process, conflicts, energy security, new security environment and democracy in the Black Sea region are touched upon. The book is the concluding product of a two-year research project of the East-West Institute.²⁸ The editors of the book underline that as Charles Kings mentions in the book, “even during the war times when the sea has been a zone of confrontation, the Black Sea area has remained as a region, a unique plating field on which the interests and aspirations of the peoples and polities within it have been played out”.²⁹

According to Mustafa Aydın, “it is the political will of the interested countries and the constant intellectual engagement with the idea that turn a geographical area into a (geo) political region”.³⁰ He expresses that “Black Sea certainly constitutes a region as the will of the governments to develop the region was demonstrated by the creation of the BSEC in 1992”.³¹ On the other hand, he argues that “increased big power attention does not guarantee prosperity and can create clashes in the Black Sea area”.³²

In his article, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou mentions that in the Black Sea region “there is thus an ongoing battle between obstacles and incentives to regional

²⁷ Charles King, *The Black Sea – A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 4-6.

²⁸ Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. vii.

²⁹ Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. 292.

³⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 59-60.

³¹ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 60.

³² Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 282.

cooperation”.³³ He adds that “the region can be perceived to be replete with paradoxes such as the tendency for certain issues to both divide and unite: one such issue is energy and energy security...”.³⁴ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou also puts forward that “the relevant hegemons -Russia, the European Union, the United States (and Turkey)- have each been concerned with their proper “national” imperatives”.³⁵ He adds that “as a consequence, they have been unable to effectively promote a true culture of regional cooperation,”.³⁶

By concentrating on the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area, the thesis touches upon a subject that has been left aside since long time. However, the thesis does not only analyze the process itself. It also questions if the regionalization process has brought peace, security and prosperity to the Black Sea region. The primary argument defended in this thesis is that the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region cannot provide the passage from “regional society” to “regional institutionalized community” due to extra-regional, regional and sub-regional factors as theorized by Björn Hettne. The fact that such a passage cannot be provided prevents the establishment of peace, security and prosperity in the Black Sea region. In this framework, the thesis explores the obstacles that the Black Sea faces in the process of regionalization.

Before concentrating on the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area, the second chapter, by referring to the new regionalism approach, touches upon the concept of region as an analytic unit and the nature of regionalization process. It will explore the conceptualization of region, regionalism, regionalization, “regionness” and analyze successful examples of regionalization such as the EU and the Northern Europe. The difference between “old” and “new” regionalisms is clearly explained by Björn Hettne who underlines that the former was a Cold War phenomenon,

³³ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 231.

³⁴ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 231.

³⁵ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 235.

³⁶ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 235.

whereas the latter resulted from a more comprehensive, multidimensional societal process.³⁷ He also clarifies that “the new regionalism must be seen as a new political landscape in the making, characterised by several interrelated dimensions, many actors (including the region itself) and several interacting levels of society.”³⁸ In this regard, regionalization constitutes an important concept of the new regionalism approach. As Mustafa Aydın points out “regionalization is as an instrument of regional and global security and stability”.³⁹ In this regard, regional groupings play an important role for regionalization. He expresses this as “regional groupings, with their localized confidence building measures, can contribute to geopolitical stability, by facilitating collaborative action against the contemporary problems...”⁴⁰

As theorized by Björn Hettne, the concept of “regionness” represents another central element of the new regionalism approach and constitutes a tool to analyze the process of regionalization in a multilevel and comparative perspective. Björn Hettne mentions about five levels of “regionness” that are “regional space”, “regional complex”, “regional society”, “regional community” and “regional institutionalized polity”.⁴¹ Björn Hettne argues that “higher level of regionness implies a lower degree of conflict, whereas decreased regionness leads to an increase in security problems”.⁴² In this regard, the EU and the Northern Europe are seen as relevant examples to examine levels of “regionness”. Thus, the EU is considered as an important example that presents “a peculiar polity” in terms of “regionness”.⁴³

³⁷Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, p. 549.

³⁸Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, p. 550.

³⁹ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 58.

⁴¹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.) *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

⁴² Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p.18.

⁴³ Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London: Routledge,

Björn Hettne mentions that “the EU is, in terms of regionness, the only example of a “regional institutionalized polity”.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the Northern Europe presents another process of regionalization that has a high level of “regionness”.⁴⁵

The third chapter explores the role of the BSEC in the regionalization process of the Black Sea region. It will firstly focus on the historical background of the Black Sea region looking into it from the angle of “regionness” levels. According to these levels and their requirements, until the establishment of the BSEC, the Black Sea region presented firstly a “regional space” by geographical terms and then in line with the increase of interaction through wars and conflicts, it became a “regional complex”. In this regard, the third chapter analyzes the contribution of the BSEC to the regionalization process of the Black Sea region and its level of “regionness”.

As Yannis Valinakis points out the member countries of the BSEC “share a desire to join forces in common projects and avoid relegation to the ‘periphery of world politics’, by transcending traditional rivalries”.⁴⁶ However, since the establishment of the BSEC, their expectations from the Organization have not been the same.⁴⁷ After its launch, the BSEC that gained its legal status in 1999 has faced several organizational changes. Within this change, the institutions of the BSEC have always played an important role to increase the level of “regionness”. These institutions that are not composed of only governmental bodies, have brought parliamentarians, businessmen, academicians and people of the Black Sea region together and in this way, they have contributed to the formation of a “regional society” in the Black Sea area. Moreover, the launch of key regional projects such as

1999, p. 44.

⁴⁴ Björn Hettne, “EU as a Global Actor: An Anatomy of Actorship”, paper published at the EU in International Affairs Conference 2008, 28 April 2008, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, p. 11. http://www.ies.be/files/repo/conference2008/EUinIA_IV_1_Hettne.pdf, accessed on 10 May 2009.

⁴⁵ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.3, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

⁴⁶ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

“Black Sea Highways” and “Black Sea Motorways” by the Organization has carried important role in the formation of such a level.⁴⁸ The improvement in the relations between the BSEC and the EU has also brought a positive effect on reaching the level of “regional society”.⁴⁹ However, all these contributions have not been enough to reach the level of “regional community” in the Black Sea area. Although the BSEC significantly contributed to the regionalization in the Black Sea area, it has not been able to turn it into a “regional community” yet. In this regard, the Organization seems limited to promote peace and prosperity as well as regional identity in the Black Sea area.

The fourth chapter analyzes the limitations stemming from differing strategies of regional and extra-regional actors in the regionalization process of the Black Sea area. The existence of differing and conflictual policies of the dominant actors in the Black Sea region has played a negative role for the improvement in the Black Sea “regionness”. While the US looks for the opportunities to increase more its presence in the region, the EU develops new and contradictory approaches towards the region.⁵⁰ Whereas Russia is concerned by the increased attention of the US and the EU towards the Black Sea issues, Turkey tries to keep its economic and political supremacy in the region.⁵¹ The incompatibility in the policies of these actors has limited the process of regionalization of the Black Sea area.

The fifth chapter discusses the limitations stemming from sub-regional dynamics that the process of regionalization faces. In this regard, it concentrates on the characteristics of the Black Sea region in terms of economy, political situation and security. The post-Soviet regional states have faced economic and political

⁴⁸ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G%20IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

⁴⁹ Mustafa Aydın, “Europe's New Region: The Black Sea in the Wider Europe Neighbourhood”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 2005, p. 261.

⁵⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 272.

⁵¹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 235-236.

problems. As Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic points out “with regard to free market entrepreneurship the Black Sea region is on the way to become a more accommodating place for business, nevertheless with the occasional glitch”.⁵² Moreover, corruption at state administration has been a common problem in the region, while the democratization process of these countries has not been completed yet.⁵³ Most of these countries have a low score in terms of political rights, civil liberties and press freedom in the world ranking.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the so called “frozen conflicts” in the region cause severe bilateral tensions by rendering the region more vulnerable to security threats.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the lack of a regional identity and the existence of competing regional groups in the Black Sea area negatively affect the process of Black Sea regionalization.⁵⁶ In this regard, the Black Sea region itself maintains several obstacles to become an actor to provide peace, security and prosperity within its borders. Within this framework, the level of “regionness” remains at the level of “regional society” without passing neither to the level of “regional community” nor the level of “regional institutionalized polity”.

Finally, I will come to the conclusion that the process of regionalization that does not come to a certain level, does not serve the transformation of Black Sea region into a Sea of prosperity, security and stability. The Black Sea region-in-making embraces several internal and external obstacles in its process of

⁵² Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 13, <http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2008/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁵³ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2008/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁵⁴ See Figure 6: Ranking of the Black Sea States in Terms of Democracy, Political Rights, Civil Liberties and Pres Freedom, Source: Freedom House, World Democracy Audit Report, 2009, in Chapter V, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Roy Allison, “The Unresolved Conflicts in the Black Sea region: Threats, Impacts on Regionalism and Regional Strategies for conflict resolution” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004, p. 95.

⁵⁶ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 5, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

regionalization to overcome. Since the end of the Cold War, especially following the 9/11 attacks to the US, there has been an excessive attention given to the region because of different reasons. Through this attention, the Black Sea area has been considered as the “heart” of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian politics. However what seems more important for the Black Sea area, for the time being, is to go on with its process of regionalization to increase cooperation and to become competent to provide security, stability and prosperity in its region and beyond.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

As Abdelwahab El-Affendi mentions, “the immediate post-Cold War era, regionalism enjoyed a resurgence”.⁵⁷ Unlike the old regionalism that dominated during the Cold War period, the new regionalism approach has a broader nature in terms of agent, sector and direction.⁵⁸

The approach interprets the concept of “region” in a different way by referring mostly to “region-in-making” and it concentrates on concepts such as “regionalization” and level of “regionness” in the new interpretation of region. According to the new regionalism approach, “regionalization is a new political landscape in making, characterized by several interrelated dimensions, many actors (including the region itself) and several interacting levels of society”.⁵⁹ In line with this, the approach argues that regionalism as project and regionalization as a process are key elements to bring prosperity, security and stability to a region. However, in the regionalism literature, this hypothesis remains still debatable.

To understand the recent phenomena of regionalism, in this chapter, the concept of region, old and new regionalism, regionalization and finally “regionness” will be addressed. To give examples of regionalization, the process of regionalization in the EU and the Northern Europe will be touched upon.

⁵⁷Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 1.

⁵⁸Rodrigo Tavares, “The Contribution of Macro-regions to the Construction of Peace: a Framework for Analysis”, article delivered at *International Studies Association Forum*, 20 March 2004, Montreal, p. 9-15, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation_07/4/1/4/pages74148/p74148-1.php, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁹Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, p. 550.

2.2. What Constitutes a “Region”?

As Felix Cuita points out “every time a comment is made about the X region, “the question usually asked first what the X region is”.⁶⁰ This question has no a simple answer since region is an ambiguous concept that has different definitions according to different definers and in different disciplines. Joseph S. Nye mentions about this complexity reminding us that “many hours were wasted at 1945 UN Conference in San Francisco trying to define it precisely”.⁶¹

Etymologically, “region” comes from the Latin word “regio”, meaning an administrative or broad geographical area distinguished by similar features. The verbal version is “regere” signifying “to rule or to direct”.⁶² Therefore, these Latin roots show that region has not only a geographical but also a political connotation.

The first debate among different conceptualizations regarding the concept of region seems to be about the degree of importance of the geographical feature. In the literature review, there is a considerable emphasis on the importance of geographical proximity to constitute a region. However Mustafa Aydın and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu argue that “a region implies more than just a close proximity among the constituent states”.⁶³ In this regard, being in a close proximity does not enough to constitute a region. For instance, as Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner underline, “although Russia’s eastern coast is very close to Alaska, the US and Russia are rarely considered as belonging to the same region”.⁶⁴ In this regard, Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner give the example of France and Francophone countries of North-West

⁶⁰Felix Cuita, “ Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics and the Making of Black Sea”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2008, p. 21.

⁶¹ Joseph S. Nye, *International Regionalism: Readings*, Boston:Brown and Company, 1968, p. 3-4.

⁶²Rodrigo Tavares, *The State of the Art of Regionalism: The Past, Present and Future of a Discipline*, UNU-CRIS e-Working Papers, W-2004/10, United Nations University Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Brugge, p. 4, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/WProdrigotavares.pdf>, accessed on 4 September 2008.

⁶³Mustafa Aydın and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, “Regionalization of Great Power Security-Near Abroad, Broader Middle East, and European Neighborhood”, *Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace*, Vol. 3, No. 8, 2008, p. 60.

⁶⁴Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner, “The New Wave of Regionalism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 1999, p. 591.

Africa that constitute a regional grouping through their linguistic similarities.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Peter J. Katzenstein points out that “the regional geographic delimitations are not real, natural or essential and they are socially constructed and politically contested and thus open to change”.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Mustafa Aydın and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu share the same argument underlying that in any case “regions are invented by political actors and regional identity is what people, politicians, and states make out of it and is thus amenable to change over time”.⁶⁷ It is true that geographical proximity and contiguity tell us very little about the definition of a region. Nevertheless, as Andrew Hurrell underlines “without some geographical limitations the term “regionalism” becomes diffuse and unmanageable”.⁶⁸ In this regard, to some extent, the geographical limitation remains as an asset for the formation of a region.

Another debate on how to define a region is related to the role of the state in the establishment of regional systems. According to Joseph S. Nye’s definition, “an international region is made up of limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence”.⁶⁹ Similarly, Peter J. Katzenstein defines “a region as a group of countries markedly interdependent”.⁷⁰ William Thomson’s list of conditions for the existence of a regional system seems embracing most of the points stated above. In a more comprehensive approach compared to others, William Thomson underlines that “for the existence of a regional system, the proximate actors’ patterns of relations or

⁶⁵Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner, “The New Wave of Regionalism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 1999, p. 591.

⁶⁶Peter J. Katzenstein, “Regionalism in Comparative Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 1996, p. 126.

⁶⁷Mustafa Aydın and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, “Regionalization of Great Power Security-Near Abroad, Broader Middle East, and European Neighborhood”, *Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace*, Vol. 3, No. 8, 2008, p. 60.

⁶⁸Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective” in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.). *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 38.

⁶⁹Joseph S. Nye, *International Regionalism: Readings*, Boston:Brown and Company, 1968, p. vii.

⁷⁰Peter J. Katzenstein, “Regionalism in Comparative Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 31, No.2, 1996, p. 124.

their interactions should exhibit a particular degree of regularity and intensity to the extent that a change at one point in the regional system affects other points”.⁷¹ In addition to this requirement, William Thomson expresses that “internal and external recognition of region by observers and actors as a distinctive area or “theatre of operation” is also remarkable in the conceptualization of region”.⁷² In this approach, William Thomson emphasizes that “a region exists if there is a common perception coming from inside and outside parties composed by not only states but also social groupings”.⁷³ In this sense, an area can be considered as a region when not only the internal by also external actors perceive it as a region.

The purpose of researcher also presents an important dimension for the consideration of a region. Patrick Morgan and David Lake underline that “according to the purposes of the researcher they can be as broad as the Third World or as narrow as the North America”.⁷⁴ The purpose of researcher also determines the typology for regional considerations. For instance, Raimo Vayrynen mentions about two groups of regions that are physical and functional.⁷⁵ He points out that “physical regions refer to territorial, military, and economic spaces controlled primarily by states, but functional regions are defined by non-territorial factors such as culture and the market that are often the purview of non-state actors”.⁷⁶ In addition, Raimo Vayrynen draws attention to the differentiation of region for historians, political scientists and economists as a concept by pointing out that “scholars in history and political science seem to think that they will know a region when they see one” whereas “for economists, the choice is even easier, region is

⁷¹William Thompson, “The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and Propositional Inventory”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1973, p. 101.

⁷²William Thompson, “The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and Propositional Inventory”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1973, p. 102.

⁷³William Thompson, “The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and Propositional Inventory”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1973, p. 103.

⁷⁴David Lake and Patrick Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, University Park, Pa. : Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 11.

⁷⁵Raimo Vayrynen, “Regionalism: Old and New”, *The International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2003. p.28.

⁷⁶Raimo Vayrynen, “Regionalism: Old and New”, *The International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2003. p.28.

coextensive with a preferential trading agreement or a customs union”.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Björn Hettne puts forward another example of typology of region by mentioning about the categorization of core, peripheral and between them intermediate regions that differ by economic dynamism and political stability.⁷⁸ There are as many typologies as well as the definitions of region and this is not the main problematic of this research. In this analysis, we will try to avoid the use of any specific typology of region and focus on the process of regionalization of a region-in-making.

For Rodrigo Tavares, region is “a cognitive construction that spills over state borders, based on territoriality with a certain degree of singularity, socially molded by a body of different actors and motivated by different disciplines”.⁷⁹ In other words, when we speak of region, we actually mean “region-in-making”. The change in the understanding of region is related to the change in the regionalism theory that has been shaped in line with developments in the international relations. The new regionalism approach includes key concepts such as “regionalization” and “regionness”. In this regard, the question is not anymore about if an X area is region or not. The new question is what the level of “regionness” is of the politically contested area. In this study, we will look at the Black Sea area from this perspective and we will first focus on the “old regionalism”, its characteristics and differences from the new regionalism approach.

2.3. Old Regionalism

In the regionalism literature, two generations of approach are mentioned: The “old” and “new” regionalism. The difference between them stems from the historical context and their qualitative characters. As opposed to the idea that there is a strict

⁷⁷Raimo Vayrynen, “Regionalism:Old and New,”*The International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2003, p.26.

⁷⁸Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism”,*New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, p. 549.

⁷⁹Rodrigo Tavares, *The State of the Art of Regionalism: The Past, Present and Future of a Discipline*, UNU-CRIS e-Working Papers, W-2004/10, United Nations University Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Brugge, p.5, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/WProdrigo%20tavares.pdf>, accessed on 4 September 2008.

separation between old and new regionalism, Luc Van Langenhove and Anna-Cristina Costea point out that “we are still witnessing today the birth of ‘first generation’ agreements, which develop themselves next to more updated ‘second generation’ regional constructions, such as the EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR”.⁸⁰

The idea of regionalism is not a new phenomena specific to the 20th century.⁸¹ Rodrigo Tavares underlines that “the earliest accounts of regional constructions date back to the time of continental empires that were a benchmark of political constructions up until the Napoleonic Wars”.⁸² Although regionalism was practically present, “by the Second World War, regionalism had still not entered to the vocabulary of international relations”.⁸³ Therefore, regionalism is mostly considered as a post-Second War phenomenon.⁸⁴

Following the end of Second World War, there was a boom concerning regional initiatives. Regional political and military constructions such as NATO, Warsaw Pact, SEATO, CENTO and ANZUS, reflecting the spirit of the Cold War, were established one after one.⁸⁵ However, as Louise Fawcett mentions, “there were few places outside Europe where regional experiment had produced tangible results”

⁸⁰ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, “EU's Foreign Policy Identity: from 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?” in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds.), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 92.

⁸¹ Rodrigo Tavares, *The State of the Art of Regionalism: The Past, Present and Future of a Discipline*, UNU-CRIS e-Working Papers, W-2004/10, United Nations University Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Brugge, p.7, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/WProdrigo%20tavares.pdf>, accessed on 4 September 2008.

⁸² Rodrigo Tavares, *The State of the Art of Regionalism: The Past, Present and Future of a Discipline*, UNU-CRIS e-Working Papers, W-2004/10, United Nations University Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Brugge, p.7, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/WProdrigo%20tavares.pdf>, accessed on 4 September 2008.

⁸³ Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective” in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 12.

⁸⁴ Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective” in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 12.

⁸⁵ Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective” in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 13.

in terms of the establishment of sustainable peace and security.⁸⁶ As Mario Telo points at “several inward-looking economic policies, weak institutional settlements, the legacy of colonialism and the weight of underdevelopment” as the root causes of the situation.⁸⁷ In this regard, the old regionalism is placed within a particular historical context, dominated by the bipolar Cold World War structure where nation states were the uncontested primary actors.⁸⁸ Due to the bipolar struggle during the Cold War, regional problems were directly influenced by the global competition between two superpowers. In this case, taking part in a regional initiative was a matter of choosing a bloc.

The regional initiatives which were the outcome of the old regionalism approach were uni-dimensional in the focus of subject. Some of them were purely with economic orientation while others like NATO were solely with a security orientation based on the preservation of balance of power in the global system.⁸⁹ Whether focused in the area of economics or security, the old regionalism was more characterized by “material calculations of power, security and interest of nation states”.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the old regionalism was more concentrated on the regional nation states and their relations while not paying attention to regional foreign policy and identity building.⁹¹ It was generally “a top-down process led by national

⁸⁶ Louise Fawcett, “Regionalism in Historical Perspective”, in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.14

⁸⁷ Mario Telò (ed.), *European Union and New Regionalism*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Michael Schulz, Fredrik Söderbaum and Joakim Öjendal, *Regionalization in a Globalizing World*, London, New York: Zed Books, 2001, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

⁹⁰ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

⁹¹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

governments and elites, with a strong emphasis on the process of government”.⁹² The non-state actors did not have any role in this generation of regionalism and in this regard the old regionalism was a state-led approach that differs from the new regionalism approach in several aspects.

2.4. New Regionalism

In parallel with the changes in the international system just before and after the decline of the bipolar world structure, the regional movements started to be proliferated in a different context and content. The new regionalism approach began to emerge in the mid-1980 as “multidimensional form of integration which includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects and thus goes far beyond the goal of creating region-based free trade regimes or security alliances.”⁹³ In this regard, the new regionalism approach is different than the old one by scope, agent, motivation, structure and relation with globalization. In terms of scope, as opposed to the old one, the new regionalism approach embraces factors such as economy, development, security and culture together.⁹⁴ According to Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum “the problematique of the NRA is not the delineation of regions per se, but rather to determine the role of regions in the current global transformation and analyse the origins, dynamics, and consequences of regionalism in various fields of activity”.⁹⁵ In addition to this, the new regionalism gives importance to sharing common or similar security concerns to promote cooperation among regional actors.⁹⁶ While referring to security, the new regionalism takes it in a broader sense. This

⁹²Rodrigo Tavares, “The Contribution of Macro-regions to the Construction of Peace: a Framework for Analysis”, article delivered at *International Studies Association Forum*, 20 March 2004, Montreal, p. 9-15, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/7/4/1/4/pages74148/p74148-1.php, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁹³Björn Hettne, “The New Regionalism: A Prologue.” in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, London:Macmillan, 1999, p. xv-xxxi.

⁹⁴ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 457.

⁹⁵ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p.18.

understanding is similar to the Barry Buzan's approach that mentions about "an enlarged regional security concept divided by sector such as economic, environmental, societal, political and military".⁹⁷ These sectors find ground in the multidimensional characteristic of the new regionalism approach.

In terms of agent, the new regionalism approach does not take into account only nation states as actors. In the new regionalism approach, "the regional initiatives involve regional governments and substate actors such as local authorities, civil society, and private business".⁹⁸ According to the this approach, regionalization is not only a project of states but also a process "set by any actors where a bunch of ideas, values and objectives aimed at creating, maintaining or modifying the provision of security, wealth and development within a region is present".⁹⁹ The interaction between these actors plays an important role in the new regionalism approach. As Charalambos Tsardanidis points out "the current processes of regionalism come more from 'below' and 'within' than before".¹⁰⁰ He adds that "it is not only economic, but also ecological and security imperatives that push countries and communities towards cooperation within new types of regionalist frameworks."¹⁰¹

In terms of motivation, the new regionalism approach has carried different meaning for different regional actors. Some regional countries have applied the new regionalism approach to have stability and security in their region.¹⁰² However, it is not only the aim maximization of security that has pushed actors to cooperate. On one hand, some countries have assumed that regional initiatives offer a gradual

⁹⁷Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 7.

⁹⁸Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. 4.

⁹⁹Michael Schulz, Fredrik Söderbaum and Joakim Öjendal, *Regionalization in a Globalizing World*, London, New York: Zed Books, 2001, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰Charalambos Tsardanidis, "The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?", *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 364.

¹⁰¹Charalambos Tsardanidis, "The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?", *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 364.

¹⁰²Charalambos Tsardanidis, "The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?", *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 372.

opportunity for their economic and political liberalization.¹⁰³ On the other hand, for others, “regionalism can be used also as a stepping-stone towards more global or multilateral relations”.¹⁰⁴ For instance, “regional groupings also have the potential to play a complementary role by helping those members seeking membership of broader arrangements like the European Union”.¹⁰⁵ In this regard, regional initiatives have raised different motivations for different countries.

Unlike most of the old regionalism schemes, the new ones are characterized by overlapping memberships of countries in a number of different groupings. For instance, Turkey is a member of BSEC, NATO, a negotiating country for EU membership as well as a strategic partner of African Union and Gulf Cooperation Council. In this sense, “in the 21st century where the bipolar system is over, a country, especially the ones that are located at the crossroads of several regions can be member of several regional cooperation schemes”.¹⁰⁶ The new regionalism approach strongly points out this possibility.

On the other hand, there are different perceptions on the relations between new regionalism and globalization. While Björn Hettne, Andras Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel¹⁰⁷ believe in the supporting relations between two concepts, Theodore Pelagidis and Harry Papisotriou¹⁰⁸ mention that these relations can be contradictory. In this plurality of perception, the only clear conclusion that can be drawn is that

¹⁰³Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-Regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 363.

¹⁰⁴Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 366.

¹⁰⁵Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea economic cooperation and regional security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 78.

¹⁰⁶Björn Hettne, “Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation” in Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷Björn Hettne, “Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation” in Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸Theodore Pelagidis and Harry Papisotriou, “Globalization or Regionalism? States, Markets, and the Structure of International Trade”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol.28, No. 3, 2002, p. 520.

“regionalisation and globalisation are mutually constitutive processes within the broader context of global system change”.¹⁰⁹

The new regionalism approach is considered as “a comprehensive multidimensional package, including economic, security, environmental and many other issues.”¹¹⁰ Within this framework, it attaches importance to development for regional cooperation. Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum point out that “cooperation for development would reduce the level of conflict and the peace dividend would facilitate further development cooperation”.¹¹¹ In this context, reaching regional peace and increasing regional development are considered as two mutually beneficial concepts for the new regionalism approach.

On the other hand, the new regionalism approach that is almost considered as the route to obtain peace, security, stability and welfare in a region-in-making, faces important criticism. The criticism is focused on the idea that following the example of European integration, a kind of miracle that turns all region-in-makings into safe, secure and prosperous circles has been expected from new regionalist initiatives.¹¹² In this regard, the criticism underlines that this expectation seems overwhelming and unrealistic and it disregards internal and external dynamics of each region-in-making. In this perspective, Rodrigo Tavares argues that there is no direct link between new regionalism and peace since new regionalism maintains a process of regionalization composed by levels of regionness and at each level the interaction between peace and regionalism changes.¹¹³ Similarly, Abdelwahab El Affendi questions if new regionalism might always lead to prosperity, security and stability and he points at

¹⁰⁹Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 5.

¹¹⁰Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 17.

¹¹¹ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 19.

¹¹²Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 16.

¹¹³ Rodrigo Tavares, “The Contribution of Macro-regions to the Construction of Peace: a Framework for Analysis”, article delivered at *International Studies Association Forum*, 20 March 2004, Montreal, p. 9-15, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/7/4/1/4/pages/74148/p74148-1.php, accessed on 29 October 2009.

over-optimistic thinking of the new regionalism approach.¹¹⁴ In addition, he underlines that “attempts at regional integration could, under particular circumstances, intensify or even generate regional conflicts”.¹¹⁵ Mustafa Aydın, touching upon another dimension of the discussion, expressed that “in a regional scheme, the focus of the bigger powers on a region might not always lead to prosperity, as these powers clash with each other as well as the regional countries”.¹¹⁶ In this regard, in the regionalism literature, there is a doubt about if the new regionalism approach applied in a region-in-making may always have positive outcomes in all circumstances.

2.5. Regionalization and Levels of “Regionness”

Regionalization constitutes important concepts of the new regionalism approach. There is no consensus among scholars about the difference between “regionalism” and “regionalization”. In this regard, Raimo Vayrynen points out that “regionalism has been based on institutionalized intergovernmental coalitions that control access to a region. Regionalization has been viewed as the dynamic process associated with region formation”.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne define “regionalism as a state-led project”, whereas consider “regionalization as a societal construction”.¹¹⁸

According to the new regionalism approach, regionalism represents “the body of ideas, values and concrete objectives that are pursued to create, maintain or

¹¹⁴Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 1.

¹¹⁵Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 14.

¹¹⁶Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 272.

¹¹⁷Raimo Väyrynen, “Regionalism: Old and New”, *The International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2003, p. 43.

¹¹⁸Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and World Order*, London: Macmillan, 1996, p. 260.

modify the provision of security, wealth, peace and development within a region”.¹¹⁹ In this sense, regionalism can be considered as a comprehensive project that will be realized if the necessary conditions are prepared.¹²⁰ Rodrigo Tavares with a slight difference, approaches to regionalism as “a theory that needs a process”.¹²¹ On the other hand, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou shortly defines it as “a tendency and a political commitment to organize the world in terms of regions”.¹²²

On the other hand, regionalization is considered as the “empirical process of change from lack of cooperation towards increased cooperation, integration, convergence, coherence and identity in a variety of different fields”.¹²³ Similarly, Andrew Hurrell defines regionalization as “the growth of societal integration within a region as an outcome of social and economic integration”.¹²⁴ In this regard, regionalization can be considered as a process for regional integration. In other words, “regionalization is the region making process whereby a geographical region is transformed from a passive object to an active subject with capacity to articulate the interests of the emerging region”.¹²⁵

In line with parameters of new regionalism approach, regional groupings are accepted as the instrument of process of regionalization. There is an expectation that “the regional groupings, by providing formal and informal forums in which the state,

¹¹⁹Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 3.

¹²⁰Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 14.

¹²¹Rodrigo Tavares, “The Contribution of Macro-regions to the Construction of Peace: a Framework for Analysis”, article delivered at *International Studies Association Forum*, 20 March 2004, Montreal, p. 9-15, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/7/4/1/4/pages74148/p74148-1.php, accessed on 29 October 2009.

¹²²Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 237.

¹²³Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 5.

¹²⁴Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective” in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell, (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 39.

¹²⁵Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 9.

sub-state and non state actors build confidence, can reduce the tendency of their members to implement non peaceful means in pursuit of their national interests”.¹²⁶ In this sense, they are supposed to affect positively the political maturity of their member states ensuring their democratization, economic liberalization and cooperation with the neighboring countries. In this regard, regionalization is considered as “a method for the enhancement of security, stability, political maturity and economic development by fostering dialogue and mutual understanding in a given region”.¹²⁷

The project of regionalism needs the region making process to be fully realized and the region making process requires a project to be started. It means that these are interdependent concepts. However, pursuing a regionalism project can not always result in successful accomplishment of regionalization process. In this sense, there are some conditions for the accomplishments of regionalization and the effects of these conditions will be examined below while analyzing the levels of “regionness”.

The concept of “regionness” is a key element of the new regionalism approach to analyze and understand the logic of today’s processes of regionalization.¹²⁸ Rodrigo Tavares puts forward that “as the process of regionalization is not static, some sort of gradation needs to be introduced in order to monitor developments and to compare regional projects”.¹²⁹ In this regard, the concept of “regionness” can be considered as an important indicator to examine the implementation of regionalism in a region-in-making.¹³⁰ According to these scholars,

¹²⁶Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 79.

¹²⁷Mustafa Aydın, “Europe's New Region: Black Sea in Wider Europe-Neighbourhood”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 2005, p. 266.

¹²⁸ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 5.

¹²⁹Rodrigo Tavares, “The Contribution of Macro-regions to the Construction of Peace: a Framework for Analysis”, article delivered at *International Studies Association Forum*, 20 March 2004, Montreal, p. 3, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/7/4/1/4/pages/74148/p74148-1.php, accessed on 29 October 2009.

¹³⁰Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 9.

there are five interrelated levels of “regionness” that define a particular region in terms of regional coherence as listed below.

The first level is determined as “regional space”. At this level, “the potential region constitutes a geographical and social unit, delimited more or less by natural physical barriers and marked by ecological characteristics”.¹³¹ In this regard, having common geographical features is important for the formation of a such a level. This level “may be based on symbolic kinship bonds rather than trust and contract relations and social relations may thus very well be hostile and completely lacking in cooperation”.¹³² In order to further regionalize, a particular territory needs to experience increasing interaction and more frequent contact between human communities, giving rise to a “regional complex”.

The second level is related to the formation of “regional complex”. At this level, the dominant role is played by the states in management of international relations.¹³³ The emergence of a regional complex implies “ever widening translocalrelations—positive and/or negative -between human groups and influences between cultures (‘little traditions’).”¹³⁴ In security terms, the region at this level is considered as “a conflict formation or a “regional (in)security complex”, in which the constituent units, as far as their own security is concerned, are dependent on each other as well as on the overall stability of the regional system...”.¹³⁵ The contacts between actors within a regional complex are more conducted by patterns of enmity rather than cooperation.¹³⁶ In this regard, at this level of “regionness”, “power balance or some kind of concert is the only security guarantee”.¹³⁷

¹³¹Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 9.

¹³²Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 10.

¹³³ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 463.

¹³⁴Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 462.

¹³⁵Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 10.

¹³⁶ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and

The third level is “regional society” which focuses on the increasing interactions between regional actors that also cover non-state actors. Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum mention that “a number of different actors apart from states appear on different societal levels and move towards transcendence of national space, making use of a more rule-based pattern of relations”.¹³⁸ They also point out that “formal organisations and social institutions play a crucial role in leading towards community and region-building”.¹³⁹ In this regard, the motivations of regional member states of the organization, “the structure of this regional organization as well as its functional system, its scope of cooperation and its institutionalization process” are key elements for procurement of increase in the level of “regionness”.¹⁴⁰

The fourth level entitled “regional community” constitutes the level whereby the region promotes welfare, social communication and convergence of values, identities and actions through regional formal and informal frameworks.¹⁴¹ Björne Hettne underlines that “a shared cultural tradition -an inherent regional civil society-in a particular region is often of importance here, particularly for more informal forms of regionalisation”.¹⁴² However, he emphasized on that fact that “the

Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.) *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹³⁷ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹³⁸ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 464.

¹³⁹ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 466.

¹⁴⁰ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹⁴¹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹⁴² Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political*

defining element is rather the multidimensional and voluntary quality of regional interaction.¹⁴³ At this level, “the regionalization process forms a “regional security community”, which means that the level of regionness makes it inconceivable to solve conflicts by violent means, between as well as within former states”.¹⁴⁴

The fifth level is related to the formation of “regional institutionalized polity”. At this level, the region turn into “an acting subject with a distinct identity, actor capability, legitimacy and structure of decision-making”.¹⁴⁵ In terms of political order, “a regional institutionalized polity” constitutes “a voluntary evolution of a group of formerly sovereign national communities into a new form of political entity”.¹⁴⁶ This political entity leads to supranational regional governance.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, at this level, “authority, power and decision-making are not centralized but layered, decentralized to the local, micro-regional, national and macro-regional/ supranational levels”.¹⁴⁸ Reaching this level is a very difficult task since it requires the convergence of political, economic and security concerns of all regional actors.

Economy, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 467.

¹⁴³Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 467.

¹⁴⁴Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁴⁵ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹⁴⁶Björn Hettne, “Globalization and the New Reginoalism: The Second Great Transformation” in Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel (eds.), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 467.

¹⁴⁸Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

Levels	Actors	Nature of relations	Characteristics of relations
Regional space	States	Low level of interaction	Shared geographical and social unit
Regional complex	States	Enmity rather than cooperation	Conflicts or balance of power
Regional society	States and non state actors	Cooperation	Increased interaction among regional actors through intergovernmental organizations and/or market, society led processes
Regional community	States and non state actors	Increased cooperation towards regional integration	Promotion of security, welfare, social communication and convergence of values, identities and actions through regional formal and informal frameworks
Regional institutionalized polity	States and non state actors	Regional integration and cooperation at the supranational level	Formation of region as an acting subject with a distinct identity, actor capability and structure of decision-making

Figure 1: Schematization of Levels of “Regionness” stated by Björn Hettne

Björn Hettne supports that “these levels can express a certain evolutionary logic”.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, these levels can be considered as a road map to follow the level of regionness of any process of regionalization and as a comparative analytical tool for understanding the construction and consolidation of regions.¹⁵⁰ Björn Hettne highlights that “a region can be a region ‘more or less’ and the level of “regionness” can both increase and decrease depending on regional dynamics affected by global and local forces”.¹⁵¹ In this regard, the concept of “regionness” is dynamic rather than static.

The concept of “regionness” has been carried to a further stage by Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler. The two authors mention about the concept of

¹⁴⁹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.), *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

¹⁵⁰ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 462.

¹⁵¹ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 461.

“actorness”. While “regionness” implies “a process of increasing regional cohesiveness”, “actorness” refers to “the growing capacity of a region to be considered as an actor from outside and inside”.¹⁵² Whereas “regionness” defines “the position of a particular region in terms of cohesion”, “actorness” defines “the capability of a region to influence its external environment by its political, economic and cultural values”.¹⁵³ The concept of “actorness” is usually referred for the EU’s situation as a world actor although there is a lot of debate on this question.¹⁵⁴ However, regarding the EU’s “regionness”, there is a common view that the EU has already reached to a higher level of “regionness” and constitutes a good example to analyze as a relatively successful regionalization process.¹⁵⁵ The Northern Europe constitutes also another successful example of regionalization supported by the EU.¹⁵⁶

2.5. Examples of Regionalization: the EU and the Northern Europe

Before going into the details of the Black Sea regionalism and its process of regionalization, it might be useful to analyze the examples of the EU and the Northern Europe to better understand the concepts of regionalization and “regionness”. The first level of “regionness” concerning the existence of “a regional space that shares a geographical and social unit delimited by natural physical barriers and marked by geographical characteristics” has been always present in Europe.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵²Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London:Routledge, 1999, p. 17.

¹⁵³Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, p. 565.

¹⁵⁴For further analysis see Mario Telò (ed.), *European Union and New Regionalism Regional Actors and Global Governance in a Post-Hegemonic Era*, Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London:Routledge, 1999, p.17.

¹⁵⁶ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.2, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

¹⁵⁷Björn Hettne, Fredrik Söderbaum and Patrik Stalgren, *The EU as a Global Actor in the South*, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Report No. 8, June 2008, p. 23, http://www.cris.unu.edu/uploads/media/2008_08.pdf, accessed on 29 March 2009.

The second level of “regionness” regarding the presence of a regional complex is in fact the legacy of the European history. Throughout the European history, “the existence of wars, some kind of power balance and concert among the actors that were either empires or nation states provided the formation of such a regional complex”.¹⁵⁸ In this regard, there has already been an interaction among European actors, although this interaction was based on the conflictual relations.

Moreover, Europe also passed through the third level of “regionness” that focuses on the increasing interaction between regional actors to form a “regional society”. The regional society is built up through the establishment of a formal state-led intergovernmental regional initiative. “The creation of the ECC with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 removing the tariffs and quotas among the participating countries...”, “...the achievement of the Customs Union in 1968 with the establishment of common external tariffs, the creation of the Single European Market in the mid-1980...” and “...the establishment of the free circulation concerning persons, capital, goods and services..” paved the way for the formation of “regional society” in Europe.¹⁵⁹ At this level, “the regional integration is focused on economic integration and internal prosperity of the region while the development of a European regional identity stayed minimal”.¹⁶⁰

The signature of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 creating the European Union with its pillar system including foreign and home affairs together with the economic pillar of the European Community remarked on the starting point of the fourth level of “regionness” that is “regional community”.¹⁶¹ The process of economic

¹⁵⁸Björn Hettne, Fredrik Söderbaum and Patrik Stalgren, *The EU as a Global Actor in the South*, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Report No. 8, June 2008, p. 24, http://www.cris.unu.edu/uploads/media/2008_08.pdf, accessed on 29 March 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 89-91.

¹⁶⁰ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 89.

¹⁶¹ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 92.

homogenization as well as political, security and identity homogenization were strengthened at this level.

“Creation of a single currency, strong commitment to democratic values through respect to the Copenhagen Criteria that is a precondition for the EU membership and formation of common foreign and security policy” were the elements allowed Europe to pass to the next and final stage in “regionness”.¹⁶² In this framework, the European identity was strengthened and the supranational nature of the EU became solid. As a result of it, the EU could become “an acting subject with a distinct identity, actor capability and legitimate structure of decision-making”.¹⁶³ Within the framework, the EU can then be considered as the only regional institutionalized polity reaching this level in terms of “regionness”.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the EU has not only achieved to reach higher levels of “regionness”, but it also has supported the new regionalism in its neighborhood.¹⁶⁵ One of these areas is the Northern part of Europe.

The Northern region seems to be a new regionalism project involved in a process of regionalization.¹⁶⁶ It is indeed an area of significant diversity, where different cultures, histories and ways of doing things have met. In this sense, the Northern region does not only present a regional space that share a common geography and social unit but also a “regional complex”. The establishment of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Baltic Sea States in the region has been already important steps on the increase of “regionness” in the Northern

¹⁶² Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds.), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 92.

¹⁶³ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds.), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 92.

¹⁶⁴ Cordula Janowski, *Globalization, Regional Integration and the EU: Pleadings for a Broader Perspective*, ZEI Discussion Papers, No. C162, 2006, p. 21-24, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c162Janowski.pdf, accessed on 30 March 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p. 2, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

¹⁶⁶ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p. 2, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

Europe.¹⁶⁷ Based on the previous experience regarding regional cooperation, the launch of *the Northern Dimension* by the EU significantly contributed to reach the level of “regional society”.¹⁶⁸

The Northern Dimension is a project of the EU bringing together Nordic countries, Baltic States and Russia. As Anastassia Obydenkova points out that “*the Northern Dimension* is a concept rather than an organizational entity and it does not create new institutions or financial instruments”.¹⁶⁹ The stakeholders of *the Northern Dimension* project are the EU members including the Nordic and Baltic member states, plus Norway, Iceland and Russia.¹⁷⁰ It supports the existing multilateral co-operation within the northern regional councils such as the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.¹⁷¹ “The stakeholders recognize and value their geographic proximity, economic interdependence and common cultural heritage”.¹⁷² “They are committed to cooperate actively on the basis of good neighborliness, equal partnership, common responsibility and transparency”.¹⁷³

The Northern Dimension also focuses on the issues concerning “freedom, security and justice, facilitation of people-to-people contacts, development of border management, good governance, efficiency of judicial cooperation in

¹⁶⁷ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.2, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

¹⁶⁸ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.2, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

¹⁶⁹ Anastassia Obydenkova, “Democratization, Europeanization and Regionalization beyond the European Union: Search for Empirical Evidence”, *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol.10, No.1, 2006, p.10, http://eiop.or.at/eiop/index.php/eiop/article/view/2006_001a/15, accessed on 29 March 2009.

¹⁷⁰ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf, accessed on 22 February 2008.

¹⁷¹ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf, accessed on 22 February 2008.

¹⁷² Seminar “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea”, organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, Athens, Seminar Report, p.2.

¹⁷³ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf, accessed on 22 February 2008.

criminal and civil matters, fight against cross-border crime”.¹⁷⁴ It also concentrates on “civil protection, cooperation in research and education exchange programs, youth policy, promotion of people-to-people contacts, visibility of regional and local cultural identity and heritage”.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, it urges cooperation on issues such as “nuclear safety and natural resources, maritime safety, biodiversity, protection of the ecosystems, environmental legislation and administrative capacity building”.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, this project pays attention to “social welfare and health care, including prevention of communicable diseases and life-style related diseases and promotion of cooperation between health and social services”.¹⁷⁷ In this regard, *the Northern Dimension* touches upon several issues that have direct effects on the daily lives of people living in the Northern Europe.

These objectives that are implemented through the mechanisms in this project pave the way for the establishment of a “regional community” in the Northern Europe. *The Northern Dimension* of Europe pursues to establish a system where “the economic and political stability, conservation of ecological systems, and the exchange over social, cultural and educational policies are ensured”.¹⁷⁸ In this sense, *the Northern Dimension* contributes to the promotion of security, dialogue and convergence of values and actions in the region. However, it does not reach the level of “the regional institutionalized polity” in contrast to the achievement of the EU, since it does not still represent a supranational structure.

¹⁷⁴ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.3, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

¹⁷⁵ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf , accessed on 22 February 2008.

¹⁷⁶ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf , accessed on 22 February 2008.

¹⁷⁷ *Northern Dimension*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/frame_pol_1106.pdf , accessed on 22 February 2008.

¹⁷⁸ Anastassia Obydenkova, “Democratization, Europeanization and Regionalization beyond the European Union: Search for Empirical Evidence”, *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol. 10, No.1, 2006, p.10, http://eiop.or.at/eiop/index.php/eiop/article/view/2006_001a/15, accessed on 29 March 2009.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the regionalization at the Northern edge of Europe seems a successful example in terms of reaching a high level of “regionness”. Our question is what the situation in terms of “regionness” is at the other edge of Europe that is the Black Sea area. In the case of the Black Sea region, and in particular for the former Soviet bloc countries, regionalism as a project and regionalization as a process were considered as remedies for overcoming economic, political and security vacuum in the region. As Dimitrios Triantaphyllou underlines “following the example of European integration and the more similar case of the Baltic Sea), the countries of the region decided to follow the path of zero-sum thinking”.¹⁷⁹ In this sense, they considered regionalization as a catalyst for prosperity, stability and security in the Black Sea area. However, the result does not seem compatible with the initial expectations. In this regard, in the next chapter, we will apply all the concepts that are explained in this chapter to the Black Sea area and analyze the impact of the BSEC as a full-fledged institutionalized and project oriented regional organization for the increase of Black Sea “regionness”. While doing so, we will use the table of “regionness” level that we touched upon in the conceptual framework.

¹⁷⁹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “ The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 233.

CHAPTER III

ROLE OF the BSEC IN THE REGIONALIZATION PROCESS

3.1. Introduction

During the last centuries, “the interaction of changing power balances among European and Eurasian states and empires, as well as political ambitions of smaller states and peoples directly affected by the actions of these powers” have shaped the strategic environment of the Black Sea zone.¹⁸⁰ Alongside these characteristics, “the status of the Black Sea area as a transit point for goods on global east-west and north-south trade routes” has strengthened its strategic importance.¹⁸¹ After the Cold War, similar to the other initiatives of new regionalism approach in the world that aimed at establishing secure, stable and prosperous regions for the new international world order, the Black Sea regional states showed their will to establish a regional organization to increase cooperation and coordination among themselves in a multilateral platform to render the area more stable and prosperous.¹⁸² This resulted in the establishment of the BSEC and the BSEC represented an important role in the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area. In this regard, the BSEC as the most institutionalized organization in the Black Sea can be an instrument to evaluate at which level the region is found in terms of “regionness”.

In line with this perspective, we will touch upon the historical background of the Black Sea area and concentrate on the objectives of the BSEC and its founding members while launching this cooperation platform. We will also focus on the BSEC’s organizational and institutional changes in 19 years. Following this, we will explore the role of major BSEC projects and the BSEC-EU relations in the

¹⁸⁰ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 5.

¹⁸¹ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 6.

¹⁸² Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 6.

development of Black Sea “regionness”. Finally, we will concentrate on the limitations that the BSEC face to deepen the level of “regionness” in the process of Black Sea regionalization.

3.2. Historical Background of the Region

When we look at the historical background of the Black Sea area, we see that it has been “a backyard of one power or another, or has witnessed a competition between great powers to dominate it”.¹⁸³ In this regard, over centuries, the dominating powers in the Black Sea area changed. “It was first a Hellenic cultural and political space from 8th century to 1st century BC, and next came a period of Roman rule, extending over most of the Black Sea coast, followed by the Byzantine Empire, and then by the Ottomans” from 5th to 18th century.¹⁸⁴

Yannis Tsantoulis underlines that “in the 18th century, the whole region was again beginning to be known for its divisions, turmoil and confrontations,”.¹⁸⁵ With the Treaty of San Stefano signed in 1774 after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774, “Russia strengthened its engagement in the Black Sea due to the concession that Catherine the Great received from the Ottoman Empire as a result of Russian victory”.¹⁸⁶ Consequently, “the European powers took necessary initiatives to replace the Treaty of San Stefano by the Berlin Treaty that limited Russia’s gains from the situation”.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, together with the nationalist movements raised in and around

¹⁸³Mustafa Aydın, *Europe’s Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 6, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

¹⁸⁴Mihail E. Ionescu, “Wider Black Sea Region Cooperation: A Historical Survey”, in Jean Dufourcq and Lionel Ponsard (eds.), *The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area in a Future European Security Space*, NATO Defence College Occasional Paper, Vol. 1, December 2005, p. 19.

¹⁸⁵ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU’s Role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEI Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 7, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 4 February 2009.

¹⁸⁶ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 7.

¹⁸⁷ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 7.

the Black Sea area, the security situation became more fragile and the Black Sea world became not simply an area of struggle between empires but a strategic environment for the interests of states that recently gained their independence.¹⁸⁸ On the other hand, in the 19th century, “the coal deposits of the southern coast, the grain fields of the north, and the oil wells of Romania and the Caucasus attracted a host investors and businessmen”.¹⁸⁹

As Charles King points out, “the next major conflagration around the sea -the First World War-engulfed all the old empires and newer nation-states.”¹⁹⁰ After the War, “four states now encircled the sea, all four of which were, in different ways, young countries”.¹⁹¹ As he mentions, “all were built on the ruins of older states or empires, but each had either new borders or, in the case of republican Turkey and the Soviet Union, radically new bases for state-building and social order”.¹⁹² The Second World War was also a turning point for the Black Sea region. Just after the War, the Black Sea became the front line of East-West rivalry.¹⁹³ While there were some regional clashes during the Cold War in other regions, “a relative stability and security were provided in the region for more than 40 years”.¹⁹⁴ However, the

¹⁸⁸ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 7-8.

¹⁸⁹ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 14.

¹⁹⁰ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 8.

¹⁹¹ Charles King, “Is the Black Sea a Region?” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p.8.

¹⁹² Charles King, “Is the Black Sea a Region?” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. 8.

¹⁹³ Charles King, “Is the Black Sea a Region?” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. 8.

¹⁹⁴ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 8, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

regional structure situated at the heart of East –West rivalry of the Cold War became an obstacle for the increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”, since the interaction between two blocs remained limited.

Although the Black Sea littoral states were torn in two different ideologies belonging two different blocs in this period of time, they were sharing a major common problem regarding environmental issues. In the second half of the twentieth century, “the rapid growth of agriculture and urban centers as well as the new energy technologies provoked an environmental catastrophe”.¹⁹⁵ This problem highlighted the need to take common regional action towards common regional problems affecting the life of all. Taking regional actions towards the environmental problems during even the Cold War was a sign of need as well as capacity to act together for Black Sea states. As an example of it, Bulgaria, Romania and the USSR had tried to cooperate during the Cold War by signing the *Varna Fisheries Agreement* in 1959, and Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey cooperated with the *General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean*.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, the Black Sea littoral states signed the *MARPOL Convention* in 1973 which designated the Black Sea as a specially protected area.¹⁹⁷ These attempts of cooperation were quite premature and the *MARPOL Convention* did not have a chance of implementation because of financial and legal reasons.¹⁹⁸ However, all these initiatives, besides their meaning in environmental issues, presented a platform for dialogue and cooperation in the region.

After the collapse of the Soviet, cooperation at the environmental area has accelerated. For instance, in 1992, six littoral states signed the *Bucharest Convention*

¹⁹⁵ Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 16.

¹⁹⁶ Laurence David Mee, “Protecting the Black Sea Environment. A Challenge for Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Europe,” in Michael Emerson and Adams D. Terry, Laurence David Mee, Marius Vahl. (eds.), *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels: CEPS Books, 2002, p. 89.

¹⁹⁷ Laurence David Mee, “Protecting the Black Sea Environment. A Challenge for Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Europe,” in Michael Emerson and Adams D. Terry, Laurence David Mee, Marius Vahl. (eds.), *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels: CEPS Books, 2002, p. 89.

¹⁹⁸ Laurence David Mee, “Protecting the Black Sea Environment. A Challenge for Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Europe,” in Michael Emerson and Adams D. Terry, Laurence David Mee, Marius Vahl. (eds.), *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels: CEPS Books, 2002, p. 89.

for the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution which came into effect in 1994.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the Black Sea Commission was established in 1995 to oversee the implementation of the Convention.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, all the Black Sea countries prepared a common policy framework for environmental protection and as a result Black Sea Environment Programme (BSEP) was established in June 1993 to conduct analyses of environmental problems in the region and the Programme came up with a Strategic Action Plan, signed by the six littorals in 1996 for the rehabilitation and protection of the Black Sea.²⁰¹ Furthermore, “Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Macedonia established a separate council of cooperation on environmental issues in December 2000”.²⁰² Following this, “in November 2001, all the 19 countries in the Black Sea Basin signed *the Declaration on Water and Water Related Ecosystems in the Wider Black Sea Region*”.²⁰³ This shows that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Black Sea welcomed the increase in the level of environmental cooperation and the scope of cooperation widened towards other areas.

The collapse of the Soviet Union became a turning point for the Black Sea region. Not only new states emerged but also new problems and threats appeared in the region. Charles King concludes that “this collapse created a security and stability vacuum in the Black Sea region”.²⁰⁴ Following the collapse of Soviet Union, the former Soviet states in the region faced severe territorial conflicts that remain still

¹⁹⁹ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 14, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

²⁰⁰ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 14, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

²⁰¹ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 14, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

²⁰² Laurence David Mee, “Protecting the Black Sea Environment. A Challenge for Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Europe,” in Michael Emerson and Adams D. Terry, Laurence David Mee, Marius Vahl (eds.), *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels: CEPS Books, 2002, p. 95.

²⁰³ Laurence David Mee, “Protecting the Black Sea Environment. A Challenge for Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Europe,” in Michael Emerson and Adams D. Terry, Laurence David Mee, Marius Vahl (eds.), *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels: CEPS Books, 2002, p. 95.

²⁰⁴ Charles King, *The Black Sea – A history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 5-6.

unresolved. “Contested borders, mixed national and ethnic groups, enforced migration, economic deprivation, widespread unemployment, authoritarian regimes and competition from outsiders for the influence” have impeded the increase of the regional cooperation.²⁰⁵ All these issues, including the entrance of the former Soviet countries torn by territorial conflicts to a political and economic transition period have rendered the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area even more difficult. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, there were also opportunities for cooperation in the Black Sea area. In this regard, Turkey initiated the establishment of the BSEC in as a project to render this region more stable, developed and respectively secure.²⁰⁶

When we apply the framework of Björn Hettne concerning levels of “regionness, we see that in the Black Sea region, here is a shared geographical unit composed by similar natural physical barriers and ecological characteristics. Moreover, when we look at the history, throughout the history, the contacts between actors were conducted by patterns of enmity rather than cooperation but still, even during that time, social and economic interactions were present in this region. In this regard, the Black Sea area represented a “regional complex” that required cooperation and coordination to pass the next level which is “regional society”. For this transformation, a suitable climate and political will of actors were needed. After the collapse of Soviet Union, within the change in its geopolitical geometry, the region became more vulnerable to security, stability and prosperity challenges. The same change opened new ways of cooperation for regional states, including the newly independent ones. In this regard, the establishment of the BSEC in 1990’s was a promising step to provide a new era for the region and its process of regionalization.

²⁰⁵ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 24, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

²⁰⁶ Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea economic cooperation and regional security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 90.

3.3. Objectives of the BSEC and Its Founding Members

Through the leadership of Turkey, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine launched the BSEC initiative on 25 June 1992 with the signature of *the Bosphorus Declaration*.²⁰⁷ With the accession of Serbia and Montenegro in April 2004, the number of Member States increased to twelve.²⁰⁸ Since its establishment, the number of the observer countries which belong to different regions rose to fourteen and today, the BSEC has several sectoral partners.²⁰⁹ *The Istanbul Declaration* remarked the desire of participating states to cooperate more closely with each other. As Panagiota Manoli expresses, “it was the first time that eleven countries from Caspian to the Adriatic joined the same institutional initiative”.²¹⁰ Following this document, they also came out with *the Bosphorus Statement* of 1992 where they underlined their commitment for the initiative.²¹¹

The participating states of the BSEC shared some common interests to establish such a mechanism. One of the common interests of these eleven states was “to enhance the mutually advantageous economic cooperation in fostering their economic, technological and social progress in the region”.²¹² The initiative urged

²⁰⁷Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 90.

²⁰⁸ “Current members states of the BSEC are Republic of Albania, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Republic of Serbia, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine”, Member States of BSEC, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/member/Pages/member.aspx>, accessed on 21 May 2009.

²⁰⁹Observers of the BSEC, Sectorial Dialogue Partners of the BSEC, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/COMOFA/Pages/default.aspx>, accessed on 21 May 2009.

²¹⁰ Panagiota Manoli, “The Role of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in the Stability of the Region”, in Aghavni Karakhanian (ed.), *Shaping an Environment for Peace, Stability & Confidence in South Caucasus*, The Institute for Civil Society and Regional Development (ICSRD), Yerevan, July 2002, p. 40.

²¹¹ Panagiota Manoli, “The Role of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in the Stability of the Region”, in Aghavni Karakhanian (ed.), *Shaping an Environment for Peace, Stability & Confidence in South Caucasus*, The Institute for Civil Society and Regional Development (ICSRD), Yerevan, July 2002, p. 40.

²¹² “Istanbul Summit Declaration of the BSEC, 25 June 1992”, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p. 8.

transition to market economy for participating states to accelerate economic cooperation within the region while transforming it into an area of stability and prosperity.²¹³ On the other hand, “diverse their motivations might have been; the main concern for joining the BSEC was their integration into the European and world structures”.²¹⁴ This interest was clearly expressed in the BSEC founding documents. These documents underline that the partnership between BSEC countries will contribute to “the future architecture of Europe and facilitate the processes and structures of European integration”.²¹⁵

Furthermore, although the architects of BSEC perceived economic development as the main pillar of cooperation, they also attached importance to the establishment of regional security and stability.²¹⁶ The agenda of BSEC seems to be restricted to mainly economic issues, not covering the “hard” security matters. However, the founding documents of BSEC also have mentioned about the need to provide security and stability in the region. In this regard, *the Bosphorus Statement* refers to “the need for the peaceful settlement of all disputes by the means and in accordance with the principles set out in the CSCE documents”.²¹⁷ The statement also affirms “the commitment of signatories to resist aggression, violence, terrorism and respect the law to restore peace and justice on the basis of general principles of the UN Charter and the CSCE”.²¹⁸ The existence of these clauses in official document gave a role to the BSEC going beyond its economic agenda expecting that improvements in the economic field would lead to improvements in the political field

²¹³ “Istanbul Summit Declaration of the BSEC”, 25 June 1992, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p. 9.

²¹⁴ Panagiota Manoli, “The Role of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in the Stability of the Region”, in Aghavni Karakhanian (ed.), *Shaping an Environment for Peace, Stability & Confidence in South Caucasus*, The Institute for Civil Society and Regional Development (ICSRD), Yerevan, July 2002, p. 40.

²¹⁵ “Istanbul Summit Declaration of the BSEC”, 25 June 1992, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p.9.

²¹⁶ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 132.

²¹⁷ “Bosphorus Statement of the BSEC”, 25 June 1992, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p. 2.

²¹⁸ “Bosphorus Statement of the BSEC”, 25 June 1992, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p. 2.

turning the region more secure, stable and prosperous.²¹⁹ The existence of these and related common interests prepared a ground for the establishment of the BSEC. However, the participating countries had different priorities and motivations in the process of this establishment.²²⁰ The diversification in their priorities and motivations would become more obvious in the following years and it would affect negatively the increase of “regionness” level in the Black Sea area.

There has been a question mark on who initiated the BSEC initiative in Turkey and whose project it was. According to common belief, Former President Turgut Özal paved the way for the idea of the BSEC. However, the project was inspired by the retired Ambassador Şükrü Elekdağ who shared his proposal of establishing the BSEC in the panel entitled “Changes in the world and Turkey” organized by a private company and on the basis of the proposal, President Turgut Özal took up the idea and turned it into a political reality.²²¹

Although, the official dissolution of Soviet Union on 8 December 1991 and the creation of new states in the Black Sea region slowed the BSEC project down, Turkey was still determined to realize its proposal.²²² Thus, at the beginning of 1992, Ankara renewed its invitation to proclaim the establishment of the organization to 10 heads of state: Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Albania, and Greece.²²³ President Turgut Özal’s preference to invite Greece to the new initiative was criticized in Turkey as Greece was blocking

²¹⁹ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 132.

²²⁰ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23-25.

²²¹ Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, “The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace”, *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

²²² Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, “The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace”, *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

²²³ Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, “The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace”, *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

Turkey's accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) at that time.²²⁴ Despite all the difficulties, on 25 June 1992, the BSEC was officially established. Greece and Albania became founding members while Yugoslavia that was led to civil war remained out of the BSEC project.²²⁵ Turkey showed a great effort to explain to the EEC and its members that the BSEC can not represent an alternative to this European institution.²²⁶

Among Turkey's motivations to propose such a regional initiative, economic considerations had significant ground.²²⁷ Following the rejection of its application for membership by the EEC in 1989, Turkey started to look for new markets. Thus, it is not a coincidence that Turkey deeply focused on the BSEC initiative just one year after the rejection of its application for the EEC membership.²²⁸ The economic cooperation in the Black Sea area would present a good opportunity for its finding new markets and for its economic development, in a broader perspective.²²⁹ Moreover, while proposing such a regional framework, Turkey had an important foreign policy objective. Turkey perceived the objective to be a role model for the former Soviet states and newly independent republics and to increase its political and economic influence in the region.²³⁰ This objective was containing a further

²²⁴ Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, "The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace", *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

²²⁵ Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, "The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace", *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

²²⁶ Begüm Gürsoy and Duygu Güvenç, "The BSEC celebrates 15 years in its birthplace", *Turkish Daily News*, 25 June 2007, <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/06/25/the-bsec-celebrates-15-years-in-its-birthplace/>, accessed on 20 March 2008.

²²⁷ Yannis Valinakis, "The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe", *Institut d'Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

²²⁸ Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, "The Turkish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May – October 2007)", Manoli Panagiota (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 131.

²²⁹ Yannis Valinakis, "The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe", *Institut d'Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

²³⁰ Mustafa Aydın, "Echoes of Özal's Vision", *The Bridge Magazine*, 2007, http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=31, accessed on 20 May 2008.

ambitious root such as the enforcement of its status and geopolitical importance as a regional leader.²³¹ In this sense, for Turkey, the initiative of the BSEC was also an instrument for its foreign policy agenda updated according to the new dynamics of the post Cold War.

The BSEC initiative was launched when Russia had to determine its new position in the regional and international system, while trying to preserve its influence on the newly independent republics that had been part of the Soviet Union.²³² To this end, Russia together with Belarus and Ukraine initiated the CIS on December 1991 and called on the other regional post-Soviet states to take part in it.²³³ On the other hand, “Moscow was trying to align and engage in various regional organizations, as a means to prevent further disintegration”.²³⁴ Russia considered Turkey’s policies towards the Black Sea as steps to undercut its positions in the region. In this regard, any support given to Turkey related to Black Sea issues by the US was considered by Russia as the continuation of the Cold War manners to replace its domination in the Caspian-Black Sea region. Nevertheless, Russia reconsidered its assertive position in the region that needed stability and cooperation and decided to pursue a more cooperative policy and it involved in the BSEC, considering it as a way to reply the requirements of the region.²³⁵ Moreover, being a member of this initiative could also help its policy of balancing Turkey’s influence in the region. In

²³¹ Mustafa Aydın, “Echoes of Özal’s Vision”, *The Bridge Magazine*, 2007, http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=31, accessed on 20 May 2008.

²³² Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

²³³ Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, “The Russian factor: Cooperation vs Competition”, *The Bridge Magazine*, 2007, http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=174&Itemid=39, accessed on 24 May 2008.

²³⁴ Igor Munteanu, “The Policy of Moldova Towards the Black Sea Region and the BSEC”, in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 87.

²³⁵ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

fact, the existence of this kind of competition between Turkey and Russia in those days had contributed to the development of the BSEC initiative.²³⁶

After the collapse of the Soviet Union also, Greece also became very interested in the Black Sea area and desired to play a leading role in the strengthening of stability and prosperity in this region.²³⁷ However, “Turkey’s active interest in promoting the idea in 1990-91 was seen as a diversion from a more Europe-oriented Balkan (or South-East European) cooperative scheme”.²³⁸ Consequently, “the eastward orientation of the proposed BSEC scheme therefore initially met with Greek resistance”.²³⁹ However, Greece changed its position and participated te in the BSEC of a time “when the Balkans was again torn between conflicts since the Black Sea region came to be seen as constituting a natural economic area for the expansion of the Greek private sector”.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, “the primary concern for Greece in joining the BSEC was to minimize Turkish influence in the region”.²⁴¹

For the former Soviet countries in the region such as Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia that had recently gained their independence, taking part in the BSEC under equal conditions with Russia had a symbolic meaning. In line with their new economic and political agendas, they had different priorities while joining the BSEC. However, while giving such a decision, their common objective was to express their autonomous presence in regional and international affairs by creating new bilateral and multilateral relations with their nearest neighbors and

²³⁶ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

²³⁷ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 24.

²³⁸ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 25.

²³⁹ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 25.

²⁴⁰ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 25.

²⁴¹ Igor Munteanu, “The Policy of Moldova towards the Black Sea Region and the BSEC”, in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 87.

beyond.²⁴² On the other hand, the invitation of Albania to the BSEC was the idea of Ankara. Turkey aimed at attracting a partly Muslim-populated country and creating economic links with Albania and its surrounding countries.²⁴³ For Albania, this invitation was considered as a unique opportunity for economic reasons.²⁴⁴ On the other hand, “Romania and Bulgaria regarded the BSEC primarily as a focal point for trade and energy transportation, being more concerned with joining sooner or later the EU and elevating their political and economic stature...”.²⁴⁵ Although, the BSEC participating states shared common interest while supporting the project, their motivation and priorities were not quite similar. There was a significant diversity in their expectations and this turned the development of project and regionalization process in the Black Sea area more complicated in the upcoming years.

3.4. From a Forum to a Legal Entity: 1992-1999

Considering the differences among the BSEC states, different historic experiences, mentalities and economic potential as well as the fact that decisions within the BSEC are made by consensus, the signature of *the Charter* was a difficult task. This achievement demonstrated the real political will of member states to cooperate more effectively.²⁴⁶ The BSEC had remained as an initiative lacking a legal status until 1999, until it became a regional economic organization with an international identity through the entry into force of *its Charter*. In line with the changes in the international politics and following the principles in *the Charter*, the

²⁴²Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 24.

²⁴³Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 25.

²⁴⁴Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 25.

²⁴⁵Igor Munteanu, “The Policy of Moldova towards the Black Sea Region and the BSEC”, in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSX Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSX, 2007, p. 87.

²⁴⁶Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, “Cooperative Efforts in the Black Sea Region” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004, p. 29.

BSEC passed through a significant organizational evolution, which also affected the regionalization process of the Black Sea, as well as showing impact on the level of Black Sea “regionness”.

The BSEC initiative passed through an institutionalization process between the years 1992 and 1999 and during this period of time it gained regional and international recognition. Within this period, the Black Sea region witnessed armed conflicts together with breakup of diplomatic relations between the regional states.²⁴⁷ These challenges were “among the toughest challenges to Black Sea regional security, as well as to the national interests of several post-Soviet states”.²⁴⁸ In this regard, while the BSEC was trying to institutionalize, the region was passing through a difficult and instable climate.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the regional post-Soviet states faced severe economic problems.²⁴⁹ The problem of refugees and forced migrants as a result of conflicts, political and economic problems also contributed to the unstable climate.²⁵⁰ The existence of all these challenges between the member states and in the region during the first years of the BSEC initiative created important challenges for the regionalization process of the Black Sea area, the creation of a Black Sea identity as well as institutionalization of the BSEC.

Within this complicated climate, at the first of the BSEC, the institutional flexibility was chosen as a model and the creation of an international secretariat was not preferred.²⁵¹ The only institution foreseen in *the 1992 Istanbul Declaration* was the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be convened regularly on rotation

²⁴⁷Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 294.

²⁴⁸ Mykola Kapitonenko, “Resolving Post-Soviet “Frozen” Conflicts: Is Regional Integration Helpful?”, *Caucasion Review of International Affairs*, Vol.3, No.1, Winter 2009, p. 37.

²⁴⁹Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 6, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Par/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

²⁵⁰Erhan Büyükakıncı, “Security Issues and Patterns of Cooperation in the Black Sea Region”, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. 35, 2004, p. 18.

²⁵¹Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 66.

basis in order to review progress and to define new targets.²⁵² However, as the time went by, “the BSEC established all the classical intergovernmental bodies mainly in parallel with the EU institutions”.²⁵³ The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was considered as the main regular decision making organ.²⁵⁴ In this regard, although the BSEC was conceived as an economic cooperation scheme, it has been ruled by a Council consisted of foreign ministers instead of ministers of economy. The Council started to meet twice a year in April and October, led by the Foreign Minister of the chairing country that rotates in 6 months.²⁵⁵ To ensure continuity within the BSEC, a Troika System with the participation of the past, the current and the future chairpersons was introduced in 1995.²⁵⁶

Later on, the member states decided to establish the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of the BSEC in March 1994, in Istanbul to coordinate BSEC activities.²⁵⁷ Its functions were set to draft and distribute the BSEC documents and to provide administrative support for the BSEC meetings.²⁵⁸ While it was decided that the Secretary-General of PERMIS would be responsible to the Chairman-in-Office and will function under his authority, “the PERMIS was not given the legal status to be a contracting partner on behalf of BSEC”.²⁵⁹

²⁵² “Istanbul Summit Declaration of the BSEC”, 25 June 1992, in *BSEC Handbook of Documents*, Istanbul: BSEC PERMIS, 1995, p.9.

²⁵³Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 66.

²⁵⁴Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 65-66.

²⁵⁵Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 65-66.

²⁵⁶ Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 66.

²⁵⁷ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 22.

²⁵⁸ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 22.

²⁵⁹Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 22.

To promote the establishment of a market economy led by the private sector in the region, the member states agreed on the creation of the BSEC Business Council (BSEC-BC) in 1992.²⁶⁰ The BSEC-BC aims at improving regional economic integration while ensuring a business-friendly environment and helping to attract foreign direct investments to the region.²⁶¹ It has been given an observer status in BSEC while it has been located within the PERMIS premises in Istanbul.²⁶² Furthermore, the establishment of the Coordination Centre for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information in 1993 in Ankara has been another important initiative to foster economic cooperation in the region by collecting, coordinating, analyzing and circulating statistics and economic information from the region.²⁶³

Following these initiatives, with the aim of enhancing cooperation among the parliamentary assemblies of the participating states and ensuring the harmonization of legislation required to implement BSEC projects, the Parliamentarian Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC)²⁶⁴ was established in 1993.²⁶⁵ The main objective of the PABSEC²⁶⁶ was set “to provide assistance to the national parliaments in enacting the

²⁶⁰ Serdar Sayan, *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for or a Complement to Globalization Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?*, Economic Research Forum, Working Paper, No: 9806, 1998, p.11, http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~sayan/DiscussionPapers/ERF_WP9806.pdf, accessed on 17 June 2008.

²⁶¹ Costas Masmanidis, “The Role of the BSEC Business Council”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 78.

²⁶² Ahmet Canlı, *Regionalism in the Black Sea Area and Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Florida State University, 2005, p. 11.

²⁶³ Serdar Sayan, *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for or a Complement to Globalization Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?*, Economic Research Forum, Working Paper, No: 9806, 1998, p.11, http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~sayan/DiscussionPapers/ERF_WP9806.pdf, p. 11, accessed on 17 June 2008.

²⁶⁴ “The Speakers of the Parliaments Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine adopted the Declaration on the Establishment of the PABSEC”, *The Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)*, <http://www.pabsec.org/introduction.asp>, accessed on 3 June 2008.

²⁶⁵ *The Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)*, <http://www.pabsec.org/introduction.asp>, accessed on 3 June 2008.

²⁶⁶ “The PABSEC works in three committees: The Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee; the Legal and Political Affairs Committee; and the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee. The Permanent Secretariat is in charge of the coordination

laws that are necessary for the implementation of the projects within BSEC”.²⁶⁷ It also pursues “to establish the legislative foundation for successful multilateral economic, political and cultural regional cooperation”.²⁶⁸ In this context, the PABSEC has represented an important element to consolidate the democratic experiences of the BSEC member states.

Another important step to foster economic development in the Black Sea area was the decision taken on the establishment of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) on June 1999 that turned into the financial pillar of the BSEC.²⁶⁹ “Since 1999, the BSTDB cumulative portfolio in its 11 member countries reached 165 operations in the key sectors of infrastructure, energy, transport, financial sector and other important areas to the total amount of over 2 billion US Dollars”.²⁷⁰ Moreover, the establishment of the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), as an affiliated body of the BSEC structure in 1998, in Greece, could be considered as a crucial asset for the regionalization in the Black Sea area. The ICBSS has been “the first think-tank that has studied practical ways of widening and deepening regional cooperation among the regional countries while promoting the application of scientific achievements to concrete fields of cooperation”.²⁷¹ Founded as a non-profit organization, “it has fulfilled a dual function of working as an independent research and training institution on the wider Black Sea area while being a related body of the BSEC as its acknowledged think tank”.²⁷² The ICBSS also became a catalyst for policy planning within the BSEC.

and effectiveness of these committees”, PABSEC, <http://www.pabsec.org/>, accessed on 2 May 2009.

²⁶⁷ *The Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)*, <http://www.pabsec.org/introduction.asp>, accessed on 3 June 2008.

²⁶⁸ *The Declaration on the Establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)*, <http://www.pabsec.org/introduction.asp>, accessed on 3 June 2008.

²⁶⁹ Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, <http://www.bstdb.org>, accessed on 2 February 2009.

²⁷⁰ Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, <http://www.bstdb.org>, accessed on 2 February 2009.

²⁷¹ Thanos Veremis, “The Involvement of the International Center for Black Sea Studies in the Policy-making & Cooperation process within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Framework: The Role of a Think-tank in the BSEC Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 153.

²⁷² International Center of Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), <http://www.icbss.org>, accessed on 3 January 2008.

Beyond institutions established specifically within the BSEC, other initiatives became operational by positive impacts of the Organization and these initiatives have served for acceleration of the regionalization process in the region. For instance, the establishment of the International Black Sea Club (IBSC) in 1992 as a non-profit organization between the mayors of the towns from Black Sea region was important step to increase the regional cooperation.²⁷³ The IBSC does not take part among institutions within the BSEC. However, since it has an observer status in the Organization, it maintains a significant place for regionalization process in the region related to the BSEC operational area. The IBSC aims at “providing the stimulation of direct contacts between companies and enterprises and the exchange of economic and commercial information among regional actors”.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, the creation of the Black Sea Universities Network in 1997 presents another step to increase cooperation in the entire Black Sea area.²⁷⁵ The Network that includes nowadays over 100 universities from the 11 member countries of the BSEC became a tool to identify and enhance intellectual resources and marked an asset to start educational cooperation in the region.²⁷⁶

Before BSEC’s turning into an international regional organization, the BSEC founding member states could agree on the establishment of several institutions that would provide the launch of the regionalization process in the wider Black Sea area. The launch of all these institutions and other related initiatives mentioned above were indeed crucial steps to increase the cooperation at the governmental, parliamentary business, societal and academic level in the Black Sea area. The results of these steps would be taken after the signature of *the BSEC Charter*, in line with the working performance of these institutions as well as the projects that they would propose and implement to deepen the process of Black Sea regionalization.

²⁷³ Black Sea Universities Network Website, <http://www.bsun.org>, accessed on 9 August 2008.

²⁷⁴ Black Sea Universities Network Website, <http://www.bsun.org>, accessed on 9 August 2008.

²⁷⁵ International Black Sea Club (IBSC), <http://www.i-bsc.org>, accessed on 7 August 2008.

²⁷⁶ Black Sea Universities Network, <http://www.bsun.org>, accessed on 9 August 2008.

3.5. Organizational Changes after the Signature of *the Charter*

The signature of *the BSEC Charter* in Yalta on 5 June 1998, which was ratified by the respective parliaments by May 1999, was a clear indication of the member states' long term commitment to the success of the Organization.²⁷⁷ This gave the BSEC more possibilities for developing regional cooperation as well as formal interaction with other international organizations.²⁷⁸ *The BSEC Charter* has mainly determined the Organization's priority areas and fields of common works as "trade, economic development, banking and finance, communications, energy, transport, agriculture, environmental protection, tourism, science and technology, combating all acts of crime, terrorism and illegal migration".²⁷⁹ With the signature of the Charter, it was expected that the BSEC would be more effective in terms of regional cooperation and its transformation as a global actor. Nevertheless, contrary to initial expectations, "the BSEC began to lose momentum in the second half of the 1990s and the intra-regional trade and economic cooperation has remained below the level that had been initially considered to be achievable".²⁸⁰

This maintained several reasons. For instance, the endeavors of the several regional states to pass from centrally-planned economies into free market economies pushed them to concentrate more on their domestic problems rather than accelerating the cooperation within the Black Sea region.²⁸¹ In addition, the lack of sufficient trust among members because of the territorial conflicts and other grievances hindered the possibility of their extensive cooperation played some role to hinder the increase of

²⁷⁷*The Yalta Summit Declaration*, [http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/YALTA %201998.pdf](http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/YALTA%201998.pdf), accessed on 12 August 2008.

²⁷⁸*The Charter of the BSEC*, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTERweb20080630.pdf>, accessed on 17 August 2008.

²⁷⁹*The Charter of the BSEC*, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTERweb20080630.pdf>, accessed on 17 August 2008.

²⁸⁰Berdal Aral, "The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 78.

²⁸¹Berdal Aral, "The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 78.

cooperation in the region.²⁸² Furthermore, “lack of coordination and common understanding among decision-makers and businessmen on account of inadequate information and/or misinformation” have similarly negatively affected the acceleration of regional cooperation.²⁸³

Plus, the disagreement among the members on the introduction of political or military elements to the Organization was also another reason affecting negatively the deepening of cooperation in the region.²⁸⁴ To overcome the image of inefficiency and to enhance regionalism, the Organization adopted the document of *the Economic Agenda for the Future* at the Moscow Ministerial Meeting in April 2001.²⁸⁵ This document was the most significant contributions of the ICBSS to the BSEC process since it was prepared by the ICBSS experts.²⁸⁶ It outlined the basic fields on which the member states decided to focus their cooperative engagement. The priority was given to the acceleration of effective economic cooperation and attainment of sustainable development covering a wide scope of issues.²⁸⁷ The document also referred “to enhance “regionness” through the cooperation and coordination of the governmental and parliamentary structures, NGOs, businessmen and academic communities” as a means to support the societal dimension of the regionalization.²⁸⁸

²⁸²Berdal Aral, “The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?”, *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 79.

²⁸³ Berdal Aral, “The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?”, *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 79.

²⁸⁴Berdal Aral, “The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?”, *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 79.

²⁸⁵“BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, September 2001, p. 203-227.

²⁸⁶Thanos Veremis, “The Involvement of the International Center for Black Sea Studies in the Policy-making & Cooperation process within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Framework: The Role of a Think-tank in the BSEC Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 154.

²⁸⁷ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3, September 2001, p. 220-220.

²⁸⁸ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3, September 2001, p. 224.

Furthermore according to this document, ensuring cooperation with the EU on the basis of establishment the BSEC-EU Platform of Cooperation, the UN together with its specialized Agencies and other international and regions organizations was set as a priority for the future.²⁸⁹

Another clause of this agenda has referred to the necessity to take soft security measures in the framework of multilateral economic cooperation towards the soft security threats such as combating organized crime, illegal trafficking of drugs and arms, terrorism, corruption, as well as cooperation in emergency situation.²⁹⁰ Overall, *the Agenda* has offered a project based cooperation approach in all these areas. However, through this document, “the cooperation in the wider Black Sea region might have been broadened but not deepened”.²⁹¹ The long list of cooperation areas was significantly ambitious to be realized and the document did not mention about the instruments and ways of cooperation.²⁹²

The only concrete proposal of *the Agenda* was the establishment of the “Project Development Fund” as an implementation mechanism that would be established in 2003 and became fully operational in 2004.²⁹³ The aim of the Fund has been “to facilitate the elaboration and promotion of cooperative projects with a high regional impact from the early stage of a project idea up to the stage of pre-feasibility studies”.²⁹⁴ In this regard, “the BSEC would contribute effectively to the prosperity of the people in the region while ensuring the integration of the region’s economies

²⁸⁹ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001 , p. 224.

²⁹⁰ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001 , p. 218-220.

²⁹¹ Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, “Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 203.

²⁹² Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, “Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 203.

²⁹³ BSEC Project Development Fund, <http://www.bsecprojects.com>, accessed on 26 May 2008.

²⁹⁴ Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, “Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 195.

with each other and with the European and world marketplace”.²⁹⁵ Concerning the intention to create a free trade zone among the BSEC members, the EU Commission’s proposal made as a response to *the Declaration of Intent for the establishment of BSEC free trade area* at the BSEC Ministerial Summit held in February in 1997 in Istanbul was accepted in *the Agenda*.²⁹⁶ This proposal envisaged “to follow the long term approach with the consideration of existing agreements between individual BSEC countries and the EU, considering the BSEC’s countries’ accession to the WTO before creating of a free trade zone as a precondition”.²⁹⁷

Over almost ten years, the BSEC tried to deepen its institutional structure whereas it also established parliamentary, local government, business and financial institutions, while constituting important elements of an emerging network of cooperation in the Black Sea region. Through the cooperation and coordination within and between these institutions and networks, the Organization started to take important measures to further increase the level of “regionness” in the Black Sea. In this sense, even though the BSEC is the product of top-down state initiative, the process of regionalization started to gain significant ground within the Organization. In line with the development of international relations, especially after the 9/11 attacks to the USA, together with regionalization issues, security issues have become an important concern of the BSEC members states and the debate on to what extent the BSEC should be involved in regional security affairs has been included in the BSEC agenda.²⁹⁸

In the BSEC founding documents, security was addressed indirectly in the sense that regional economic cooperation could provide security and stability in the

²⁹⁵ Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, “Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 195.

²⁹⁶ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001 , p. 225.

²⁹⁷ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 23, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

²⁹⁸ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 131.

region.²⁹⁹ In this regard, the ability of the economic cooperation in terms of fostering confidence, dialogue and understanding among the member states has been seen as an important measure to promote a more secure and stable environment in the region.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, while being transformed from an informal initiative to an international organization, the BSEC added new areas of cooperation regarding soft security measures that were not present in *the 1992 Istanbul Summit Declaration* on its agenda.³⁰¹ These areas that have found ground in *the BSEC Charter* are “to fight against crime, illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and radioactive materials, all acts of terrorism and illegal migration”.³⁰² Moreover, *the Charter* did also call for an agreement among the governments of the BSEC participating states on combating crime and emergency assistance with disaster management.³⁰³ Thus, *the Agreement on Combating Organized Crime* and *the Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters* signed in 1998 were pioneering developments on the increase of BSEC’s involvement regarding soft security issues.³⁰⁴

The adoption of *the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future* following the Moscow Summit in April 2001 was a turning point for the Organization’s putting more emphasis on the soft security measures in the framework of multilateral economic cooperation.³⁰⁵ Through *this Agenda*, the BSEC was officially tasked “to combat organized crime, illegal trafficking in drugs and arms, terrorism,

²⁹⁹Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 132.

³⁰⁰Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 132.

³⁰¹Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 132

³⁰²Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 139.

³⁰³Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 139.

³⁰⁴ Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, “Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 198.

³⁰⁵ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 149.

corruption and money laundering in the Black Sea region considered as a part of the wider European context”.³⁰⁶ In this context, *the Economic Agenda* has been the affirmation of the BSEC’s involvement in soft security issues. Moreover, establishment of the Central Network of Liaison Officers to set up an institution allowing closer cooperation concerning combating transnational crime within the Organization in May 2002 was the prove of the BSEC’s commitment to deal closely with soft security issues in its region.³⁰⁷

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 to US gave another dimension to this commitment of the BSEC. The BSEC was not prepared at the legal and conceptual levels to handle the post 9/11 terrorist challenges.³⁰⁸ The PABSEC General Assembly adopted quickly *the Statement on joint Measures in Combating International Terrorism* in Sofia on 6 December 2001, condemning the terrorist attacks in the US and elsewhere.³⁰⁹ Thus, in *the Economic Agenda*, the BSEC underlined “whatever the motive, terrorism in all its forms and extremism in all its manifestations have to be condemned and eradicated”.³¹⁰ Following the 9/11 attacks, the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs called for the implementation of *1998 Agreement on Combating Organized Crime* and the elaboration of a new additional protocol specifically on combating terrorism.³¹¹ This showed the increased security concern within the BSEC and the shift in the member states’ interest valuing also considerably the cooperation in security issues.

³⁰⁶ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001, p. 225-228.

³⁰⁷ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 149.

³⁰⁸ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 149.

³⁰⁹ *The Statement on Joint Measures in Combating International Terrorism*, adopted by the Eighteenth Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly, Sofia, 6 December 2001, http://www.pabsec.org/resimler/dosyalar/5declarationonterrorism_HE_r_ZJEAH.pdf, accessed on 5 August 2008.

³¹⁰ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001 , p. 218.

³¹¹ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 157.

The most significant element indicating the shift in the attitude of the BSEC member states to deal closely with the security issues could be found in *the Istanbul Decennial Summit Declaration* of 25 June 2002.³¹² In *the Declaration*, a new security approach calling for further efforts to fight against terrorism and other linked illegal activities and to promote security and stability in the Black Sea region for the BSEC was adopted.³¹³ In this approach, a new conception of security that is larger than the traditional security understanding was formulated while the interrelations between socio-economic development and the regional security situation were underlined.³¹⁴ The mandate of finding ways of enhancing contribution of the BSEC to strengthen security and stability in the region to the regional security challenges was given to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the ICBSS was assigned by the task to create and coordinate the work of a special Study Group on this issue.³¹⁵ The *ad hoc* Study Group, following two years of negotiations, publicized the *Background Paper* that focuses “on the ways and means of enhancing the BSEC contributions to strengthening security and stability in the region” on March 2005.³¹⁶ However, the BSEC countries could not reach a consensus on the direction they wish to follow within the BSEC concerning security issues.³¹⁷ Accordingly, the disagreement among the member states on making the BSEC further involved in the hard security issues remained unresolved.³¹⁸

³¹² *The Istanbul Decennial Summit Declaration: Looking Beyond Tens Years of Cooperation and Progress*, Istanbul, 25 June 2002, [http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/Istanbul 2002.pdf](http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/Istanbul%2002.pdf), accessed on 4 September 2008.

³¹³ *The Istanbul Decennial Summit Declaration: Looking Beyond Tens Years of Cooperation and Progress*, Istanbul, 25 June 2002, [http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/Istanbul 2002.pdf](http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/declaration/summit/Reports/Istanbul%2002.pdf), accessed on 4 September 2008.

³¹⁴ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 158.

³¹⁵ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 158.

³¹⁶ “Background Paper on the Ways and Means of Enhancing the BSEC Contribution to Strengthening Security and Stability in the Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2006, p. 295-303.

³¹⁷ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 158.

³¹⁸ Ioannis Stribis, “The Evolving Security Concern in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 159-160.

Despite the disagreement among the member states, “the security issues not only the soft ones but also to some extent the hard ones have become more intensively presented within the BSEC agenda”.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, unless all its members approve to change *the Charter*, any role has been given to the BSEC to deal with hard security issues in a legitimate way.³²⁰ In any case, the involvement of BSEC on cooperation in several security affairs of non military character represents a tiny added value for the development of level of “regionness”. However, this does not seem enough to be able to pass the next level of “regionness” that also requires an increased cooperation in the security area.

3.6. Increased Regionness Provided by Institutions

The institutionalization scheme of the BSEC that includes the PABSEC, the ICBSS, the Council of Business plays an important role for regionalization process of the Black Sea area since these institutions are designed to increase cooperation at governmental and non-governmental levels. Similarly, the BSEC’s project based approach has served extensively to the Black Sea regionalization process. The projects present important assets for regional development, cohesion and further cooperation. The existence of BSEC’s own financial bodies such as the BSTDB and the Project Development Fund supports the enforcement of project based approach. The BSEC Statistical Data and Economic Information Coordination Center provides information and technical assistance to these projects. The BSEC cooperation with the third parties such as the OSCE, the UN and the EU for the launch and implementation of these projects also positively affect the increase in the level of “regionness”.

As it is indicated in *the Charter*, “the PABSEC, founded on the idea of pluralistic democracy, has worked to secure the understanding and adoption of aims

³¹⁹ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 22, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

³²⁰ Mustafa Aydın, *Europe's Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After the EU Enlargement*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 53, June 2004, p. 22, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ53.pdf>, accessed on 30 April 2009.

and projects of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”.³²¹ In this regard it has provided a legal basis for economic, commercial, social, cultural and political cooperation among the member countries.³²² In the meantime, it provides assistance to national parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy while promoting cooperation with other international and regional organization.³²³ Recently, the PABSEC undertook another task to strengthen pluralistic democratic structure and political stability in the Black Sea region.³²⁴ The new task that is the monitoring of elections in the region constitutes an asset to enhance parliamentary democracy and the rule of law within the BSEC member states.³²⁵ As a recent activity in this matter of subject, in 2006, a PABSEC delegation took part in monitoring the parliamentary elections in Ukraine.³²⁶ Consequently, by adopting this new task, the PABSEC showed its commitment to promote democratic values in the Black Sea region.³²⁷

The PABSEC has also given particular significance to cooperation on the basis of culture and education to provide a synergy among people as well as young generation living in the BSEC region.³²⁸ With this perspective, the PABSEC adopted *the Recommendation on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and*

³²¹*The Charter of the BSEC*, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTER0web0080630.pdf>, accessed on 17 August 2008.

³²²*The Charter of the BSEC*, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTER0web0080630.pdf>, accessed on 17 August 2008.

³²³*The Charter of the BSEC*, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTER0web0080630.pdf>, accessed on 17 August 2008.

³²⁴ Georgi Pirinski, “The Parliamentary Dimension of the Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 69.

³²⁵ Georgi Pirinski, “The Parliamentary Dimension of the Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 69.

³²⁶ Georgi Pirinski, “The Parliamentary Dimension of the Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 69.

³²⁷ Georgi Pirinski, “The Parliamentary Dimension of the Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 69.

³²⁸ PABSEC, <http://www.pabsec.org/activities.asp>, accessed on 23 May 2009.

Information.³²⁹ In the framework of *this Convention*, a number of important events had been achieved. For instance, the Black Sea University opened in Romania in 1993 which led to the creation of the Black Sea Universities Network later on in 1997.³³⁰ Furthermore, the PABSEC has also contributed to the promotion of the Black Sea cooperation on the cultural issues. It has supported cultural initiatives and launched festival to build friendly relations among the young people in the region.³³¹ Moreover, it issues recommendations to promote dialogue among cultures and build trust among nations. As a result of the recommendations, “First Black Sea Games” were held in Turkey in July 2007.³³² These games constituted a means to raise awareness on the Black Sea region and to develop “public to public” contact in the BSEC area. In this regard, the PABSEC plays a key role to expand the democratic awareness and to raise the level of “regionness” in the Black Sea area by fostering the interaction among people.

The ICBSS is another key institution to affect the level of Black Sea “regionness”. The Center has provided preparatory documents, working papers, reform and project proposals to urge decision makers to act in a number of fields such as security and stability, science and technology, and institutional renewal.³³³ Moreover, the Center has been an important contributor to the advancement of

³²⁹*Recommendation on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information*, adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly, Bucharest, 22 June 1994, <http://www.pabsec.org/dosyalar/pdf/rec3.94.pdf>, accessed on 6 September 2008.

³³⁰*Recommendation on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information*, adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly, Bucharest, 22 June 1994, <http://www.pabsec.org/dosyalar/pdf/rec3.94.pdf>, accessed on 6 September 2008.

³³¹ Georgi Pirinski, “The Parliamentary Dimension of the Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 72.

³³²Black Sea Games, http://www.karadenizoyunlari.gov.tr/karadenizoyunlari_eng/index.html, accessed on 6 August 2008.

³³³Thanos Veremis, “The Involvement of the International Center for Black Sea Studies in the Policy Making and Cooperation Process Within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Framework: The Role of a Think-Tank in the BSEC Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 154.

relations between the BSEC and the EU.³³⁴ The ICBSS brings together experts, academicians and researchers to provide brainstorming sessions on the BSEC related topics. For instance, the ICBSS Annual Seminar, started in 2008, embracing participants coming from most of the BSEC countries as well as the BSEC observer countries, has been a special occasion for the acceleration of the academic cooperation in the Black Sea area. Furthermore, the ICBSS constitutes one of the initiators³³⁵ of the Commission on the Black Sea that was launched in January 2009 to contribute to a joint vision and common strategy for the Black Sea region by developing knowledge on areas of key concern. Throughout 2009 and 2010, the Commission, by conducting several workshops and publishing reports that contain recommendations to the BSEC on several issues has contributed to raise awareness on the Black Sea issues and present a significant effort to increase security and prosperity in the Black Sea area.³³⁶

Concerning the academic cooperation, the Black Sea Universities Network plays also an important role. The Network that selected 30 universities across the Black Sea region as promoters of the EU Bologna Process and standards in the Black Sea region has become the main coordinator for cooperation in education and science in the Black Sea area.³³⁷ The ICBSS and this Network both have positive effects on providing public to public contact. Through these mechanisms, civil society members started to gain an active role in the Black Sea politics and regionalization process. They also serve to promotion of the BSEC at regional and international level.

At the business level, the BSEC-BC has initiated several projects to increase cooperation. Through its main networking instrument that is the Black Sea Business

³³⁴Thanos Veremis, “The Involvement of the International Center for Black Sea Studies in the Policy Making and Cooperation Process Within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Framework: The Role of a Think-Tank in the BSEC Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2006, p. 154.

³³⁵The other initiators are the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS BST), Bucharest; the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh/Germany; the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Ankara.

³³⁶ Reports of the Black Sea Commission, <http://www.blackseacom.eu/>. accessed on 4 June 2010.

³³⁷ Black Sea Universities Network, <http://www.bsun.org>, accessed on 9 August 2008.

Opportunity Network hosted by the Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Council has become a useful business-to-business channel.³³⁸ The Black Sea Information Gateway Web Portal initiated by the BSEC-BC also provides important information on business conditions and opportunities in all 12 countries of the BSEC region.³³⁹ Furthermore, through organizing international conferences or attending the ones of other organizations, it keeps to create awareness about the strengths of the Black Sea as a very attractive investment destination.³⁴⁰ The Council contributes in as many ways as possible to the improvement of the business environment and the benefit of business people in the region. Furthermore, the Council is also in close contact with international economic bodies such as OECD and UNDP. In this regard, the BSEC-BC is a strategic tool to increase the business and trade capacity among the regional states and to develop economic relations of the region with third parties, especially international economic actors.

The BSTDB by helping to finance and accelerate privatization programs and structural reforms tries to establish a strong common economic space and a higher level of economic collaboration among the Black Sea countries.³⁴¹ The interaction of the BSEC member states in the field of banking and finance is being achieved through the BSEC Working Group on Banking and Finance. The Working Group encourages “the promotion of closer and more beneficial cooperation among the member states in the field of banking and finance”.³⁴² To this end, the BSTDB cooperates with numerous European financial institutions.³⁴³

With the assistance of the BSTDB, since 1999, intra-regional trade has grown significantly and exceeded even the impressive rate of growth of the countries’ economies during this period. In this regard, “the share of trade of Black

³³⁸ Black Sea Business Opportunity Network, <http://www.bsbin.com>, accessed on 5 June 2010.

³³⁹ Black Sea Information Gateway, <http://www.bsec-business.org>, accessed on 8 June 2010.

³⁴⁰ Costas Masmanidis, “The Role of the BSEC Business Council”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 78.

³⁴¹ Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, <http://www.bstdb.org/>, accessed on 8 June 2010.

³⁴² Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, <http://www.bstdb.org/>, accessed on 8 June 2010.

³⁴³ Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, <http://www.bstdb.org/>, accessed on 8 June 2010.

Sea countries with each other has grown as a share of GDP and as a share of overall international trade, gradually but steadily”.³⁴⁴ Moreover, “foreign investment flow into the region has risen by increasing 16-fold since 2000”.³⁴⁵ Throughout ten years of operation, the Bank has contributed to this expanding regional cooperation within the Black Sea area. In this sense, it serves as an institution with “a currently active portfolio of 912 million US\$ and with an overall amount signed and committed of over 1.3 billion US\$, covering 94 projects”.³⁴⁶ Furthermore, “by possessing a credit rating that is equal to or higher than that of 10 of its 11 shareholders, it can provide financing at reasonable cost to firms, banks and agencies in Black Sea region”.³⁴⁷

The Bank contributes in a significant way to deepening of economic cooperation while it prepares a suitable ground to accelerate political and cultural harmonization in the region. Not only the Bank, but also the PABSEC, the ICBSS and the BSEC Business Council provide significant contribution to increase in the regional interaction and accordingly cooperation at societal, academic and business levels.

3.7. Role of Major Projects in the Black Sea “Regionness”

The project based approach has been an important characteristic of the BSEC to make a difference on daily life of people in the BSEC area. Through efforts of the working groups in the BSEC Council, BSEC activities have increasingly focused on practical regional projects such as creation of a BSEC common energy market and interconnected power system and development of a regional communication system and transport infrastructure.

³⁴⁴ Hayrettin Kaplan, “Statement by the President”, *BSTDB Annual Report 2009*, Thessaloniki, http://www.bstdb.org/cps/rde/xfw/bstdb/annualBSTDB_2009.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2010.

³⁴⁵ Hayrettin Kaplan, “Statement by the President”, *BSTDB Annual Report 2009*, Thessaloniki, http://www.bstdb.org/cps/rde/xfw/bstdb/annualBSTDB_2009.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2010.

³⁴⁶ Hayrettin Kaplan, “Statement by the President”, *BSTDB Annual Report 2009*, Thessaloniki, http://www.bstdb.org/cps/rde/xfw/bstdb/annualBSTDB_2009.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2010.

³⁴⁷ Hayrettin Kaplan, “Statement by the President”, *BSTDB Annual Report 2009*, Thessaloniki, http://www.bstdb.org/cps/rde/xfw/bstdb/annualBSTDB_2009.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2010.

The cooperation in the energy domain has focused mainly on electricity. For instance, *the Memorandum (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Electric Power Industry* was signed in 1998 to create a BSEC Interconnected Power System that will be a part of a wide regional energy market.³⁴⁸ Although the BSEC energy domain restricted to mainly electricity, the Black Sea Oil and Gas Summit that was held following the 2007 Istanbul Summit, has showed the BSEC's efforts to engage in the oil and gas industry as well. Concerning the communication infrastructure, "the BSEC is making major attempts to strengthen network of communication lines within the region through a number of projects and several the fiber optic projects have already been operational".³⁴⁹

Regarding transportation issues, *the MoU on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods* which entered into force on 20 July 2006, facilitates road transport by gradual liberalization of road transport market, simplification of procedures, harmonization of charges and facilitation of professional driver visas.³⁵⁰ Following the signature of *the MoU*, new transportation projects were brought to the agenda of the BSEC. In this regard, there are two flagship projects which will link all BSEC member states by both land and sea and these projects aims at facilitating the transportation in the Black Sea region in an efficient. One of them is the construction of the "Black Sea Ring Highway" to be completed in 2014. The Highway, also named the "The Road of the Argonauts", constitutes "a 7100 klm project circling the Black Sea by facilitating the overland transport of goods within BSEC, from Europe to Asia and vice-versa."³⁵¹ It also aims at accelerating circulation among people living in the BSEC area. So far, an important part of the

³⁴⁸Panagiota Manoli, "Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward" *ICBSS*, Policy Brief, No. 1, July 2006, p. 7.

³⁴⁹Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, "Cooperative Efforts in the Black Sea Region" in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Buildin*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p.30.

³⁵⁰*The Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods*, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/agreementmous/mous/Download/MoUTranspGoods.pdf>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

³⁵¹ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos , " The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region", 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

project has been accomplished. However, the road between Russia-Georgia remained incomplete because of the armed conflict occurred between two countries in 2008.³⁵²

The other project in the area of transportation is the extension of the “European Motorways of the Sea” to the BSEC region under the name of “Black Sea Motorways” and “it has been designed to develop the motorways of the Black Sea as well as to strengthen the maritime links among the ports of the BSEC member states”.³⁵³ The BSEC supports not only the implementation of “the Black Sea Ring Highway” and “the Black Sea Motorways” projects, but also, urges, in close cooperation with the European Union, the establishment of a “Black Sea Partnership on Transport” by integrating these two major projects into the Pan-European Transport Network.³⁵⁴ As the Secretary General of BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos in 11th Eurasian Economic Summit that was held in Istanbul on 2 May 2008 stated these two projects are expected “to foster intra-BSEC trade, tourism, and economic prosperity among the Black Sea countries making a concrete difference in the lives of the people of the region and bring them closer to each other”.³⁵⁵

Recently, the BSEC launched another important pilot project that is the establishment of a BSEC Permit system for the road transit of goods.³⁵⁶ The discussion on it was going on since several years. However, the implementation of

³⁵² Hanna Shelest, “Unresolved Conflicts Impact on the National and Regional Security in the Black Sea Region”, in Igor Munteanu (ed.), *the Black Sea Region: a Security Minefield or a Partnership Road?*, Discussions Papers, No.4, Cartier Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 29.

³⁵³ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos , “ The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁵⁴ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos , “ The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁵⁵ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos , “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁵⁶ Press Release, “the Launching of the BSEC Permit System”, *the BSEC PERMIS*, 12 February 2010, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/bsecnews/PressReleases/PressReleases/PressRelease-PERMITsystem-English-16Feb2010.pdf>., accessed on 20 May 2010.

the project officially started on 16 February 2010, with the participation of seven BSEC Member States, namely, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey.³⁵⁷ The new Permit system aims at facilitating work of the road transporters and contributing to trade relations among the participating countries.³⁵⁸ “The Permit will be used for a single round trip only and trucks holding such a Permit will be allowed during this trip to transit through the territories of all participating Member States without presenting any other bilateral transit permit”.³⁵⁹

The BSEC also undertakes a number of activities to protect the environment of the Black Sea. *The Convention of the Black Sea against pollution* signed in 1992 and the *Investment Facility Project for the Black Sea DABLAS* facilitates the pre-feasibility studies for water projects in Black Sea countries in cooperation with major international financial institutions.³⁶⁰ Moreover, *the Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea Area* signed in 1996 and *the Danube and Black Sea Countries Water Protection Declaration* announced in 2007 are other important measures to foster the environmental cooperation in the region.³⁶¹

As for the development on trade domain, various initiatives have been launched recently by the Organization with the aim of improving the intra-BSEC trade situation. In this regard, the BSEC has been cooperating with the UNDP and the Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme (BSTIP) constitutes the

³⁵⁷ Press Release, “the Launching of the BSEC Permit System”, *the BSEC PERMIS*, 12 February 2010, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/bsecnews/PressReleases/PressReleases/PressRelease-PERMITsystem-English-16Feb2010.pdf>, accessed on 20 May 2010.

³⁵⁸ Press Release, “the Launching of the BSEC Permit System”, *the BSEC PERMIS*, 12 February 2010, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/bsecnews/PressReleases/PressReleases/PressRelease-PERMITsystem-English-16Feb2010.pdf>, accessed on 20 May 2010.

³⁵⁹ Press Release, “the Launching of the BSEC Permit System”, *the BSEC PERMIS*, 12 February 2010, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/bsecnews/PressReleases/PressReleases/PressRelease-PERMITsystem-English-16Feb2010.pdf>, accessed on 20 May 2010.

³⁶⁰ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEWWITH%20SG%20BY%20GIRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁶¹ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20GIRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

first joint project between the two organizations launched in 2007 by *the Agreement on Cooperation* signed on 28 June 2007, in Istanbul.³⁶² The project, which is co-financed by the Government of Greece, the Government of Turkey and the UNDP pursue to develop trade and investment linkages among the BSEC member states, with the direct participation of their business communities.³⁶³

The projects concerning several issues from trade, communication, energy, transportation, tourism, culture to environmental protection conducted only by the BSEC or in cooperation with other international organizations have significantly positive impacts on the increase in the level of cooperation in the region. Consequently these projects play a major role to increase the level of Black Sea “regionness”.

3.8. The BSEC-EU Relations and Effects on the Black Sea “Regionness”

“The EU has invested in process of regionalization in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, with the *Northern Dimension* initiative and *the Barcelona Process*”.³⁶⁴ This contribution has been conducted in the framework of *the EU Neighborhood Policy (ENP)*. The Black Sea remained the only natural region of the EU that has been ignored. This situation has recently changed.

In fact, “the BSEC and the EC relations date back to 1996”.³⁶⁵ As a result of rapprochement between the EU and the BSEC, “at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting of 14 September 2006, the EU decided to

³⁶²Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G%20IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁶³Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G%20IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

³⁶⁴ Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS, Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p.1, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf>, accessed on 12 November 2009.

³⁶⁵Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 6.

address Black Sea region within the new communication on *the ENP*.³⁶⁶ Following this, *the BSEC–EU Interaction: the BSEC Approach* was introduced to EU institutions by the BSEC as a regional input to the EU’s further steps on this matter of subject.³⁶⁷ The BSEC welcomed the EU’s efforts to increase cooperation with the Organization and on 25 June 2007 at the organization’s 15th Anniversary Summit held in Istanbul gave a positive answer to the demand of the EC to obtain an observer status within the Organization.³⁶⁸ As a response to this development, the key document for the development on the BSEC-EU relations entitled *the Black Sea Synergy-A New Regional Cooperation Initiative* was formally introduced in Kiev in February 2008 by the EC.³⁶⁹ On 19 June 2009 the EC published another communication that assessed the first year of implementation of the Black Sea Synergy.³⁷⁰ Later that year, the EC following a joint Polish-Swedish proposal, published the Communication on the *Eastern Partnership (EaP)*.³⁷¹ Since 1996, the regional sectoral initiatives and programs in key areas of regional cooperation have been already present in the BSEC and the EU interaction.³⁷² In the framework of *the ENP*, the Black Sea countries had started to dominate on the agenda of the EU external policies. However, “since the EU was favoring to increase bilateral relations

³⁶⁶Overview of BSEC-EU Relations, *the BSEC Website*, October 2007, <http://www.icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=189>, accessed on 20 June 2009.

³⁶⁷*The Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the BSEC on a BSEC-EU Enhanced Relationship*, Kyiv, 14 February 2008, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=135>, accessed on 20 June 2009.

³⁶⁸*The Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the BSEC on a BSEC-EU Enhanced Relationship*, Kyiv, 14 February 2008, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=135>, accessed on 20 June 2009.

³⁶⁹*The Black Sea Synergy-A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Commission of the European Communities, No. 160 final, Brussels, 11 April 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

³⁷⁰*Report on the First Year of Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy*, Commission of the European Communities, No. 391, 19 June 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/blacksea/doc/com08_391_en.pdf, accessed on 18 June 2009.

³⁷¹Overview of BSEC-EU Relations, *the BSEC Website*, October 2007, <http://www.icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=189>, accessed on 20 June 2009.

³⁷²*Report on the First Year of Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy*, Commission of the European Communities, No. 391, 19 June 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/blacksea/doc/com08_391_en.pdf, accessed on 18 June 2009.

with its neighbors through the ENP, it was lacking a regional approach towards the Black Sea area.³⁷³ Through the *Black Sea Synergy Initiative*, the EU put for the first time the Black Sea region on its priority agenda as a single distinct policy area and recognized the BSEC as a regional partner to the EU.³⁷⁴ *The Synergy* promotes a project-oriented approach to address common problems with a particular emphasis on areas like “transport, energy, environment, maritime management, fisheries, migration and fight against organized crime, information society and cultural cooperation”.³⁷⁵ In this regard, it provides the increase of cooperation not only between the EU and the Black Sea region but also within the region itself. Meanwhile, “*the Black Sea Synergy* has reinforced the Europeanization process in the region by promising specific “carrots” and having concrete benchmark”.³⁷⁶ Within *the Black Sea Synergy* framework, there are several projects contributing to the development of the “regionness” at societal level while contributing to the Europeanization of the Black Sea region.³⁷⁷ However, the EU did not find enough *the Black Sea Synergy* to be engaged in Black Sea region. Following the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 and the the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, it came out with a new policy by launching the EaP for Black Sea regional issues.³⁷⁸

³⁷³ Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 18.

³⁷⁴ Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 14.

³⁷⁵ *The Black Sea Synergy- A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Commission of the European Communities, No. 160 final, Brussels, 11 April 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

³⁷⁶ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU's Role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEI Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 2, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 2 May 2009.

³⁷⁷ Yannis Alexandros, *The European Union and the Black Sea Region: The New Eastern Frontiers and Europeanisation*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No.7, May 2008, p. 4.

³⁷⁸ Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *the EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 15.

Following the conflict, the EU noticed the vulnerability of the Black sea countries and the region and designed a special mechanism for the region. With a limited geographical scope compared to the Black Sea Synergy, the mechanism includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.³⁷⁹ The limitation on the scope has been criticized by Russia and pursued as a way to isolate Russia and ignore its regional interests.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the EU explains the “exclusion” of Russia and Turkey by the fact that both countries have acquired a different status in their relationship with the EU and this limitation provides a more coherent group of non-EU countries that are easier to handle as a group.³⁸¹ The mechanism implies “new association agreements including deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with those countries willing and able to enter into a deeper engagement and gradual integration in the EU economy”.³⁸² It also paves the way for “easier travel to the EU through gradual visa liberalization, accompanied by measures to tackle illegal immigration”.³⁸³ *The Partnership* also attaches importance “to promote democracy and good governance, to strengthen energy security, to promote sector reform and environment protection, to encourage people to people contacts and to support economic and social development”.³⁸⁴ Moreover, “it offers additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase

³⁷⁹ *The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of the EU, No: 8435/09, http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/50_93_joint_declaration_of_the_prague_eastern_partnership_summit.pdf, accessed on 20 August 2009.

³⁸⁰ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU's Role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEİ Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 16, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 2 May 2009.

³⁸¹ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 12, February 2009, p. 3, http://icbss.org/images/papers/policy_brief_12_yt.pdf, accessed on 10 November 2009.

³⁸² *The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of the EU, No: 8435/09, http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/50_93_joint_declaration_of_the_prague_eastern_partnership_summit.pdf, accessed on 20 August 2009.

³⁸³ *The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of the EU, No: 8435/09, http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/50_93_joint_declaration_of_the_prague_eastern_partnership_summit.pdf, accessed on 20 August 2009.

³⁸⁴ *The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of the EU, No: 8435/09, http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/50_93_joint_declaration_of_the_prague_eastern_partnership_summit.pdf, accessed on 20 August 2009.

stability”³⁸⁵ In fact, the content of this mechanism embodies overlapping points with *the Black Sea Synergy*.³⁸⁶ In this regard, the division of labor between two mechanisms does not seem clear yet. Moreover, the role of BSEC is not clearly mentioned in the document of *the EaP*.³⁸⁷ Nevertheless, “*the Partnership* is an endeavor by the EU to raise the visibility of the wider Black Sea area in the eyes of Europeans and for the involved countries that have European aspirations”.³⁸⁸ Therefore, *the EaP* serves “as some psychological anchor for internal transformation and readjustment to reach the requisite EU standards”.³⁸⁹ In this sense, somehow, it provides improvement of relations between these countries and the EU. In this regard, in an indirect way, by preparing necessary conditions to improve cooperation between these states, this partnership contributes to the concept of regional cooperation.

Although it contains some limitations, the raising BSEC-EU relations represent a special dimension for the increase in the level of “regionness”. *The Black Sea Synergy* and *the EaP* strengthen the interaction between the BSEC and the EU. This creates positive effect on the regional level through the promotion of economic cooperation within the Black Sea area and provides confidence building among regional actors. On the other hand, “these partnership mechanisms contribute to the enhancement of the bi-regional relations between the EU and the Black Sea region while bringing the BSEC closer the EU”.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, “they facilitate interaction

³⁸⁵*The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, Prague, 7 May 2009, Council of the EU, No: 8 435/09, http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/50_93_joint_declaration_of_the_prague_eastern_partnership_summit.pdf, accessed on 20 August 2009.

³⁸⁶Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *the EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 21.

³⁸⁷ Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *the EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 16.

³⁸⁸Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 16.

³⁸⁹Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 18.

³⁹⁰Panagiotis Gavras, “The Black Sea and the European Union”: Developing Relations and Expanding Institutional Links”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1,

of the region with global capital markets”.³⁹¹ Meanwhile, the projects jointly conducted with the EU help “the Europeanization of institutions and infrastructures of countries in the Black Sea region”.³⁹² For instance, the EU’s support to the reforms in the Black Sea higher education via the Tempus Program contributes to the homogenization and Europeanization of the educational system in the Black Sea countries.³⁹³ As in this example and in the overall picture, the EU remains as an important contributor for the increase of “regionness” level in the Black Sea area.

Overall, the BSEC can be considered as a successful instrument to develop the level of “regionness” in the wider Black Sea area. The BSEC has helped create a favorable cooperation atmosphere in a region torn by conflicts. The BSEC has opened a new, dynamic and special chapter in Black Sea regional history. “Established at a time when the Balkans and the Caucasus were facing problems including ethnic conflicts, the BSEC has become a viable regional arrangement where economic motives transcended political conflicts”.³⁹⁴ The fact that “the BSEC brings together representatives of all Black Sea states, including Turkey and Armenia that do not have diplomatic relations, can be considered as an achievement itself”.³⁹⁵ Recently, the Black Sea became more of a region that it was before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Economically, the BSEC has contributed significantly to the development of the entire region, by increasing profits and welfare. Increased cooperation in the Black Sea region through BSEC mechanisms not only has generated economic benefits but also has contributed to building confidence and

January 2004, p.27.

³⁹¹Tedo Japaridze, Panagiota Manoli, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, *The EU's Ambivalent Relationship with the BSEC: Reflecting on the Past, Mapping out the Future*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 20, January 2010, p. 16.

³⁹² Yannis Alexandros, *The European Union and the Black Sea Region: The New Eastern Frontiers and Europeanisation*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No.7, May 2008, p. 4.

³⁹³Tempus and Erasmus Mundus: Supporting Education in the EU Neighbourhood Countries, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main.php?id=74&id_type=3, accessed on 13 October 2010.

³⁹⁴ Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea economic cooperation and regional security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 90.

³⁹⁵ Ahmet Canlı, *Regionalism in the Black Sea Area and Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Florida State University, 2005, p. 20.

reducing persisting bilateral tensions among regional countries. In addition to this, the Organization with all its institutions has played a key role for a variety of issues from environmental protection, promotion of democracy and soft security measures to cultural and academic cooperation in the region. This proves the multi-dimensionality of the Organization. Therefore, the BSEC is not only an international organization but also has become a forum that promotes dialogue and confidence building among member states, civil society members, academicians and businessmen. This has prepared a suitable climate to sustain and develop stability and prosperity in the region to a certain extent. Moreover, the involvement of non-state actors in the BSEC issues has represented an important added value for the regionalization process of the Black Sea since this has expanded cooperation from only state level to business, societal and academic levels. The BSEC project based approach has important effects on the daily life of people in the BSEC area. In this regard, it marks a means for the formation of Black Sea regional identity. Furthermore, the projects initiated and ruled together with different organizations raise the BSEC's "regionness" within the Black Sea and towards the third parties.

Taking all the points mentioned above into account, with the high level of social interaction and regional cooperation provided by the BSEC, the Black Sea region represents more than "a regional complex". The region passes to third level of "regionness" that is "regional society". As theorized by Björn Hettne, this level starts with a state-led intergovernmental regional cooperation and sometimes includes a market and society-led processes of regionalization.³⁹⁶ The motivations of the regional states to form the regional organization, the structure of this regional organization as well as its functional system, its scope of cooperation and its institutionalization process present key elements for establishment of "regional society".³⁹⁷ The BSEC significantly contributed to the formation of "regional society" in the Black Sea area. However, despite the improvement in the Black Sea "regionness", the Black Sea area does not form a Sea of prosperity, stability and

³⁹⁶Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, "Theorizing the Rise of "Regionness", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 463-464.

³⁹⁷Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, "Theorizing the Rise of "Regionness", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 463-464.

security yet. In this regard, the BSEC has limitations to increase the level of Black Sea “regionness”.

3.9. Limitations of the BSEC

The limitations of the BSEC to deepen the process of regionalization appear in several areas. The Organization does not seem successful enough to evoke economic potential of the region.³⁹⁸ Moreover, as Mustafa Aydın puts forward “since it was not and still is, not entrusted with a political role, let alone a peacemaking and/or peacekeeping mission, it lacks the necessary institutions for proactive diplomacy and cannot emerge as a capable regional actor...”.³⁹⁹ These factors do not contribute to the formation of a strong regional identity in the region. In this regard, the criticism on success of the BSEC is mainly directed to “its institutional composition together with its decision making process and policy implementation procedure, its role in regional economic integration, its capacity in post conflict rehabilitation”.⁴⁰⁰ The ability of the BSEC to promote regional thinking and identity among its member states is also under question.⁴⁰¹

The policy implementation constitutes an important problem within the BSEC. Even if several agreements were signed and conventions were adopted on crucial topics to ensure development, stability and prosperity in the region, because of their non-binding character, they are not implemented by all member states.⁴⁰² Moreover, the rotating 6 monthly chairmanship as a coordination system to promote cooperation at the governmental level also represents challenges in terms of policy-

³⁹⁸ Panagiota Manoli, *Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward*, Policy Brief, No. 1, ICBSS, July 2006, p. 1.

³⁹⁹ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 279.

⁴⁰⁰ Panagiota Manoli, *Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward*, Policy Brief, No. 1, ICBSS, July 2006, p. 1.

⁴⁰¹ Panagiota Manoli, *Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward*, Policy Brief, No. 1, ICBSS, July 2006, p. 1.

⁴⁰² Panagiota Manoli, *Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward*, Policy Brief, No. 1, ICBSS, July 2006, p. 2.

making within the BSEC for mainly two reasons.⁴⁰³ First, the 6 months period is very short for the implementation of all policies by the chairing member state during its mandate. Second, since each chairing member state gives importance to its own national priorities regarding its chairmanship agenda, the continuity on the priorities of the Organization can not be fully ensured.

The BSEC also shows a lack of coordination in planning and organizing of its activities. In fact, at 2007 Bucharest Statement titled “BSEC Towards its 15th Anniversary”, the member states agreed to enhance the role of the PERMIS on these issues.⁴⁰⁴ They also gave “an extra role to the PERMIS on taking over of the initiative and expertise to convene meetings, when there is an obvious lack of initiative or expertise of the country-coordinators of different working groups”.⁴⁰⁵ However, this role can not be fulfilled by the PERMIS since each BSEC institution does not cooperate enough with the Secretariat and it has an extremely limited number of professional staff.

For the Organization, economy has been the field of cooperation at the top priority. However, despite its contribution to the economic cooperation of the region, the Organization has some limitations to deepen the regional economic integration even in this field. Even if since its establishment, “the region has seen its export grow threefold and its imports more than double” but “the intra-BSEC trade volume comprises only 20 percent of the region’s total trade volume”.⁴⁰⁶ Moreover, the region still suffers from “a lack of diversification in export goods, incomplete trade policy reforms and a poor investment climate”.⁴⁰⁷ Together with this,

⁴⁰³Panagiota Manoli, *Reflecting on the BSEC: Achievements, Limitations and the Way Forward*, Policy Brief, No. 1, ICBSS, July 2006, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁴*The Bucharest Statement BSEC towards its 15th Anniversary*, 26 April 2006, http://www.mae.ro/poze_editare/2006.04.26_StatemBuc_BSEC.pdf, accessed on 24 February 2009.

⁴⁰⁵*The Bucharest Statement BSEC towards its 15th Anniversary*, 26 April 2006, http://www.mae.ro/poze_editare/2006.04.26_StatemBuc_BSEC.pdf, accessed on 24 February 2009.

⁴⁰⁶Panagiota Manoli, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 14, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴⁰⁷Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 279.

“the economic systems of the Black Sea member states are not mutually complementary and they have not made the slightest progress towards specialization and the international division of labor”.⁴⁰⁸ Most of the BSEC countries in the region make reforms to eliminate the obstacles for business and investments at their home on to way to pass to market economy. However, they still suffer from challenges such as “bureaucratic and legislative complexity, corruption, lack of predictability, complex taxation systems etc”.⁴⁰⁹ At the same time, “they have also many non-tariff barriers-to-trade that obstruct cross-border business cooperation and prevent the Black Sea region from being considered as an integrated, sizable regional market”.⁴¹⁰

Taking all these elements into account, it seems that, for the moment, the BSEC is not able to offer enough contribution for its member states’ efforts to deal with these challenges. Furthermore, the BSEC is not totally able to put expectations of its member states on economic integration in the same melting pot. This causes problems such as “the lack in assessing and implementing regional infrastructure projects, improving of inter-sectorial coordination, introducing flagship projects, mobilizing resources and encouraging private and civil society participation”.⁴¹¹ Moreover, the absence of a policy prioritization among the member states towards the BSEC issues troubles management of regional projects for the development and ensurance of stability in the region. In line with this, “the projects that have been submitted to the Organization’s Project Development Fund that is a mechanism to improve regional development usually have no regional impact or visibility”.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ Vladimir Ryabtsev, “Why Is There No “Security Complex” in the Black Sea-Caucasus Region?”, *OSCE Yearbook*, 2006, p. 102.

⁴⁰⁹ Igor Munteanu, “The Policy of Moldova towards the Black Sea Region and the BSEC”, in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2., Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 92.

⁴¹⁰ Costas Masmanidis, “The Role of the BSEC Business Council”, in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 81.

⁴¹¹ Panagiota Manoli, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 25, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴¹² Tedo Japaridze, “BSEC: A Road Map to Relevance”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.5, No.2, 2006, p. 29.

The non-establishment of a Free Trade Area (FTA) in the Black Sea region constitutes another and crucial challenge for economic integration. Although it was one of the founding objectives of the BSEC, the establishment of FTA in the Black Sea could not be realized.⁴¹³ Thus, this was an ambitious project since as “Greece was full member of the EU and other BSEC countries have signed Association Agreements with the EU and were not permitted to abolish tariffs on imports from other members of the BSEC”.⁴¹⁴ The EC had already put forward conditions regarding the viability for establishment of a FTA such as “the establishment of a FTA in a gradual prospect, the respectful consideration of existing agreements between the EU and BSEC countries and the complementation of their admissions to the WTO before the creation of a regional FTA”.⁴¹⁵ Following these conditions, the BSEC adopted in 2001 a rather less ambitious position. In *the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future* approved in 2001, it outlined that the establishment of a BSEC FTA should be achieved gradually, taking into account “the Customs Union, the European Agreements, the Partnership and Co-operation Agreements of some Member States, the obligations resulting from membership in the EU and WTO and other international organizations”.⁴¹⁶ In this sense, even the first stage of the economic integration in the Black Sea region could not be fully achieved.

The challenges regarding the full implementation on an agreement for personal drivers and businessmen within the region also complicate economic integration in the field of intra regional trade.⁴¹⁷ *The BSEC Agreements on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of*

⁴¹³ Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 366.

⁴¹⁴ Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 366.

⁴¹⁵ Charalambos Tsardanidis, “The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?”, *Agora Without Frontiers*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 367.

⁴¹⁶ “BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.1, No. 3 , September 2001 , p. 203.

⁴¹⁷ Ahmet Canlı, *Regionalism in the Black Sea Area and Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Florida State University, 2005, p. 20.

the BSEC Member States was signed just by Albania, Armenia, Moldova and Turkey on 23 October 2010 when the agreement was opened to the signature, but neither other member states signed the agreement nor it was entered into force in the signatory member states.⁴¹⁸ Similarly, *the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businesspeople Nationals of the BSEC Member States* was signed by the same member states on the same date, but again neither other member states signed the agreement nor it was not enter into force in the signatory member states.⁴¹⁹ This constitutes a significant obstacle in the development of regional trade relations and the increase of regional trade volume.

The lack of security and instability in the region impede the economic integration since the existence of these conflicts persist the lack of confidence among regional states that are subject to the conflicts. In this regard, “territorial conflicts overshadowed regional economic cooperation in the Black Sea region”.⁴²⁰ As a result, the real economic potential of the Black Sea could not been substantiated. The regional cooperation in the BSEC area has reached a level “where political and security considerations can not be thought separately from the BSEC”.⁴²¹ However, deprived of a political role, the BSEC does not have the capability to pursue a proactive diplomacy.⁴²² Moreover, the BSEC is unable to use its economic instruments “to initiate cross-border projects in the framework of post-conflict

⁴¹⁸ *The Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States*, opened to signature on 23 October 2008, <http://www.bsecorganization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/agreementmous/int3/Pages/int3.aspx>, accessed on 2 April 2010.

⁴¹⁹ *The Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businesspeople Nationals of the BSEC Member States*, opened to signature on 23 October 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/agreementmous/int2/Pages/in2.aspx>, accessed on 2 April 2010.

⁴²⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 279.

⁴²¹ Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, “The Turkish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May – October 2007)”, Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 132.

⁴²² Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, “The Turkish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May – October 2007)”, Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 132.

rehabilitation projects”.⁴²³ These aspects seem to challenge its role for regionalization process in the Black Sea area.⁴²⁴

The lack of a strong regional identity takes its place among challenges regarding the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area. Although the BSEC through different initiatives work on building such a strong identity, its efforts remain limited. Therefore, “as an institutional umbrella, the BSEC can not be useful in engineering collective action” that will be a catalyst for a strong regional identity formation.⁴²⁵ Similar to the situation during the establishment of the Organization, the BSEC member states still maintain different political and economic priorities, different social attitudes as well as differing supranational and intergovernmental affiliations.⁴²⁶ Formation of a strong regional identity has not become the first priority for most of the BSEC member states yet. Thus, they have different institutional relationship with Euro-Atlantic and European structures. Moreover, they are also involved in different regional initiatives. For instance, most of former Soviet Countries in the region ratified the CIS Charter.⁴²⁷ Countries of the eastern part of the Black Sea take part in arrangements such as Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative and Southeast Europe Defense

⁴²³ Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, “The Turkish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May – October 2007)”, Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 137.

⁴²⁴ Mustafa Aydın and Ömer Fazlıoğlu, “The Turkish Policy towards the Wider Black Sea Region and its Chairmanship of the BSEC (May – October 2007)”, Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 137.

⁴²⁵ Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p.30, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Panel/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴²⁶ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU's role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEİ Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 31-32, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 4 February 2009.

⁴²⁷ “These countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Moldova. Ukraine ratified the Creation Agreement of CIS but not the Charter. And after the Russia- Georgia conflict in August 2008, Georgia decided to quit the Organization”, Sergei Markedonov, “Post-Soviet Integration: Does the CIS Work?”, 13 January 2010, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/sergei-markedonov/post-soviet-integration-does-cis-work>, accessed on 12 May 2009.

Ministerial.⁴²⁸ This diversity in taking part in different multinational activities remarkably complicates and hinders the identity formation in the region.

The BSEC member states do not work in an effective and sufficient way to promote Black Sea regional identity. The PERMIS also remains limited to work on the promotion of the Black Sea regional identity.⁴²⁹ The BSEC member states do not give same importance to the projects within the BSEC that are means for identity formation in the region.⁴³⁰ In fact, the projects present essential tools to increase regional cooperation that will lead to the promotion of regional identity. In this regard, “the full implementation of flagship projects such as the Black Sea Motorways of the Sea and the Black Sea Ring Highway that will connect not only people but also businesses seems essential to increase regional awareness”.⁴³¹ On the other hand, apparently, the BSEC lacks a high impetus to create feeling of belonging to Black Sea region. This is certainly a difficult process that requires sufficient political, financial and technical support.⁴³² Such a transformation process also requires a leadership.⁴³³ The current lack of leadership within the BSEC constitutes one of the reasons blocking formation of a strong regional identity. Turkey played an important role in the establishment of the BSEC, however for the moment, the BSEC faces a leadership problem. The closer relationship between Turkey and Russia may create an opportunity for the BSEC to overcome this problem.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁸ Ahmet Canlı, *Regionalism in the Black Sea Area and Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Florida State University, 2005, p. 16.

⁴²⁹ Tedo Japaridze, “BSEC: A Road Map to Relevance”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.5, No. 2, 2006, p.27.

⁴³⁰ “BSEC-EU Interaction: The BSEC Approach”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No.2, June 2007, p.316. of the BSEC (May – October 2007)”, Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 137.

⁴³¹ Ahmet Canlı, *Regionalism in the Black Sea Area and Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Florida State University, 2005, p. 16.

⁴³² Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 30, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴³³ Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 30, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴³⁴ Fiona Hill, “Seismic Shifts in Eurasia: The Changing Relationship between Turkey and Russia and its Implications for the South Caucasus”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3,

While there is a significant growth of regional business, professional and non-governmental network associations, the regional cooperation within BSEC does not include a direct impact on everyday life and welfare of people living within the BSEC borders.⁴³⁵ Moreover, despite the emergence of a number of civil society organizations in the Black Sea region and the provision of the right to obtain sectorial dialogue partnership with the BSEC, “there is a lack of lobbying on the BSEC”.⁴³⁶ In this regard, one hand, the BSEC does have a full-fledge public diplomacy strategy that will increase regional awareness among its member states while providing its visibility in the international community. The 2007 Summit was a good opportunity to make BSEC known further in and beyond the Black Sea region.⁴³⁷ In June 2007, the BSEC celebrated its first 15 years of existence with an extraordinary Summit meeting in Istanbul.⁴³⁸ However, this and similar celebrations seem symbolic to raise popularity of BSEC.⁴³⁹ Since the Organization lacks a permanent public diplomacy strategy and department, the awareness about what it is doing to increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness” remains limited. On the other hand, civil society actors, academicians and business groups do not pay enough effort to contribute to regional identity formation in the Black Sea area. In this regard, the Black Sea Commission that prepares reports assisting in formation of a strong regional Black Sea identity within the stronger BSEC presents a remarkable exception.

September 2003, p. 57.

⁴³⁵ Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 25, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴³⁶ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region*, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20GIRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

⁴³⁷ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Wider Black Sea Area and its Challenges”, 12 May 2008, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com/2008/05/wider-black-sea-area-and-its-challenges.html>, accessed on 5 May 2009.

⁴³⁸ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Wider Black Sea Area and its Challenges”, 12 May 2008, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com/2008/05/wider-black-sea-area-and-its-challenges.html>, accessed on 5 May 2009.

3.10. Conclusion

Despite all the efforts of the BSEC to turn the Black Sea into a region of dialogue through the conventions, agreements, decisions on economic, political, cultural and even soft security issues, the region could not become a zone of peace yet as we see in the case of August 2008 armed conflict between two BSEC members. The BSEC maintains significant limitations at institutional, economic, political and regional identification levels to render the region into a Sea of peace, stability and prosperity. In this regard, the BSEC remains unable to carry the level of regional society to the level of “regional community” in terms of “regionness”. As theorized Björn Hettne, for the establishment of a “regional community”, the regional organization is supposed to promote dialogue, economic development, convergence of values and actions in the region as well as security by enveloping people in the region around similar principles of identification.⁴⁴⁰ The BSEC can provide a relative economic development in the region while preparing a suitable platform for dialogue among population and government of the BSEC countries. However, it has not become a direct promoter of stability and security in the region yet. However, the incapacity of the BSEC in the mentioned areas does not present the only reason for non-formation of “regional community” in the Black Sea area. The existence of different strategies of predominant actors towards the Black Sea issues has a significant part in the obstacles ahead for the increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”.

⁴⁴⁰ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 466.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROLE OF REGIONAL AND EXTRA-REGIONAL FACTORS AND REGIONALIZATION PROCESS IN THE BLACK SEA AREA

4.1. Introduction

As in history, the Black Sea of today is a region of geostrategic importance where cooperation and competition possibilities lay down side by side. Within this framework, the BSEC has played a key role in region building and helped the Black Sea countries to identify themselves more with the Black Sea region. Nevertheless, the Organization has faced some limitations to deepen the process of regionalization. Besides this, the lack of conformity in the policies of predominant actors in the region also has affected negatively the process of Black Sea regionalization.⁴⁴¹ Russia and Turkey do not present the only predominant actors in the Black Sea area. The US that has an important political and military presence in the region and the EU that recently became a regional actor with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania has become an important stakeholder in the Black Sea issues.⁴⁴² In this framework, the Black Sea has begun to resemble “a quadrangle game board, occupied by a quartet comprising Turkey, the Russian Federation, the EU and the US”.⁴⁴³ Therefore, the existence of incompatible perceptions in the strategy towards the Black Sea issues may rather complicate the process of Black Sea regionalization and its transformation into a zone of stability, security and prosperity.

Accordingly, in this chapter, we will analyze the regional and the extra-regional factors that impede the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area. In

⁴⁴¹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 235.

⁴⁴² Ariel Cohen and Conway Irwin, *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea Region*, Heritage Foundation Paper, No. 1990, 13 December 2006, p.1, http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/2006/pdf/bg1990.pdf, accessed on 3 June 2009.

⁴⁴³ Iris Kempe, Kurt Klotzle, *The Balkans and the Black Sea Region: Problems, Potentials, and Policy Options*, Center for Applied Policy Research Policy Analysis, No. 2, April 2006, p. 5, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/314/balkans_Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 13 April 2008.

this regard, we will explore the strategies of the USA, the EU, Russia and Turkey towards Black Sea issues.

4.2. USA Strategy Towards the Black Sea Region

The US strategy towards the Black Sea region requires analysis to analyze obstacles that the process of Black Sea regionalization faces. What the Black Sea region represents for the US is debatable. On July 2008, Judy Garber, the American Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs described the US interests in the Black Sea in detail. For Judy Garber, the American interests focus on “advancing democratic and market reforms; on strengthening economic ties, energy diversity and a cleaner, more sustainable environment to preserve the Black Sea’s natural beauty and resources; and improving security throughout the region”.⁴⁴⁴ However, Lincoln Mitchell argues that “the US interest in the Black Sea Region is based upon energy, security and political developments”.⁴⁴⁵ He also mentions that “developing reliable energy resources from outside the Middle East and eliminating the threat of major acts of terrorism against the US are of immediate and urgent importance”.⁴⁴⁶ Moreover, he underlines that “limiting Russia’s increasing strength in the region that can undermine US and European economic and security interests, also constitutes a significant concern for the US”.⁴⁴⁷ In this regard, the US seems interested in Black Sea region for a variety of strategic issues.

In fact, the attention and involvement of the US in Black Sea region gained significant ground after the 9/11 attacks to US. The region began to be perceived by the US as “the back door to Broader Middle East and North Africa Region”.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ Judy Garber, “Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region”, Keynote Address at the Woodrow Wilson Center Conference, Washington DC, June 10, 2008, <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/EUR/State/105827.pdf>, accessed on 29 September 2009.

⁴⁴⁵ Lincoln A. Mitchell, “More than location: Crafting a US Policy for the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 134.

⁴⁴⁶ Lincoln A. Mitchell, “More than location: Crafting a US Policy for the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No.2, June 2008, p. 134.

⁴⁴⁷ Lincoln A. Mitchell, “More than location: Crafting a US Policy for the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 139.

⁴⁴⁸ Ronald D. Asmus, *Developing a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, The

Considering the region as a gateway to threats towards Euro-Atlantic security, the US started to pay more attention to Black Sea issues. The attention was further strengthened after the membership of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO in 2004.⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, As Mustafa Aydın mentions, “various former Soviet states along the north and east of the Black Sea became strategically important to the US for securing the east–west energy corridor linking Europe with the Caspian resources”.⁴⁵⁰ In line with these motivations, the US assumed to play a greater role in the region.

The Black Sea region is also important in terms of energy supply security for the US and Turkey has a special role to this end. In this regard, Judy Garber noted that “the U.S. has a significant interest in expanding oil and gas pipelines networks to facilitate the production of energy, and is keenly aware of Turkey’s own strategic role and growing stake in Mediterranean-Black Sea-Caspian energy networks”.⁴⁵¹ In line with this perspective, the US supported the Baku-Tbilisi-Cayman (BTC) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) gas pipeline that have presented two important energy supply projects initiated by Turkey.⁴⁵² With the aim of bypassing Russia and its supremacy on the energy issues in the region, the US has kept supporting for other pipeline projects including the Nabucco Pipeline that will transport gas from Turkey to Austria, via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary.⁴⁵³ These projects represent key initiatives for the US in terms of its priorities on energy supply security.

German Marshall Fund of the United States, Istanbul Paper, No. 2, 2004, p. 20, http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/special/Istanbul_PAPER2.pdf, accessed on 28 September 2009.

⁴⁴⁹ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 273.

⁴⁵⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 273.

⁴⁵¹ Judy Garber, “Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region”, Keynote Address at the *Woodrow Wilson Center* Conference, Washington DC, June 10, 2008, <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/EUR/State/105827.pdf>, accessed on 29 September 2009.

⁴⁵² Gareth Winrow, “Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Wider Black Sea Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2007, p. 221.

⁴⁵³ İrem Köker, “Nabucco Moves a Step Ahead in Pipeline Wars”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 October, 2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=us-signals-nabucco-is-preferred-over-other-pipelines-2010-10-01>, accessed on 2 October 2010.

After the 9/11 attacks, taking into account the existence of regional conflicts and the proximity to unstable regions, “the US started to consider the Black Sea region as a “springboard to launch combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq”.⁴⁵⁴ In this regard, the US increased its military presence in the Black Sea region and extended partnerships with the Black Sea regional countries.⁴⁵⁵ For instance, “the American military has been training and equipping the Georgian army since the spring of 2002” as a part of of America's war on terror, against the presence of Chechen and al-Qaeda fighters in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge.⁴⁵⁶ On the other hand, since 2001 the US has lifted its arms embargo on Azerbaijan and has conducted its programme to improve Azerbaijan’s military capability.⁴⁵⁷ In this regard, the US has a significant military assistance to these two countries.

During the 2003 preparation of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Bucharest and Sofia openly said that Washington could count on them for future strategic cooperation.⁴⁵⁸ Following this, these two countries on the west coast of the Black Sea signed military agreements with the US. In December 2005, Romania has agreed to the establishment of US military bases on its territory.⁴⁵⁹ Plus, “Romania accepted the American proposal concerning the placement of anti-ballistic missile interceptors

⁴⁵⁴ Gareth Winrow, “Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Wider Black Sea Region ”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* , Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2007, p. 229.

⁴⁵⁵ Gareth Winrow, “Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Wider Black Sea Region ”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* , Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2007, p. 229.

⁴⁵⁶ Natalia Antelava, “US Military Will Stay in Georgia”, *BBC News*, 18 January 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3406941.stm>, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴⁵⁷ Emil Sanamyan, “A Look at the Azerbaijani Military: A Dangerous Shopping Spree”, 16 April 2007, <http://yandunts.blogspot.com/2007/04/look-at-azerbaijani-military-dangerous.html>, accessed on 1 March 2009.

⁴⁵⁸ Federico Bordonaro, “US Military Bases in the Black Sea Region”, *Power and Interest News Report*, 19 November, 2005, http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/intervention/2005/1119blacksea_bases.htm, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁴⁵⁹ Saffet Akkaya, “US Military Bases in Romania and Bulgaria and their possible Implications on Regional Security”, *Al-Jazeera: Cross-Cultural Understanding*, 25 January 2009, <http://www.ccun.org/Opinion%20Editorials/2009/January/25%20o/US%20Military%20Bases%20in%20Romania%20and%20Bulgaria%20and%20their%20possible%20Implications%20on%20Regional%20Security%20By%20Saffet%20Akkaya.htm>, accessed on 3 March 2009.

on the Romanian soil, as part of a revamped US missile shield in Eastern Europe”.⁴⁶⁰ Bulgaria and the US also signed an agreement in April 2006 for the use of several military bases on Bulgarian territory.⁴⁶¹ Bulgaria gave the permission to the US to use the bases "for missions in third countries without a specific authorization from Bulgarian authorities".⁴⁶² The establishment of these military bases has upgraded Romania and Bulgaria's importance for the US and with the establishment, the US significantly expanded its presence in the Black Sea region.

Besides energy and security issues, the US has made a lot of political and financial investments in the Black Sea. In this regard, Washington has been active in helping to resolve “the frozen conflicts”, particularly in the South Caucasus. As one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, it has contributed to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.⁴⁶³ Moreover, during the Bush administration, the US gave a particular importance to the Black Sea region in its agenda of bringing democracy to the post Soviet countries that have showed authoritarian tendencies.⁴⁶⁴ Sometimes, this raised doubts about whether the US has a hidden agenda in the Black Sea region or not. This doubt reached the top level, especially in Russia, when *the Rose Revolution* in Georgia and *the Orange Revolution* in Ukraine were welcomed by the

⁴⁶⁰Alex Spillius, “Romania Approves US Missile Defence shield”, *Telegraph UK*, 4 February 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/romania/7158685/Romania-approves-US-missile-defence-shield.html>, accessed on 23 May 2010.

⁴⁶¹ Saffet Akkaya, “US Military Bases in Romania and Bulgaria and their possible Implications on Regional Security”, *Al-Jazeera: Cross-Cultural Understanding*, 25 January 2009, <http://www.ccun.org/Opinion%20Editorials/2009/January/25%20o/US%20Military%20Bases%20in%20Romania%20and%20Bulgaria%20and%20their%20possible%20Implications%20on%20Regional%20Security%20By%20Saffet%20Akkaya.htm>, accessed on 3 March 2009.

⁴⁶²Saffet Akkaya, “US Military Bases in Romania and Bulgaria and their possible Implications on Regional Security”, *Al-Jazeera: Cross-Cultural Understanding*, 25 January 2009, <http://www.ccun.org/Opinion%20Editorials/2009/January/25%20o/US%20Military%20Bases%20in%20Romania%20and%20Bulgaria%20and%20their%20possible%20Implications%20on%20Regional%20Security%20By%20Saffet%20Akkaya.htm>, accessed on 3 March 2009.

⁴⁶³ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p.13-14, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁴⁶⁴Judy Garber, “Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region”, Keynote Address at the *Woodrow Wilson Center* Conference, Washington DC, June 10, 2008, <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/EUR/State/105827.pdf>, accessed on 29 September 2009.

US authorities.⁴⁶⁵ On the other hand, with an intention of improving the judicial systems in the Black Sea region, the US, through the Resident Legal Advisors Programme, provided technical assistance to regional countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Turkey on issues such as the rule of law and the implementation of international legal best practices.⁴⁶⁶ All these efforts spent by the US have been not only to fortify the security and stability of the Black Sea region, but also to contribute to the democratization efforts in the region with its own means.

Besides taking an active role by itself, the US decided to give also a special role to NATO to provide security in the Black Sea region. The former US Ambassador to Ankara Ross Wilson stated that from the US point of view, “NATO is and will remain the premier provider of security for the Euro-Atlantic region, which includes the Black Sea”.⁴⁶⁷ The statement showed that the US considers the Black Sea as part of the Euro-Atlantic region and gives priority to NATO to provide security in this region. This priority became very obvious when the US supported the extension of NATO’s Operation Active Endeavour⁴⁶⁸ from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea. However, this idea faced the joint objection of Russia and Turkey, arguing that “any NATO involvement in the region would have destabilizing effect on regional security dynamics”.⁴⁶⁹ On the other hand, Turkey has claimed that “NATO activity in the Black Sea may threaten *the 1936 Montreux Convention* that provides the full control over the Turkish Straits connecting the Mediterranean and

⁴⁶⁵David C. Speedie, “The Bloom is off the Rose--and the Orange, and the Tulip”, 1 July 2010, http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/articles_papers_reports/0056.html, accessed on 10 July 2010.

⁴⁶⁶Judy Garber, “Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Wider Black Sea Region”, Keynote Address at the *Woodrow Wilson Center* Conference, Washington DC, June 10, 2008, <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/EUR/State/105827.pdf>, accessed on 29 September 2009.

⁴⁶⁷Ross Wilson, “U.S. Policy in the Black Sea Region”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 2006, p.3.

⁴⁶⁸“The NATO’s Operation Active Endeavour was created in 2001 as a naval deployment to prevent the movement of terrorists and trade in components of weapons of mass destruction in the Mediterranean Sea”, Operation Active Endeavour, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_7932.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on 27 May 2009.

⁴⁶⁹Ariel Cohen and Conway Irwin, *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea Region*, Heritage Foundation Paper, No. 1990, 13 December 2006, p. 10, <http://s3.amazonaws.com/thfmedia/2006/pdf/bg1990.pdf>, accessed on 3 June 2009.

the Black Sea”.⁴⁷⁰ Moreover, Turkey has considered the extension of the Operation Active Endeavour “as redundant after the establishment of Operation of Black Sea Harmony (OBSH) and Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) to strengthen the security of Black Sea maritime domain”.⁴⁷¹

In 2006, the US seemed to change its strategy on this issue. Thus, no consensus was reached within NATO to extend the Operation Active Endeavour to the Black Sea area. The US authorities declared their support for existing regional security measures such as the BLACKSEAFOR and the OBSH.⁴⁷² For this change of position, Turkey’s objection with relevant arguments to NATO military presence in the Black Sea and the lack of consensus within NATO were instrumental.⁴⁷³ Ross Wilson, while underlying this change of position, also expressed that “the US is not seeking to establish a permanent naval presence in the Black Sea, but it is committed to engaging with its allies and friends to enhance security and cooperation throughout the region”.⁴⁷⁴ However, through becoming an observer in the BSEC in 2007, the US has showed its continuing desire to be more active in the region, but this time in a cooperating framework with the existing regional initiatives.

After the 2004 and 2009 enlargements, NATO has become a significant littoral organization in the Black Sea region.⁴⁷⁵ Moreover, through a variety of partnerships and NATO strengthened its relations with the region. The Partnership

⁴⁷⁰ Suat Kınıklioğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 543.

⁴⁷¹ Ariel Cohen and Conway Irwin, *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea Region*, Heritage Foundation Paper, No. 1990, 13 December 2006, p. 6, http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/2006/pdf/bg1990.pdf, accessed on 3 June 2009.

⁴⁷² Ross Wilson, “U.S. Policy in the Black Sea Region”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 2006, p.14.

⁴⁷³ Lale Kemal, “US Black Sea Strategy Has The Potential to Revive Ankara’s Concerns”, 20 March 2007, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/yazarDetay.do?haberno=105952>, accessed on 2 August 2009.

⁴⁷⁴ Ross Wilson, “U.S. Policy in the Black Sea Region”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 2006, p. 11.

⁴⁷⁵ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 271.

for Peace (PfP) programme is one of these partnership mechanisms.⁴⁷⁶ The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is another mechanism of NATO that Black Sea countries are familiar.⁴⁷⁷ Moreover, Georgia and Ukraine have the Intensified Dialogue Programme that, in fact, presents an important stage before the start of the Membership Action Plan (MAP).⁴⁷⁸ However, in line with objections of Russia, these countries could not be granted with the MAP during the 2008 Bucharest and 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl Summits.⁴⁷⁹ After the arrival of a pro-Russian government to power in 2010, Ukraine by redefining itself as a “non-bloc European nation” seems not to have an aspiration for NATO membership anymore.⁴⁸⁰ On the other hand, despite problems that it had with Russia in August 2008 that was a sign of Russian objection to its membership aspiration, Georgia still seems to be keen to start the MAP with the Alliance.⁴⁸¹ Thus, the Allies expressed their concerns over the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia and decided to support Georgia’s recovery by the establishment of a NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC), which is supported by an Annual National Programme (ANP) and the establishment of a NATO Liaison Office in Tbilisi.⁴⁸² In addition to these frameworks, NATO-Russia Council (NRC) that

⁴⁷⁶“It has a significant number of participants from the Black Sea region. These participant states are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine. These countries make significant contributions to the Alliance’s operations and missions, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur”, Partnership for Peace, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm, accessed on 15 May 2010.

⁴⁷⁷“Georgia is the first country agreed on IPAP with NATO in 2004, on the other hand, Azerbaijan, Armenia signed the agreement in 2005 while Moldova did it in 2006 and lastly, Serbia agreed on IPAP in 2009”, NATO’s Relations with Georgia, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm, accessed on 19 May 2010.

⁴⁷⁸ NATO’s Relations with Georgia, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm, accessed on 19 May 2010.

⁴⁷⁹“Early NATO Membership Unlikely for Georgia, Ukraine”, *Voice of America News*, 4 September 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-09-04-voa57-68793252.html>, accessed on 28 May 2009.

⁴⁸⁰Richard Solash, “Clinton Tells Ukraine That Door To NATO Remains Open”, *RFERL*, http://www.rferl.org/content/Clinton_Tells_Ukraine_That_Door_To_NATO_Remains_Open/2089237.html, accessed on 29 May 2010.

⁴⁸¹Micheal Hikari Cecire, “Georgia And NATO's Elusive Promise”, *Eurasia News*, 29 October 2010, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/201010299312/georgia-and-natos-elusive-promise.html>, accessed on 1 June 2010.

⁴⁸²NATO’s Relations with Georgia, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm, accessed on 19 May 2010.

was established in 2002 by replacement of the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council initiated in 1998 presents an important element for NATO as well as for Russia.⁴⁸³ The Council is a mechanism where NATO and Russia have worked together as equal partners in a wide range of areas and constitutes an important channel for consultation and cooperation.⁴⁸⁴ The Council was suspended by the Alliance unilaterally in September 2008, after Russia's retaliation to Georgia's attack on South Ossetia in August 2008.⁴⁸⁵ Following this, as a sign to restore the damaged NATO-Russia relations, the Council became operational in March 2009.⁴⁸⁶ The NATO-Russia relations maintain several ups and downs. NATO expresses its discomfort for Russia's reactions, which sometimes get very assertive towards the developments in the Black Sea region in which the Alliance is now a stakeholder.⁴⁸⁷ In this sense, Russia's continuing unilateral suspension of its legal obligations under the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)* since December 2007, citing the fact that none of the NATO countries had ratified *the Adapted CFE*", significantly concerns the Alliance.⁴⁸⁸ On the other hand, Russia shows its opposition to NATO's increasing presence, through enlargement or partnership mechanisms, in the Black Sea region.⁴⁸⁹ Thus, Georgia's insistence on becoming a NATO member

⁴⁸³ NATO-Russia Relations, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51105.htm, accessed on 5 June 2010.

⁴⁸⁴ NATO-Russia Relations, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51105.htm, accessed on 5 June 2010.

⁴⁸⁵ NATO-Russia Relations, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51105.htm, accessed on 5 June 2010.

⁴⁸⁶ NATO-Russia Relations, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51105.htm, accessed on 5 June 2010.

⁴⁸⁷ Mustafa Aydın, "Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 273-274.

⁴⁸⁸ "The Alliance members did not ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty, as Russia did not respect all the commitments of the CFE Treaty including full withdrawal of all the Russian military forces from the former Soviet Republics Moldova and Georgia. As a result, Russia suspended its legal obligations under the CFE Treaty", Jeffrey D. McCausland, "After Georgia: Russia, NATO, and the CFE", *Carnegie Council*, 3 November 2008, http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/articles_papers_reports/0011.html, accessed on 17 June 2009.

⁴⁸⁹ Irina Kobrinskaya, *The Black Sea Region in Russia's Current Foreign Policy Paradigm*, PONARS, Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 41, December 2008, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations%20Black%20Sea%20Region%20PONARS.pdf>, accessed on 4 February 2010.

despite Russian objections seems to play a role in the involvement of Russian military forces in the Georgian territory. Although, the NATO-Russia Council restarted to work, the effects of the August 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict over South Ossetia continues to damage the NATO-Russia relations. Nearly eight months after the conflict between Russia and Georgia, Russian troops were still present in the Georgian territory as a violation of the ceasefire agreement signed between in August 2008 and this was strongly criticized by NATO.⁴⁹⁰

The cooperation mechanisms present important tools for NATO to cooperate individually with the Black Sea countries. However, there is yet no co-operation programme of NATO focusing specifically on the Black Sea region.⁴⁹¹ The Black Sea region has been seen by NATO “more as a stepping stone to a specific operation theater rather than as a region in its own right”.⁴⁹² In this sense, a broad approach of NATO towards Black Sea has been missing. Nevertheless, even if NATO could not develop a broad approach for the Black Sea region, it keeps its eyes on the region through its bilateral connections. NATO’s increased attention to developments in the Black Sea was made clear in *the Istanbul Summit Declaration* in June 2004. *The Summit Declaration* was particularly referred to the importance of the Black Sea region for Euro-Atlantic security.⁴⁹³ In *the Declarations of 2006 Riga Summit* and *2008 Bucharest Summit*, the commitment of NATO allies to ensure security and stability in the Black Sea region was repeated.⁴⁹⁴ In the last NATO Strasbourg/Kehl Summit, the NATO allies declared once again that that the Black Sea region

⁴⁹⁰C. J. Chivers, “Russia Keeps Troops in Georgia, Defying Deal”, *New York Times*, 2 April 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/world/europe/03georgia.html>, accessed on 2 August 2009.

⁴⁹¹Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 80.

⁴⁹²Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 80.

⁴⁹³*The NATO Istanbul Summit Declaration*, 28 June 2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm>, accessed on 4 August 2009.

⁴⁹⁴*The NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration*, 3 April 2008, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>, accessed on 5 August 2009.

continues to be important for Euro-Atlantic security.⁴⁹⁵ Moreover, the Allies appreciated “the progress in consolidation of regional cooperation and ownership, through effective use of existing initiatives and mechanisms, and based on transparency, complementarities and inclusiveness”.⁴⁹⁶ In line with these statements, it seems that the failure to expand the coverage of Operation Active Endeavour to the Black Sea has not deterred Alliance from focusing more on the region.⁴⁹⁷

The US and NATO increased presence and influence in the Black Sea region present a model that is not appreciated by Russia. The US and NATO seem far away from developing a separate comprehensive approach towards the Black Sea region. Even if the US and NATO gave signals to cooperate more with the existing regional cooperation frameworks, they continue to build bilateral relations with the regional countries that mostly seek to be a part of transatlantic world. This policy is not welcomed by Russian authorities and harms not only Russia and the US/NATO relations, but also the relations between Russia and other Black Sea countries as in the case of Russia-Georgia damaged relations. As a result, the Black Sea region turns into an area divided between pro-NATO and pro-Russia countries and this remains a big challenge ahead for development of the process of Black Sea regionalization.

4.3. The EU Strategy Towards the Black Sea Region

The membership of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU has led the Union to focus more on its Southeast periphery and especially the wider Black Sea area.⁴⁹⁸ With this enlargement, the EU became a Black Sea littoral actor that is open to be affected by any instability and insecurity in the Black Sea region. Within this

⁴⁹⁵*The NATO Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration*, 04 April 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm, accessed on 5 August 2009.

⁴⁹⁶*The NATO Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration*, 04 April 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm, accessed on 5 August 2009.

⁴⁹⁷Gareth Winrow, “Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Wider Black Sea Region”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2007, p. 221.

⁴⁹⁸Zacchary Ritter, *EU Engagement in the Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, European and Atlantic Security, Working Paper Research Unit, No: FG3-WP/09, December 2006, p. 7, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3541, accessed on 10 February 2010.

framework, several regional issues that “range from energy security and resource access, the risk of flare-ups and spill-over of the region’s unresolved conflicts, combating organized crime and terrorism” started to concern more the Union.⁴⁹⁹ In line with this change, the EU has transformed its emerging strategic thinking on the region, which is now considered as an inseparable part of the European security architecture.⁵⁰⁰

The EU has encouraged “democratization processes of the regional states and their integration to European and Transatlantic cooperation structures to promote a stable and secure European southeastern neighborhood”.⁵⁰¹ On the other hand, the EU has also given a special importance to the region concerning the energy supply security issues in its quest for alternative energy resources.⁵⁰² The Ukraine 2006⁵⁰³ and 2009⁵⁰⁴ gas crises have pinpointed the strong dependence of the EU on Russia and the need for diversification of its energy supplies.

After the last wave of enlargement, the EU gradually started to realize that the establishment of a single, coherent policy framework towards the Black Sea region has been a necessity. In this regard, it launched *the Black Sea Synergy Strategy* in 2007 as an intermediary step towards a cohesive EU strategic vision for the region.⁵⁰⁵ It focuses particular attention to enhance ongoing cooperation processes towards the

⁴⁹⁹Nicklas Nilsson, “EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?”, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 32.

⁵⁰⁰Charles King, “The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 2.

⁵⁰¹Nicklas Nilsson, “EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?”, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 26.

⁵⁰²Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Haggström, *The wider Black Sea region: An emerging hub in European security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p.75, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁵⁰³Andrei Nesterov, “Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies”, *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁰⁴Andrei Nesterov, “Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies”, *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁰⁵Yannis Tsantoulis, *Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 12, February 2009, p. 1, http://icbss.org/images/papers/policy_brief_12_yt.pdf, accessed on 10 November 2009.

Black Sea region.⁵⁰⁶ In this regard, “it revolves around "partnerships" in five priority areas such as environment, energy, transport, internal security and democracy”.⁵⁰⁷ The strategy concentrates on the development of cooperation within the Black Sea region and also between the region as a whole and the European Union.⁵⁰⁸ In this sense, it also adds “a multilateral regional dimension to the Eastern branch of the ENP, which since 2004 had been entirely built around bilateral activity with Moldova, Ukraine and the three South Caucasus countries”.⁵⁰⁹ The ENP have already included the regional cooperation frameworks such as *the Northern Dimension* for its northern branch, *the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* for its southern branch and *the Stability Pact for the Balkans* for its southeastern branch.⁵¹⁰ In this regard, *the Black Sea Synergy* constitutes a comprehensive approach of the EU for the Black Sea region.

Following the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, “the EU decided to carry a message of its solidarity to the consolidation of the statehood and territorial integrity, good governance, democratization and economic development of its eastern borders”.⁵¹¹ In this regard, after the Polish-Swedish proposal that referred to the need to strengthen the presence of the EU in its eastern neighborhood, the EU Commission officially presented on 2008 a Communication

⁵⁰⁶*The Black Sea Synergy- A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Commission of the European Communities, No. 160 final, Brussels, 11 April 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

⁵⁰⁷Fabrizio Tassinari, *A Synergy for Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Guidelines for the EU Initiative*, CEPS, Policy Briefs, No. 105, June 2006, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁸Panagiota Manoli, “The European Union and its Eastern Neighbours: New Relations in the Making”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2008, p. 91.

⁵⁰⁹ Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS, Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p.3, <http://www.harvardbssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf>, accessed on 12 November 2009.

⁵¹⁰Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS, Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p.3, <http://www.harvardbssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf>, accessed on 12 November 2009.

⁵¹¹Yannis Tsantoulis, *Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 12, February 2009, p. 1, http://icbss.org/images/papers/policy_brief_12_yt.pdf, accessed on 10 November 2009.

entitled *Eastern Partnership (EaP)*.⁵¹² In fact, “this partnership calls for a policy which goes beyond the current *ENP* both by deepening bilateral cooperation and by creating a solid framework for multilateral co-operation”.⁵¹³ *The EaP* urges “to improve the political and economic trade relations of the six Post-Soviet states of strategic importance such as Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Belarus”.⁵¹⁴ In this regard, exclusion of Russia and Turkey in this regard is important since “both countries have acquired a different status in their relationship with the EU (Turkey – accession country; Russia – strategic partnership) than the other states of the region”.⁵¹⁵

The new partnership implies “new association agreements including deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with those countries willing and able to enter into a deeper engagement, gradual integration in the EU economy”.⁵¹⁶ It allows for “easier travel to the EU through gradual visa liberalization, accompanied by measures to tackle illegal immigration”.⁵¹⁷ Furthermore, through this, it also seeks “to promote democracy; strengthen energy security; promote environment protection; encourage people to people contacts; support economic and social development; and offer additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances”.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹²Tedo Japaridze, *A Memo on How to Make the EU – BSEC Relations Relevant and Productive*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No:11, February 2009, p. 2.

⁵¹³Yannis Tsantoulis, *Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 12, February 2009, p. 3, http://icbss.org/images/papers/policy_brief_12_yt.pdf, accessed on 10 November 2009.

⁵¹⁴*The Eastern Partnership (EaP)*, Communication from the Commission to European Parliament and the Council, Commission of the European, No. 823, Brussels, 3 December 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

⁵¹⁵Yannis Tsantoulis, *Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No. 12, February 2009, p. 3, http://icbss.org/images/papers/policy_brief_12_yt.pdf, accessed on 10 November 2009.

⁵¹⁶ *The Eastern Partnership (EaP)*, Communication from the Commission to European Parliament and the Council, Commission of the European, No. 823, Brussels, 3 December 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

⁵¹⁷*The Eastern Partnership (EaP)*, Communication from the Commission to European Parliament and the Council, Commission of the European, No. 823, Brussels, 3 December 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

⁵¹⁸ *The Eastern Partnership (EaP)*, Communication from the Commission to European Parliament and the Council, Commission of the European, No. 823, Brussels, 3 December 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

While the development of these policies indicates EU willingness to pursue a much more developed strategy for the Black Sea region, because of their overlapping agendas, the almost parallel launching of *the EaP* and *the Black Sea Strategy* seems to complicate somehow the formulation of a coherent EU policy towards its eastern neighborhood.⁵¹⁹ In these documents, there are references to the importance to cooperate with the existing regional initiatives. In this regard, the BSEC seems as an important cooperation partner in the region. Thus, the EU's becoming an observer in the BSEC is a key development for the deepening of cooperation between the two institutions as well as for the EU's commitment to get more involved in the Black Sea issues.⁵²⁰ However, the prospect for such a deepened EU role in the Black Sea faces serious obstacles, especially emanating from Russia.

Russia is pretty much concerned by the *EaP* initiative. In an interview on 21 March 2009, at the Brussels Forum, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov expressed this concern by saying that “we are accused of having spheres of influence. But what is the EaP, if not an attempt to extend the EU's sphere of influence, including to Belarus”.⁵²¹ Thus, the “sphere of influence” debate is a major source of disagreement between the EU and Russia. In this sense, there are several areas where the EU and Russian interests contradict each other. The diversification of energy routes and conflict resolution present the most significant areas on the clash of interests in the Black Sea region.⁵²² The dependency of the EU on Russia for natural gas supply threatens the energy supply security of the EU member states.⁵²³ In this regard, the EU seeks for alternative roads bypassing Russia and at this point

⁵¹⁹Tedo Japaridze, *a Memo on How to Make the EU – BSEC Relations Relevant and Productive*, ICBSS, Policy Brief, No: 11, February 2009, p. 2.

⁵²⁰ Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS , Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p. 10, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf>, accessed on 12 November 2009.

⁵²¹Valentina Pop, “EU Expanding its “Sphere of Influence”, Russia Says“, *EU Observer* , 21 March 2009, <http://euobserver.com/9/27827>, accessed on 10 September 2009.

⁵²²Valentina Pop, “EU Expanding its “Sphere of Influence”, Russia Says“, *EU Observer* , 21 March 2009, <http://euobserver.com/9/27827>, accessed on 10 September 2009.

⁵²³ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The wider Black Sea region: An emerging hub in European security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p.73, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

Turkey as an energy transportation hub becomes an important alternative for the EU.⁵²⁴ Thus, the realization of Nabucco pipeline project that will be an alternative road for the transportation of Caucasus gas to Europe passing through Turkey is considered as a vital issue to this end.⁵²⁵

Another issue of debate between the EU and Russia is related to the resolution of “the frozen conflicts”. After 2007 EU enlargement, the “Transdnestrian conflict became located just off the EU’s border, while the South Caucasian conflicts became sited just across the Black Sea”.⁵²⁶ This fact oriented the EU to be more active in conflict resolution in the region.⁵²⁷ Until now, the EU involvement in the region in terms of conflict resolution was limited and the EU dealt more for the rehabilitation of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by providing financial support.⁵²⁸ Furthermore, the EU appointed two special representatives, one to help with conflict resolution in the South Caucasus and one to deal specifically with Transdnestria.⁵²⁹ Until now, “the EU involvement in the region has been almost invisible and only recently it has begun to concern itself with the ‘frozen’ conflicts in the Black Sea region”.⁵³⁰ Nevertheless, although its structure is not very clear yet, *the Black Sea Strategy* document pursues “a more active EU role through increased

⁵²⁴ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The wider Black Sea region: An emerging hub in European security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p.73-75, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁵²⁵ İrem Köker, “Nabucco Moves a Step Ahead in Pipeline Wars”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 October 2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=us-signals-nabucco-is-preferred-over-other-pipelines-2010-10-01>, accessed on 2 October 2010.

⁵²⁶ Nicklas Nilsson, “EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?”, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p.30.

⁵²⁷ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The wider Black Sea region: An emerging hub in European security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p.18, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁵²⁸ Nicu Popescu, “The European Union and Conflicts in the South Caucasus”, CEPS, 8 February 2007, http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=291, accessed on 12 September 2009.

⁵²⁹ Nicu Popescu, “The European Union and conflicts in the South Caucasus”, CEPS, 8 February 2007, http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=291, accessed on 12 September 2009.

⁵³⁰ Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, *Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Area in the Context of EU-Russia Relations*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No.5, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 33.

political involvement in ongoing efforts to address the conflicts (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh)".⁵³¹ However, Russia does not prefer any increased EU involvement in the settlement of these conflicts.⁵³²

The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007 changed important dynamics in the Black Sea region. Before the membership of these countries to these organizations, Romania and Bulgaria were not actively involved in the Black Sea issues.⁵³³ However, their membership to NATO and the EU has increased the level of their involvement in the regional issues. Both started to consider themselves as "a part of the NATO and EU bridge to trade and energy and the barrier to transnational threats emanating from the Black Sea region".⁵³⁴ While emphasizing the importance of their geopolitical location, they have become more vocal to lead a NATO/EU role in the Black Sea area.⁵³⁵

The multi-dimensional strategy that the EU offers for the Black Sea region has productive tools to ensure stability, democratization and prosperity in the region.⁵³⁶ However, the strategy has contradictory points even within itself. Whether the EU's regional policy towards the BSEC area may gain a structure similar to *the Northern Dimension* for the Baltic region, the *Barcelona Process* for the

⁵³¹ *The Black Sea Synergy- A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Commission of the European Communities, No. 160 final, Brussels, 11 April 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, accessed on 2 January 2010.

⁵³² Nicu Popescu, "The European Union and Conflicts in the South Caucasus", CEPS, 8 February 2007, http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=291, accessed on 12 September 2009.

⁵³³ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁵³⁴ Eugene Rumer and Jeffrey Simon, *Toward a Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), Washington DC, United States, Occasional Papers, No. 3, 2006, p. 10, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/DigitalLibrary/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=49706>, accessed on 5 January 2010.

⁵³⁵ Iris Kempe, Kurt Klotzle, *The Balkans and the Black Sea Region: Problems, Potentials, and Policy Options*, Center for Applied Policy Research Policy Analysis, No. 2, April 2006, p. 8, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/314/balkans_Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 13 April 2008.

⁵³⁶ Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS, Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p. 6, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf>, accessed on 12 November 2009.

Mediterranean region or *the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe* for the Balkans or not is still under question.⁵³⁷

The plurality of partnership mechanism towards the region and the ambiguity on their interaction as in the case of the *Black Sea Synergy* and *the EaP*, impede the formation of such a Black Sea dimension.⁵³⁸ Since the EU has differing relations with regional countries, it is getting difficult to melt all its policies in the same pot. In this regard, *the Black Sea Synergy* strategy faces challenges to be implemented. On the other hand, *the EaP* that is based on the developing increased relations with some regional countries to prepare them for the EU membership in future faces Russia's concerns.⁵³⁹ Furthermore, Turkey follows a more careful approach regarding Black Sea developments.⁵⁴⁰ This overall picture presenting the EU's Black Sea perspective does not seem compatible with the perspectives of other regional actors, including Russia and Turkey. This difference in the Black Sea perception and policies does not serve the development regarding the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area.

4.4. Russia's Strategy Towards the Black Sea Region

The strategic importance of the Black Sea region for Russia has not changed since centuries. In September 2003, Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed this "by referring to the Azov-Black Sea region as a zone of Russia's "strategic interests".⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, he also stressed that "the Black Sea provides Russia with

⁵³⁷ Micheal Emerson, *The EU's New Black Sea Policy: What Kind of Regionalism is This?*, CEPS , Working Document, No. 297, July 2008, p. 11, [http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/381/Michael %20 Emerson %20 EU%20New%20 Black%20Se a%20 policy.pdf](http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/381/Michael%20Emerson%20EU%20New%20Black%20Sea%20policy.pdf), accessed on 12 November 2009.

⁵³⁸ Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU's role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEI Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 22, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 4 February 2009.

⁵³⁹ Valentina Pop, "EU Expanding its "Sphere of Influence", Russia Says", *EU Observer* , 21 March 2009, <http://euobserver.com/9/27827>, accessed on 10 September 2009.

⁵⁴⁰ Mustafa Aydın, "Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 280.

⁵⁴¹ Irina Kobrinskaya, *The Black Sea Region in Russia's Current Foreign Policy Paradigm*, PONARS, Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 41, December 2008, p. 1, [http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations %20BLack% 20Sea% 20Region%20PONARS.pdf](http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations%20BLack%20Sea%20Region%20PONARS.pdf), accessed on 4 February 2010.

a direct exit to its most important transport routes, and thus that an effective security system is needed for the region”.⁵⁴² Russia considers the Black Sea region as an integral part of the CIS that is an area of “common cultural and spiritual heritage” and pursues that “the countries of the CIS share historically conditioned mutually privileged relations”.⁵⁴³ In this sense, for Russia, it is more than natural to have close ties with the post Soviet Black Sea regional countries with which it shares a common Soviet legacy. In this regard, as Sergey Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister expressed, “Russia is disturbed by the EU’s eastward enlargement, as well as *the ENP* and *the EaP* that represent revisionist policies to remove the post-Soviet space from Russian influence”.⁵⁴⁴ In this regard, regarding its foreign policy approach towards the Black Sea region, on one hand, Russia pursues the policy of preserving as much as possible of the *status quo*, on the other hand, it focuses on using its energy card for strategic purposes.⁵⁴⁵

In order not to allow further western involvement in the Black Sea region after the NATO and EU eastward enlargements, as well as to block the US increased influence in the Black Sea region, Russia is criticized to pursue different tactics. One of these tactics is Russia’s preference to cause and maintain low intensity conflicts like in the South Caucasus and Moldova.⁵⁴⁶ Indeed, Russia does not seem to play a constructive role for the peaceful settlement of “the frozen conflicts” in the region and can even worsen the situation by taking part actively in the conflict as in the case of South Ossetia or by recognizing the *de facto* states in the conflictual areas as in the

⁵⁴² Irina Kobrinskaya, *The Black Sea Region in Russia’s Current Foreign Policy Paradigm*, PONARS, Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 41, December 2008, p.1, [http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations %20BLack% 20Sea% 20Region%20PONARS.pdf](http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations%20BLack%20Sea%20Region%20PONARS.pdf), accessed on 4 February 2010.

⁵⁴³ *The Black Sea Region: New Conditions, Enduring Interests*, Chatham House, Russia and Eurasia Programme: Seminar Summary, 16 January 2009, http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/13539_160109blacksea.pdf, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁵⁴⁴ Sergey Lavrov, “Russian Foreign Policy and a new quality of the geopolitical situation” in *Diplomatic Yearbook 2008*, Moscow, 2008, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁵ Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 10, [http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework% 20Analytical%20Review.pdf](http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf), accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁵⁴⁶ Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 12, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

case of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.⁵⁴⁷ The support for the low intensity conflicts in the Black Sea region plays role as “a legitimization tool for Russia’s military forces to stay in key zones of geopolitical importance to Moscow, officially involved in peace keeping on the dividing lines between clashing communities”.⁵⁴⁸ On the other hand, by distributing Russian passports to citizens of the *de facto* states, Russia finds a way to intervene in the internal politics of regional countries subjected to separatists movements when it considers necessary.⁵⁴⁹ All these tactics strengthen the geopolitical importance of Russia in the Black Sea region.

In fact, Russia is not necessarily opposed to the goals of good governance, the rule of law, fighting corruption and building democracies.⁵⁵⁰ However, it often equates these issues with the Black Sea region’s becoming more oriented towards the West. It sees this possibility as a destabilizing factor since it can lose direct influence over the region.⁵⁵¹ As a result, Russia intends to challenge the possible Euro-Atlantic integration of some regional countries that aim to become EU/NATO members.⁵⁵² More specifically, Russia tries to keep Georgia and Ukraine away from the Euro-Atlantic institutions and the US, where the “Colored revolutions” occurred.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁷Taras Kuzio, “Russian Passports as Moscow’s Geopolitical Tool”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.5 , No. 176, 15 September 2008, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33938, accessed on 8 February 2010.

⁵⁴⁸Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 12, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁵⁴⁹ Taras Kuzio, “Russian Passports as Moscow’s Geopolitical Tool”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.5 , No. 176, 15 September 2008, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33938, accessed on 8 February 2010.

⁵⁵⁰Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, “A View from Russia”, Manoli Panagiota (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 112-114.

⁵⁵¹Zacchary Ritter, *EU Engagement in the Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, European and Atlantic Security, Working Paper Research Unit, No: FG3-WP/09, December 2006, p. 11, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3541, accessed on 10 February 2010.

⁵⁵²Zacchary Ritter, *EU Engagement in the Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, European and Atlantic Security, Working Paper Research Unit, No: FG3-WP/09, December 2006, p. 12, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3541, accessed on 10 February 2010.

⁵⁵³ Zacchary Ritter, *EU Engagement in the Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for the*

Moreover, Russia express that the establishment of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) and the Community for Democratic Choice (CDC) where these countries are also involved presents a formation of “alliance system” against itself.⁵⁵⁴

Since Georgia became a sovereign Republic, there have been numerous examples of Russian pressure on Tbilisi. Some of these examples are, among others, “the granting of Russian citizenship to Abkhaz and South Ossetians; price increases and irregular supply of natural gas to Georgia by Gazprom; an embargo on Georgian wine and the cancellation of air travel links with Moscow”.⁵⁵⁵ The scale of provocation increased and contributed to the launch of the armed conflict war in August 2008 between Georgia and Russia even if the main subject of the war was South Ossetia. Following it, two countries could not find a common ground to put their relations on the right track yet.

On the other hand, the Russia-Ukraine relations that were damaged after “the Orange revolution”, have improved as a result of pro-Russian Victor Yanukovich’s coming to power after 2010 presidential elections in Ukraine. Before this significant change, even if Russia-Ukraine relations were not in a war situation, there were remarkably tense between these countries. One of the disagreements was about the Russian Black Sea Fleet located in Sevastopol that is the maritime city of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Former President Yushchenko saw the stationing of Russian navy in Crimea as “a problem for national interests and security”.⁵⁵⁶ However, it seems that the newly elected President of Ukraine Yanukovich, despite the protests of Ukrainian opposition groups, does not share the same concern with his

EU, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, European and Atlantic Security, Working Paper Research Unit, No: FG3-WP/09, December 2006, p. 12, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3541, accessed on 10 February 2010.

⁵⁵⁴ Ian Lesser, *Global Trends, Regional Consequences: Wider Strategic Influences on the Black Sea*, ICBSS, Xenophon Paper, No. 4, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁵ *The Black Sea Region: New Conditions, Enduring Interests*, Chatham House, Russia and Eurasia Programme: Seminar Summary, 16 January 2009, http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/13539_160109blacksea.pdf, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁵⁵⁶ Alexander Cooley and Volodymyr Dubovyk, *The Triangular Politics of Russia’s Naval Base in Crimea*, PONARS, Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 47, December 2008, p.31, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations%20Black%20Sea%20Region%20PONARS.pdf>, accessed on 6 March 2010.

predecessor. On 21 April 2010, Russia and Ukraine signed a historical agreement to bring two countries closer. In this agreement, while “Russia agreed to a 30% drop in the price of natural gas sold to Ukraine,..., Ukraine agreed to extend Russia's lease of Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol for 25 years”.⁵⁵⁷ The agreement is beneficiary in economic terms for Ukraine it puts an end to disputes on natural gas prices between two countries.⁵⁵⁸ For Russia, the extension has further meanings. While it ensures Russia’s maritime power on the Black Sea, eventually it shows Russia’s determination to increase its political influence in the Black Sea region, especially on the security issues.⁵⁵⁹ The agreement has also a symbolic meaning for Russia. It shows that while Ukraine does not anymore seek for NATO membership, its relations with Ukraine gain the level of strategic partnership. In this regard, Russia seems to fly the message that Ukraine will be on its side rather than on the Euro-Atlantic side.

Besides trying to maintain the *status quo* in the region by keeping pro-Western post Soviet countries in the Black Sea away from the western world and to prevent further Western interference, Russia has provided support to Turkey’s commitment regarding *the Montreux Convention* and existing regional security frameworks in the Black Sea area.⁵⁶⁰ *The Convention* signed in 1936 that has given sovereignty to Turkey over the Turkish Straits was an issue of major debate between Russia and Turkey.⁵⁶¹ The 1994 revision made by Turkey to *the Convention on*

⁵⁵⁷ Ivan Watson and Maxim Tkachenko, “Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-base-for-gas deal”, *CNN International*, 21 April 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html>, accessed on 3 December 2009.

⁵⁵⁸ Ivan Watson and Maxim Tkachenko, “Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-base-for-gas deal”, *CNN International*, 21 April 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html>, accessed on 3 December 2009.

⁵⁵⁹ Ivan Watson and Maxim Tkachenko, “Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-base-for-gas deal”, *CNN International*, 21 April 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html>, accessed on 3 December 2009.

⁵⁶⁰ “Russia Calls Full Compliance to Montreux Convention”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 September 2008, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/9759360.asp>, accessed on 25 October 2009.

⁵⁶¹ Anıl Grtuna, *Turkish-Russian Cooperation in the Post Soviet Era*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006, p. 47 <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12607080/index.pdf>, accessed on 5 March 2010.

*Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits and Marmara Sea*⁵⁶² had been perceived by Russia as an obstacle for its transporting the Caspian oil to the world markets through the Turkish Straits.⁵⁶³ In this regard, on April 1997, referring to its loss of 926,000 dollars because of being kept waiting at the entrance of the Turkish Straits between the years 1994-1997, Russia submitted a report to International Maritime Organization suggesting to limit the Turkish control over the Straits but this report was not issued.⁵⁶⁴ However, after the implementation of *the Regulation Maritime Traffic Regulations of Turkish Straits* by Turkey in 1998 that addressed Russian concerns, the tensions between two countries on this issue were softened.⁵⁶⁵ In today's circumstances, Russia seems far away from complaining about *the Convention*, since it complies with Russia's priorities in the region.⁵⁶⁶ "*The Montreux Convention prevents non-riparian forces from remaining in the Black Sea longer than 21 days*" and "allows carrying a maximum of 45,000 tons of naval vessels with no single warship exceeding 30,000 tons".⁵⁶⁷ In this regard, in line with Russia's expectations, *the Convention* does not allow any long stay of the US and NATO forces in the Black Sea and prevent more western interference in the region.⁵⁶⁸ Within this framework, after the Georgia crisis, Russia called for full implementation

⁵⁶²“The revision was implemented to limit increased traffic at the Turkish Straits, with the aim of preventing accidents and protecting environment”, Anıl Gürtuna, *Turkish-Russian Cooperation in the Post Soviet Era*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006, p. 49, <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12607080/index.pdf>, accessed on 5 March 2010.

⁵⁶³Anıl Gürtuna, *Turkish-Russian Cooperation in the Post Soviet Era*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006, p. 58, <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12607080/index.pdf>, accessed on 5 March 2010.

⁵⁶⁴Anıl Gürtuna, *Turkish-Russian Cooperation in the Post Soviet Era*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006, p. 58, <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12607080/index.pdf>, accessed on 5 March 2010.

⁵⁶⁵Gennady Chufirin, *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 155-156.

⁵⁶⁶“Russia Calls Full Compliance to Montreux Convention”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 September 2008, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/9759360.asp>, accessed on 25 October 2009.

⁵⁶⁷ *The Montreux Convention Document*, http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Montreux_Convention, accessed on 4 March 2009.

⁵⁶⁸“Russia Calls Full Compliance to Montreux Convention”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 September 2008, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/9759360.asp>, accessed on 25 October 2009.

of the agreement restricting the movement of non-Turkish military shipping in Turkey's Straits.⁵⁶⁹

Turkey and Russia also share a similar vision on other issues, particularly concerning the Black Sea security. For instance, concerning the role of the BLACKSEAFOR and the BSHO both countries are of the similar opinion. Arguing that the Black Sea naval security can only be ensured by the Black Sea littoral states, these two countries have objected to the expansion of NATO Active Endeavour Operation towards the Black Sea.⁵⁷⁰ Moreover, both countries pursue the BSEC as the most institutionalized and reliable regional cooperation mechanism while keeping distance towards other cooperation frameworks such as the ODED-GUAM, the CDC and the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation assuming that these frameworks are supported by the extra-regional actors.⁵⁷¹ However, when the subject comes to the energy and energy supply security, these two countries do not follow a parallel strategy in the Black Sea region. Russian officials had opposed to Turkish and American attempts to promote the BTC pipeline project. For Russia, "this proposed pipeline was economically unfeasible and was really a political project aimed at boosting the influence and prestige of Turkey and the United States in the south Caucasus at the expense of Russia".⁵⁷²

Energy flows and exports constitute another dimension of the Russian foreign policy for geopolitical control over the Black Sea region. In this sense, Russia plays its energy card "to strengthen its economy, to enforce its influence over its neighbors, to monopolize the regional and international energy market and to make western

⁵⁶⁹ "Russia Calls Full Compliance to Montreux Convention", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 September 2008, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/9759360.asp>, accessed on 25 October 2009.

⁵⁷⁰ Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 13, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁵⁷¹ Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 14 <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁵⁷² Gareth Winrow, "Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Wider Black Sea Region", *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2007, p. 222.

world dependant to itself on the energy sector”.⁵⁷³ In this regard, Russia does not welcome any project that keeps itself out of the energy game in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, Russia did not ratify *the Energy Charter Treaty* that is “an international agreement originally based on integrating the energy sectors of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into the broader European and world markets yet”.⁵⁷⁴ This shows that Russia does not totally agree on the principles of competitive energy market set by the Europeans.

In terms of energy power, “Russia hosts the largest known natural gas reserves and the eighth largest oil reserves in the world”.⁵⁷⁵ In this regard, Russia has already a significant role in the determination of prices in the international energy sector. To be an energy producing country does not seem sufficient for Russia since the country also aims at becoming a key energy transit country for transportation of the Caspian oil and gas to the Western markets. In this regard, the projects such as BTC oil pipeline, the BTE gas pipeline and the Turkey-Greece Inter-connector that bypass Russia, are criticized by this country.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, the Nabucco pipeline project that will transport gas from Turkey to Austria, via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary is strongly opposed by Russia.⁵⁷⁷ As a response to these projects bypassing itself, Russia has engaged in several projects designed to compete with new gas infrastructure of Europe. The most recent effort in this regard is “the South Stream pipeline”.⁵⁷⁸ This pipeline which was “initiated in June 2007 as a joint venture between Gazprom and Italy’s ENI Energy Company will run under the Black Sea

⁵⁷³Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 13, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁵⁷⁴Zacchary Ritter, *EU Engagement in the Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, European and Atlantic Security, Working Paper Research Unit, No: FG3-WP/09, December 2006, p. 12, accessed on 10 February 2010.

⁵⁷⁵*Russia: Country Analysis*, Energy Information Administration Independent Statistics and Analysis, May 2008, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Russia/Background.html>, accessed on 10 February 2010.

⁵⁷⁶Nicklas Nilsson, “EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?”, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 28.

⁵⁷⁷Nicklas Nilsson, “EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?”, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 29.

⁵⁷⁸“Russia, Austria Sign Deal on South Stream Project”, *Rianavosti*, 24 April 2010, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100424/158728916.html>, accessed on 30 April 2010.

coast from Russia to Bulgaria and reduce Russia's dependence on transit states".⁵⁷⁹ Russian efforts to promote the pipeline since summer 2007 have rendered several successes in Nabucco partner countries. "Russia has already signed intergovernmental agreements with Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia to implement the onshore part of the project" and recently, "in April 2010, Russia and Austria signed a deal on Austria's joining in the South Stream gas project".⁵⁸⁰ Moreover, "in August 2009, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to agreement on Moscow's request to route its South Stream gas pipeline through Turkey's territorial waters".⁵⁸¹ Whether the Nabucco and South Stream pipelines are parallel or contradictory initiatives is questionable. However, the certain point is that Russia is committed to prove its power on energy issues at regional and international levels in every means.

The last energy dispute between Russia and Ukraine in January 2009 showed the impacts of energy flow shortage by Russia on the energy supply security for Ukraine, the regional countries and the entire Europe. Thus, the dispute between these countries dates back to 2005. "Because of the natural gas and transit prices, Russia cut off the gas supply to Ukraine in January 2006".⁵⁸² Following this, in March 2008, Russia reduced gas supplies to Ukraine. "During the last months of 2008 relations between Gazprom and Ukraine again became tense because of a dispute over the size of debts owed by Ukraine".⁵⁸³ "The last dispute of 2009 resulted in at least 18 countries reporting major falls or cut-offs of their gas supplies from

⁵⁷⁹ Nicklas Nilsson, "EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?", *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2008, p. 29.

⁵⁸⁰"Russia, Austria Sign Deal on South Stream Project", *Rianavosti*, 24 April 2010, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100424/158728916.html>, accessed on 30 April 2010.

⁵⁸¹ Charles Recknagel, "Putin Wins Turkey's Approval Of South Stream Route," *Radio Free Europe*, 6 August 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Putin_In_Turkey_Seeking_Approval_For_South_Stream_Route/1793851.html, accessed on 29 August 2009.

⁵⁸²"Ukraine - time to Pay Gas Bills", *RIANOVOSTI*, 25 November 2008, http://www.russiatoday.com/Top_News/2008-11-25/Ukraine_-_time_to_pay_gas_bills.html, accessed on 28 August 2009.

⁵⁸³"Ukraine - time to Pay Gas Bills", *RIANOVOSTI*, 25 November 2008, http://www.russiatoday.com/Top_News/2008-11-25/Ukraine_-_time_to_pay_gas_bills.html, accessed on 28 August 2009.

Russia transported through Ukraine”.⁵⁸⁴ As a result, “Ukrainian steel and chemical factories were temporarily shut down due to the lack of gas and the country reportedly lost 100 million Dollars in transit fees because of the cut-off”.⁵⁸⁵ “The affected EU countries asked the Russian Company Gazprom to pay penalties of up to 4 million Dollars for each day when the gas was cut off”.⁵⁸⁶ This showed once again the importance of energy security for the Black Sea region and its customers that are especially the European Union members. Today, Ukraine and Russia relations are improving and they start to cooperate on energy issue. However, this “rapprochement” can easily turn upside down by a change of government in Ukraine and then Europe can face once again serious problems on its energy supply security. In this regard, there is no steady cooperation on energy topic at regional level in the Black Sea area yet. Consequently, energy remains as a matter of dispute rather than cooperation in and around the Black Sea region. Moreover, Russia’s assertive reactions by using its energy card for its foreign policy objectives are able to damage not only its relations with the EU but also its bilateral relations in the Black Sea area.

Russia is a key actor for the increase of “regionness” level in the Black Sea area. Without its contribution, it is not possible to succeed in the process of Black Sea regionalization. However, Russia does not always show a cooperative performance on several regional topics including the energy issue. Moreover, its involvement in “the frozen conflicts” by supporting *de facto* states or by distributing the Russian passports to their citizens does not serve promotion of security and stability in the region. The armed conflict between Russia and Georgia proved once again how the security dynamics are open to be worsened in the Black Sea region. The conflict also showed the fragility of relations not only within the Black Sea region but also between Russia and Western actors. The disagreement between Russia and Western actors towards the Black Sea region is based on the existence of different perceptions between Russia, US, NATO and the EU regarding the Black

⁵⁸⁴“Eighteen Countries Affected by Russia-Ukraine Gas Row”, *REUTERS*, 7 January 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUKTRE5062Q520090107?sp=true>, accessed on 27 August 2009.

⁵⁸⁵ Andrei Nesterov, “Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies”, *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁸⁶ Andrei Nesterov, “Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies”, *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

Sea issues. This difference sometimes results in Russia's becoming assertive to defend its national interests in the Black Sea region. The feeling that the Western actors try to isolate it from its "near abroad" makes Russia more suspicious towards the Western actors as well as the pro-Euro-Atlantic actors in the region. With this perspective, Russian President Medvedev, in June 2008, in a speech in Berlin had raised "the idea for new European security architecture".⁵⁸⁷ Medvedev named "NATO and the OSCE as Cold War era institutions" and called for "the creation of new pan-European security architecture to replace these institutions that are incapable of addressing 21st century security challenges".⁵⁸⁸ Although the proposal of Russia is not totally welcomed by the West, it raised awareness on Russia's way of thinking towards regional and international security issues.

The US-Russian relations constitute an important parameter for Russia's strategy towards the Black Sea region. Although the relations passed through difficult time, recent development happened after the change in the US administration points at a relevant improvement in the relations between two countries. After his taking office in January 2009, the US President Obama announced that "the US abandoned the controversial George Bush administration plan to build a missile defence system in Europe that had long soured relations with Russia".⁵⁸⁹ The plan of Bush administration was based on "the deployment of long-range-missile defence systems in Poland and the Czech Republic" and Russia considered this as "a real threat to its territorial security and regional dominance".⁵⁹⁰ In this regard, the abandonment of this project opened a new chapter for the US-

⁵⁸⁷ Daniel P. Fata and David Kramer, "Russia's New European Security Architecture Proposal: The Wrong Blueprint", *Today's Zaman*, 6 December 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-194736-russias-new-european-security-architecture-proposal-the-wrong-blueprint.html>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁸⁸ Daniel P. Fata and David Kramer, "Russia's new European security architecture proposal: The wrong blueprint", *Today's Zaman*, 6 December 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-194736-russias-new-european-security-architecture-proposal-the-wrong-blueprint.html>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁵⁸⁹ Luke Harding and Ian Traynor "Obama Abandons Missile Defence Shield in Europe", *Guardian UK*, 17 September 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama>, accessed on 20 November 2010.

⁵⁹⁰ Luke Harding and Ian Traynor "Obama Abandons Missile Defence Shield in Europe", *Guardian UK*, 17 September 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama>, accessed on 20 November 2010.

Russian relations. Furthermore, the signature of the new nuclear disarmament deal to replace the expired Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)⁵⁹¹ on 8 April 2010 in Prague, by President Obama and his Russian counterpart Medvedev has presented a significant step for further improvement in their bilateral relations.⁵⁹²

Time will show if the recent developments in US-Russian relations have implications in the Black Sea region. The Black Sea region is significantly vital for both actors since it remains as an important bargaining tool when bilateral relations between two countries are strained. However, it is important to note that the significance of the region for each actor is still based on different reasons. Therefore, it is needed to ensure significant dialogue to convince Russia that the US presence in the region, NATO expansion towards the Black Sea and the EU's Black Sea policies are not attempts against this country. This kind of reconciliation can provide an improvement of relations between Russia and pro-Euro-Atlantic regional actors. The assurance of such a dialogue and confidence-building measures can have positive effect on the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area.

4.5. Turkey's Strategy Towards the Black Sea Region

Turkey has given a strategic importance to the Black Sea region and its foreign policy has been based on promotion of stability and prosperity through cooperation in the Black Sea region. As President of Turkey Abdullah Gül stated in his speech on the occasion of 15th anniversary of the BSEC, "when the Cold War came to an end, it was Turkey that took the lead to launch the BSEC to help transform the centrally planned economies of the Soviet time and integrate them into the world economy and make use of potential of the region".⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ "The treaty limits both sides to 1,550 warheads, about 30% less than currently allowed. Both sides would have seven years after the treaty's ratification to carry out the reduction in long-range nuclear warheads", Mary Beth Sheridan, "What is New START?", *Washington Post*, 21 December 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/21/AR2010122103961>. html, accessed on 22 December 2010.

⁵⁹² Jonathan Marcus, "US and Russian Leaders Hail Nuclear Arms Treaty", BBC News, 8 April 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8607985.stm>, accessed on 27 April 2010.

⁵⁹³ Abdullah Gül, "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: A Straightforward Assessment of the Past 15 Years and a Vision for the Future from the Turkish Perspective" in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*. Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 8.

In line with this motivation, as President Abdullah Gül put forward Turkey has been pursuing “a constructive and balanced Black Sea policy composed by three main pillars such as inclusiveness, transparency and regional ownership through which the emergence of new dividing lines will be prevented in the Black Sea region”.⁵⁹⁴ The developments such as the eastward enlargement of NATO and the EU, the raising presence of the US in the region, the Black Sea’s gaining importance as an important energy supply route for Europe have led Turkey to reconsider its priorities in the Black Sea area.⁵⁹⁵

Turkey is not in favor of the Wider Black Sea Region concept with capital “W” as proposed by the US. For Turkey, this denomination of Black Sea geography presents a part of the US strategy that gives an overloaded attention to the region in line with its national interests.⁵⁹⁶ Ankara argues that “there are no significant security threats emanating from the region.”⁵⁹⁷ Moreover, similar to Russia, Turkey pursues a *status quo* policy towards the region.⁵⁹⁸ As a reliable Ally of NATO, “Turkey has been very supportive for NATO’s open door policy and in this regard played a very positive role for Romania’s and Bulgaria’s membership to NATO”.⁵⁹⁹ However, the efforts of Bulgaria and especially Romania to become spokesmen of the US-led policies in NATO towards the Black Sea region do not comply with Turkey’s priorities concerning the Black Sea issues.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁴ Abdullah Gül, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: A Straightforward Assessment of the Past 15 Years and a Vision for the Future from the Turkish Perspective” in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*. Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 8. p.2007, p. 9.

⁵⁹⁵ Özdem Sanberk, “Türkiye, ABD ve Yeni Karadeniz Bölgesinde Dönüşüm İçin İşbirliği”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2007, p. 41.

⁵⁹⁶ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 544.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁵⁹⁸ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 544.

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Ambassador Anal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁰⁰ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 544.

On the other hand, Turkey also seems worried about *the Black Sea Synergy* and *the EaP* frameworks of the EU, with the concern that these policies can bypass the regional initiatives led by the BSEC in the region.⁶⁰¹ Even if in the official documents of the EU, there is a particular reference to the need of collaboration with the BSEC regarding the Black Sea issues, Turkey still worries that this reference can be easily underestimated. Thus, “the other BSEC countries that are also members of the EU do not show a similar sensitivity to bring the BSEC to the fore for regional and international issues”.⁶⁰² For instance, “some members of both organizations do not spend effort to support the role of BSEC in any regional and international frameworks”.⁶⁰³ In this regard, Turkey remains alone in the support of the BSEC as an important regional actor. In addition to these concerns, Turkey is also “uncomfortable with the regional initiatives in the Black Sea area such as the ODED-GUAM, the CDC and Black Sea Forum that do not only have the potential to duplicate the BSEC, but also give Russia a sense of being sidelined”.⁶⁰⁴ In this regard, Turkey considers “the BSEC as the most institutionalized economic organization in the region that opens an important channel of dialogue for all regional countries and aims at preserving its functional role in the region”.⁶⁰⁵

Turkey’s approach to the Black Sea region includes “a clear distinction between two paradigms such as maritime and broader strategic issues”.⁶⁰⁶ Rafet Akgünay, Former Deputy Under-Secretary for Political Affairs of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had stated this distinction in a conference organized in

⁶⁰¹ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 545.

⁶⁰² Interview with Ambassador Anal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁰³ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁰⁶ Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 95.

June 2006 on “Democracy and Security in the Black Sea”⁶⁰⁷ by underlying that “for Turkey, the challenges faced in these two paradigms are entirely different in nature and scale”.⁶⁰⁸ In this conference, Rafet Akgünay had clearly pointed out that “the maritime area is relatively immune from asymmetric risks and threats and the littoral states already have sufficient means and mechanisms that are needed to deter and if necessary, to counter those risks that may arise in the future”.⁶⁰⁹ In this regard, he had emphasized that “Turkey is in favor of handling regional issues in a strictly regional format, with the participation of all regional players on an equal basis and without the need of any foreign intervention”.⁶¹⁰ On the other hand, in the same speech, he had specified that “Turkey is ready to play a constructive role in the fields of “the frozen conflicts”, energy security and broader challenges of democratization in cooperation with all the relevant parties”.⁶¹¹ In this regard, Rafet Akgünay seems underlined Turkey’s commitment to cooperate with the extra-regional and international actors on these specific areas as long as their policies are in line with existing regional mechanisms.

For Turkey, the security in the Black Sea is directly related to “the preservation of the principles of *the Montreux regime*”.⁶¹² In the aftermath of the 2008 August armed conflict between Russia and Georgia, *the Montreux Convention* came up once again not only in regional but also in the world agenda. After the crisis, “the US that is not a signatory state to *the Convention* wanted to use the Turkish Straits to send two hospital ships carrying aid to Georgia”.⁶¹³ However, even if they

⁶⁰⁷The mentioned conference entitled “Democratization and Security in the Black Sea” was co-hosted by German Marshall Fund with the ARI Movement in Ankara, Turkey, 29-30 June 2006.

⁶⁰⁸Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 96.

⁶⁰⁹Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 96.

⁶¹⁰Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 96.

⁶¹¹ Bülent Karadeniz, “Security and Stability Architecture in Black Sea”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2007, p. 96.

⁶¹² Suat Kınıkkoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 543.

⁶¹³Seda Kırdar, “Conflict Resolution in Georgia: An Analysis Applying”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri

were hospital warships, in line with *the Convention* “Turkey did not allow the passage of these warships, which exceeded the weight limit of 30,000 per each”.⁶¹⁴ At the end, “Turkey allowed three lighter American warships to pass through the Turkish Straits” and this complies with the articles of the Convention.⁶¹⁵ In this regard, Turkey showed its commitment to *the Montreux regime* even in the subject of carrying humanitarian aid for a post-conflict situation. Russia that called “all countries to comply with *the Montreux Convention* and to implement the agreement restricting the movement of non-Turkish military shipping in the Turkish Straits” remained very comfortable with the result as this prevented the US to help more Georgia.⁶¹⁶ Turkey’s move was a relevant step to avoid further escalation of the crisis. Beyond this, it was a turning point for averting a further deterioration for US-Russian relations on the long-term.

The Montreux regime is vital for Turkey for also environmental reasons. The narrow Turkish Straits are “one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes and every year, more than 54,000 vessels, including 5,500 oil tankers pass through this passage and this means that an average of 150 ships traverse the Straits every day”.⁶¹⁷ “An accident that occurs in the region would be disastrous, not only to the international oil trade but also to the millions of Turks who live along the shores of the waterway”.⁶¹⁸ Because of this danger, “in 2002 Turkey limited the size of tankers transiting the Straits to under 200 meters at night and at other times when visibility is

Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter 2008, p. 62.

⁶¹⁴Seda Kırdar, “Conflict Resolution in Georgia: An Analysis Applying”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter 2008, p. 62.

⁶¹⁵Seda Kırdar, “Conflict Resolution in Georgia: An Analysis Applying”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter 2008, p. 62.

⁶¹⁶Seda Kırdar, “Conflict Resolution in Georgia: An Analysis Applying”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 13, No. 3, Winter 2008, p. 63.

⁶¹⁷Zeyno Baran, “Turkey and the Wider Black Sea Region” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspective*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 91.

⁶¹⁸Zeyno Baran, “Turkey and the Wider Black Sea Region” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspective*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 91.

limited”.⁶¹⁹ In an effort to limit tanker traffic in the increasingly crowded Straits, Turkey supports the construction of pipeline routes that bypass the waterway.⁶²⁰

The Montreux Convention of 1936 definitely lies at the heart of the Turkey’s Black Sea maritime policies. *The Convention* is a mechanism to keep extra-regional powers from establishing permanent naval forces in the Black Sea by “imposing limits on battleships with regard to their tonnage, number and the duration of their stay in the Black Sea, while it sets up a fully liberalized passage regime for merchant vessels”.⁶²¹ Any abolition of this regime is not acceptable for Turkey as it will be against Turkey’s security perception for the Black Sea area. In this regard, in parallel the principle of *the Montreux Convention*, Turkey has taken the lead in developing a number of instruments for enhancing regional cooperation and stability in the Black Sea maritime area. In respect with *the Montreux Convention*, Turkey initiated regional maritime security arrangements such as the BLACKSEAFOR, the OBSH, the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center (BBCIC) and the Black Sea Cooperation Forum of Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Agencies (BSCF) to promote security and stability in the Black Sea.

Turkey initiated the BLACKSEAFOR at the second Chiefs of the Black Sea Navies meeting which was held in Varna/Bulgaria in 1998.⁶²² The BLACKSEAFOR, “as a multilateral framework, is not a permanent task and it performs on call duties”.⁶²³ It was formally established by the six littoral states in Istanbul in April 2001 with “the tasks of search and rescue operations, humanitarian assistance, mine

⁶¹⁹Zeyno Baran, “Turkey and the Wider Black Sea Region” in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspective*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, p. 91.

⁶²⁰Orhan Babaoğlu, “The Black Sea Basin: A New Axis in Global Maritime Security”, *Harvard Black Sea Security Program Publications*, August 2005, p. 13, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/bssp/publications/109>, accessed on 27 March 2010.

⁶²¹*The Montreux Convention Document*, http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Montreux_Convention, accessed on 4 March 2009.

⁶²²Blackseafor Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, <http://www.blackseafor.org/English/AnaSayfa.asp>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶²³ Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

counter-measures, environmental protection and goodwill visits”.⁶²⁴ There has been a project to widen the scope of mission of the BLACKSEAFOR to also include the issues such fight against terrorism, organized crime and proliferation of WMD.⁶²⁵ In fact, the efforts to this end started before the 9/11 attacks to the US and accelerated afterwards and in this regard, member states have adopted a number of documents, including a unique regional risk assessment paper.⁶²⁶ However, since 2006, some countries show their disagreement to have a final decision on the transformation of the BLACKSEAFOR as a mechanism to fight against terrorism, organized crime and proliferation of WMD in the Black Sea.⁶²⁷

Turkey also initiated the creation of the OBSH in its territorial waters and beyond in the Black Sea on 1 March 2004.⁶²⁸ As a part of its mission, “the OBSH patrols the Black Sea, detects and follows ships suspected of being involved in illegal activities” and “once a suspected ship is detected, it is handed over to relevant authorities for search, detention and prosecution if necessary”.⁶²⁹ This operation that is based on bilateral structure, shares objectives with NATO's Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean and Turkey exchanges information about the OBSH with the Alliance on a regular basis.⁶³⁰ In 2006, Turkish government officially invited the other littoral states to participate in the OBSH.⁶³¹ By doing this,

⁶²⁴Blackseafor Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, <http://www.blackseafor.org/English/AnaSayfa.asp>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶²⁵ Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶²⁶Blackseafor Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, <http://www.blackseafor.org/English/AnaSayfa.asp>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶²⁷Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶²⁸Turkish General Staff, Maritime Security in the Black Sea, http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/karadeniz_deniz_isbirligigorev_grubu.htm, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶²⁹Turkish General Staff, Maritime Security in the Black Sea, http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/karadeniz_deniz_isbirligigorev_grubu.htm, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³⁰Turkish General Staff, Maritime Security in the Black Sea, http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/karadeniz_deniz_isbirligigorevgrubu.htm, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³¹Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics

Turkey aimed at involving them to counter security threats together in the Black Sea.⁶³² While Russia joined the operation in 2006 and Ukraine concluded its participation agreement in 2007, Romania signed *the MoU* with Turkey regarding its participation to the OBSH in 2009 and Bulgaria together with Georgia have expressed interest in becoming members of the OBSH.⁶³³ In this regard, the OBSH presents one of the backbones of the Black Sea maritime security.

In addition, in 2006, Turkey also initiated the BSCF as a mechanism “to promote cooperation between Border/Coast Guard authorities of 6 littoral states and to prevent the flow of narcotics, explosives, human trafficking and other illegal activities”.⁶³⁴ All in all, “the BSCF has helped to strengthen safety and security of navigation in the Black Sea”.⁶³⁵

The information sharing and coordination are also issues of major concern for Turkey to provide security and stability in the Black Sea. In this regard, through the initiative of Turkey, the BBCIC was established in 2004 and located in Burgas, Bulgaria.⁶³⁶ The Center proposed by Turkey contributes to “the enhancement of information sharing about illegal maritime activities in the Black Sea region”.⁶³⁷ In addition to this, in 2007, Turkey led another initiative that is the Black Sea Defence Ministerial Process (BDMP) by trying to apply the Southeast European Defence

Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶³²Turkish General Staff, Maritime Security in the Black Sea, <http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/karadenizdeniz-isbirligirevgrubu.htm>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³³Turkish General Staff, Maritime Security in the Black Sea, <http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/karadenizdeniz-isbirligirevgrubu.htm>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³⁴Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum (BSCF), <http://bscf-bcg.org/history.aspx>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³⁵ Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶³⁶Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum (BSCF), Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center (BSBCIC), <http://bscf-bcg.org/bourgas.aspx>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

⁶³⁷Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum (BSCF), Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center (BSBCIC), <http://bscf-bcg.org/bourgas.aspx>, accessed on 5 March 2009.

Ministerial Process (SEDM) model in the Black Sea region.⁶³⁸ However, after Russia-Georgia armed conflict in August 2008, it decided to postpone the establishment of such an initiative since it was impossible to engage all Black Sea littoral states in such a mechanism.⁶³⁹ This initiative that aimed at establishing a forum for good neighborly relations and strengthening regional defence capabilities and confidence building interaction among the countries of the region remains frozen for the time being.⁶⁴⁰

It is significant that membership in the BLACKSEAFOR, the OBSH, the BBCIC are open to the participation of six littoral states. This is related to the Turkey's belief that maritime security should be guarded only by the littoral states.⁶⁴¹ For Turkey, this regional approach to the Black Sea maritime security is particularly important for protection of *the Montreux regime*. This was one of the reasons for Turkey to object the expansion of the NATO Active Endeavour Operation to the Black Sea.

Russia and Turkey seem to be on the same boat concerning several issues including *the Montreux regime* and Black Sea maritime security issues. In fact, there are clear indications of development in the relations between Russia and Turkey during the past decade. Turkey's recent foreign policy motto of "having zero problem with neighbors" implemented by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, significantly contributed to this convergence of positions. Turkey's seeking to have more cooperative relations with Russia in the Black Sea region is somehow related to its belief that Russia needs to be on board for the success of any initiative taken in the Black Sea region. "Ankara believes that antagonizing Moscow will only destabilize

⁶³⁸Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶³⁹ Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶⁴⁰Interview with Hasan Sekizkök, Head of Defence Infrastructure Industry and Logistics Department, NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security Affairs Deputy Directorate General, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 September 2010.

⁶⁴¹ Orhan Babaoğlu, "The Black Sea Basin: A New Axis in Global Maritime Security", *Harvard Black Sea Security Program Publications*, August 2005, p. 13, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/bssp/publications/109>, accessed on 27 March 2010.

the region”.⁶⁴² In this regard, it constantly refers to the need to involve all littoral states in any regional scheme. Moreover, Turkey also considers that Russia is a key part for the resolution of “the frozen conflicts” in the region. In this regard, “although Ankara wants to avoid taking sides in any Russia-versus-West struggle for influence, it continues to develop its own relations with Moscow.”⁶⁴³

At the economic side, over the last seven years, Russia has become Turkey’s major trading partner. Russia and Turkey aims at increasing bilateral trade to 100 billion Dollars over the next five years.⁶⁴⁴ The energy cooperation, particularly the supply of Russian natural gas, plays a significantly important role in the overall context of economic relations between two countries. Today, “Turkey depends on Russia for 29 percent of its oil and 63 percent of its natural gas”.⁶⁴⁵ In this framework of dependency, both countries are jointly involved in some pipeline projects. For instance, the Blue Stream Natural Gas Pipeline Project that bypasses the Turkish Straits is an important pillar of their relations on energy issue. Furthermore, Russia shows interest “in building a north–south pipeline from Samsun to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, parallel to the Blue Stream, to export oil as well as electricity to Turkey via the Black Sea”.⁶⁴⁶ Russia is also interested in providing Turkey with nuclear energy, as well as buying shares in Turkey’s gas distribution companies.⁶⁴⁷ In addition, “Turkey and Russia have agreed on the construction of Samsun Ceyhan

⁶⁴² Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁴³ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 544.

⁶⁴⁴ Richard Weitz, “*Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 21 June 2010 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100621B.html>, accessed on 22 June 2010.

⁶⁴⁵ Igor Torbakov, “The Georgia Crisis and Russia-Turkey Relations”, *the Jamestown Foundation*, 2008, p.11, <http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/GeorgiaCrisisTorbakov.pdf>, accessed on 12 April 2010.

⁶⁴⁶ Richard Weitz, “Medvedev’s Visit Marks New Stage in Russian-Turkish Energy Partnership”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 21 June 2010 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100621B.html>, accessed on 22 June 2010.

⁶⁴⁷ “Russia, Turkey Agree on Oil Refinery Construction Samsun-Ceyhan Pipeline”, RT News, 27 October 2009, http://rt.com/busin_ess/news/russia-turkey-oil-refinery/, accessed on 23 June 2010.

Pipeline”.⁶⁴⁸ These developments point to the increasing cooperation between Turkey and Russia on energy issue.

The paradox of Russia-Turkey energy cooperation lies in the fact that while Moscow and Ankara are engaged in an intense cooperation, at the same time they are in a sort of competition in the same sphere. Turkey appears to be pursuing an energy strategy with two dimensions. First, “it seeks to diversify its own sources of imported fuel and second, it tries to render itself an east-west energy corridor as part of a broader plan aimed at increasing its geopolitical role in the region”.⁶⁴⁹ Being aware of Europeans’ efforts on decreasing their dependency on Russia and diversifying energy supplies, Turkey portrays itself as an energy transit hub for Europe and offers alternative routes to the West for the transfer of Caspian energy resources.⁶⁵⁰ The BTC and the Nabucco are such initiatives to this end. On the other hand, Russia is not intending to leave the leadership in this issue to any other country. In this regard, while initiating new projects such as the South Stream, it tries to take Turkey on its side. In line with this, it achieved to make Turkey agree to allow its territorial waters to be used for the South Stream project.⁶⁵¹ Apparently, despite some practical cooperation between two countries, there is a difference in their energy strategy. Eventually, the existence of projects that are alternative to each other threatens the deepening of energy cooperation in the region and the energy item can not become a matter of cooperation in the Black Sea area at the service of Black Sea regionalization process.

Another difference in the perception between Russia and Turkey is about the settlement of “the frozen conflicts”. Turkey considers “the frozen conflicts” as major

⁶⁴⁸ Richard Weitz, “Medvedev’s Visit Marks New Stage in Russian-Turkish Energy Partnership”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 21 June 2010 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100621B.html>, accessed on 22 June 2010.

⁶⁴⁹ Cem Oguz, “Turkey’s Rearranged Energy Chessboard”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 18 July 2007, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=turkey8217s-rearranged-energy-chessboard-2007-07-18>, accessed on 10 December 2010.

⁶⁵⁰ Richard Weitz, “Medvedev’s Visit Marks New Stage in Russian-Turkish Energy Partnership”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 21 June 2010 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100621B.html>, accessed on 22 June 2010.

⁶⁵¹ Richard Weitz, “Medvedev’s Visit Marks New Stage in Russian-Turkish Energy Partnership”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 21 June 2010 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100621B.html>, accessed on 22 June 2010.

impediments to the cooperation in the Black Sea area. As in the example of armed conflict between Georgia and Russia, these “frozen conflicts” can anytime turn into “warm battles”. The existence of these conflicts is one of the reasons why Turkey has had difficulties in penetrating to the region at economic and political levels. Turkey argues that “these conflicts can only be dealt through specially devised processes and a higher degree of economic cooperation can eventually contribute to the facilitation of their resolution”.⁶⁵² Recently, after the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia, Turkey showed a stronger commitment for the resolution of “the frozen conflicts” in the Black Sea region.⁶⁵³ Among the settlement of “the frozen conflicts”, “Turkey has been involved actively on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue as it has directly affected its relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia.”⁶⁵⁴ Turkey supports the territorial integrity in and around the Black Sea area and does not support separatist movements in the region.⁶⁵⁵ Turkey does not welcome Russia’s taking side in these conflicts and believes that its initiatives encouraging the *de facto* states to become more assertive impede stabilization of the conflictual areas.⁶⁵⁶ In this regard, Turkey has criticized Russia’s recognition of the *de facto* states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the 2008 August conflict.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵²Abdullah Gül, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: A Straightforward Assessment of the Past 15 Years and a Vision for the Future from the Turkish Perspective” in Sergiu Celac (ed.), *Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Fifteen Years of Regional Activity, 1992-2007, Views by Foreign Ministers & Heads of BSEC Institutions*, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 11.

⁶⁵³Hasan Kanbolat, “Ankara Will Host Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”, *Todays Zaman*, 13 January 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-163936-ankara-will-host-caucasus-stability-and-cooperation-platform.html>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁵⁴Hasan Kanbolat, “Ankara Will Host Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”, *Todays Zaman*, 13 January 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-163936-ankara-will-host-caucasus-stability-and-cooperation-platform.html>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁵⁵Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁵⁶Burcu Gultekin-Punsmann, *The Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform: An Attempt to Foster Regional Accountability*, ICBSS, Policy Papers, No. 13, April 2009, p. 3, http://www.icbss.org/index.php?Itemid=101&id=84&option=com_content&task=view, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁵⁷Hasan Kanbolat, “Ankara Will Host Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”, *Todays Zaman*, 13 January 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-163936-ankara-will-host-caucasus-stability-and-cooperation-platform.html>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

Indeed, Turkey is not comfortable with the lack of confidence in the Caucasus and argues that this situation presents the major obstacle for the peaceful resolution of frozen conflicts.⁶⁵⁸ As a response to this situation, following the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia that highly damaged the existing lack of confidence, Turkey proposed the establishment of a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) as an initiative for the promotion of regional peace, security and prosperity.⁶⁵⁹ “This platform that includes Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation, is designed to serve as a supplemental body for existing regional mechanisms (i.e. the OSCE Minsk Group) to resolve regional disputes”.⁶⁶⁰ Moreover, the CSCP that constitutes an important regional project pursue mainly “to reinvigorate the local economies of countries in the southern Caucasus, to promote free trade, to realize international pipeline projects, to restructure administrative organizations and to resolve refugee problems”.⁶⁶¹ Even if some of the parties involved have bilateral problems, for instance Russia with Georgia, Armenia with Azerbaijan and Turkey with Armenia, this initiative seems to open direct channels of communication and dialogue in the Caucasus providing its positive affects in the entire Black Sea region. However, negotiations on the establishment of the Platform are still continuing and the persistence of problems between Russia and Georgia does not allow concluding the negotiations.⁶⁶²

In addition to this initiative, Turkey’s commitment to normalize its relations with Armenia plays an important role for the promotion of stability and security in the Caucasus and accordingly in the Black Sea area. Being one of the first countries

⁶⁵⁸Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁵⁹Burcu Gultekin-Punsmann, *The Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform: An Attempt to Foster Regional Accountability*, ICBSS, Policy Papers, No. 13, April 2009, p. 3, http://www.icbss.org/index.php?Itemid=101&id=84&option=com_content&task=view, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁰Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁶¹Hasan Kanbolat, “Ankara Will Host Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”, *Todays Zaman*, 13 January 2009 <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-163936-ankara-will-host-caucasus-stability-and-cooperation-platform.html>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁶² Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

that had recognized the independence of Armenia, Turkey did not set diplomatic relations with this country because of the claims in the Armenian declaration of independence and the constitution that consider eastern Turkey as Armenian territory.⁶⁶³ Following the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding regions of Azerbaijan that makes in total one fifth of Azerbaijan's territory, Turkey closed its border with Armenia as an act of solidarity to Azerbaijan.⁶⁶⁴ Furthermore, Armenia's effort to make the 1915 events internationally recognized as a "genocide" has damaged the relations between two countries.⁶⁶⁵ Nevertheless, since last five years, there have been important efforts for the normalization of these relations. For instance, the proposal offered in 2005 by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for the establishment of a joint committee of historians opened the channels of communication on this particular issue between two countries and the "football diplomacy" of September 2008 through which President Abdullah Gül visited Yerevan strengthened this opening.⁶⁶⁶ These breakthroughs were maintained with continued bilateral meetings at the level of foreign ministers. Finally, Turkey and Armenia announced on 23 April 2008 that two countries had drafted a "road map" on normalizing diplomatic relations.⁶⁶⁷

The road map led to the signature of two Protocols, *Protocol on Development of Relations Between* and *Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations*, between Turkey and Armenia, in October 2009, in Switzerland with the endorsement

⁶⁶³ Camilla Hagelund, "Turkish-Armenian rapprochement at an impasse", *Henry Jackson Society*, 16 May 2009, <http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/stories.asp?pageid=49&id=1166>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁴ Camilla Hagelund, "Turkish-Armenian rapprochement at an impasse", *Henry Jackson Society*, 16 May 2009, <http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/stories.asp?pageid=49&id=1166>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁵ Camilla Hagelund, "Turkish-Armenian rapprochement at an impasse", *Henry Jackson Society*, 16 May 2009, <http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/stories.asp?pageid=49&id=1166>, accessed on 10 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁶ Dorian Jones and Darren Mara, "Turkey and Armenia Agree on Reconciliation Roadmap", *Deutsche Welle*, 23 April 2009, <http://www.dw.world.de/dw/article/04201193,00.html>, accessed on 1 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁷ Dorian Jones and Darren Mara, "Turkey and Armenia Agree on Reconciliation Roadmap", *Deutsche Welle*, 23 April 2009, <http://www.dw.world.de/dw/article/04201193,00.html>, accessed on 1 May 2010.

of the US, the EU, France and Russia.⁶⁶⁸ *The Protocols* aimed at establishing diplomatic relations, open the mutual border and setting up a joint commission to address historical issues between the two countries.⁶⁶⁹ According to the legal framework, they would take effect until ratified by Armenia's and Turkey's legislatures.⁶⁷⁰ The signing of *the Protocols* has been a landmark in Turkish-Armenian relations. However, their ratification has not become a reality yet. The Armenian Constitutional Court ruled in January 2010 that *the Protocols* were not in compliance with the Armenian Constitution, including Paragraph 11 of the Armenian Declaration of Independence and reference to the recognition of so-called "genocide".⁶⁷¹ This has received reaction from the Turkish side that has considered the decision to move against *the Protocols'* spirit of good will.⁶⁷² Within this problematic picture, the unilateral suspension of normalization process by Armenia's President Sarkisian has jeopardized the entire normalization process between two countries. The existence of such a problematic situation in the Black Sea region prevails as a challenge for the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area.

Overall, Turkey is a major actor in the Black Sea that works to promote regional security, stability and prosperity. In this regard, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it initiated new regional mechanisms in the Black Sea area. Meanwhile, Turkey tries to keep Russia and other littoral states on board concerning the Black Sea issues. At the same time, Ankara does not seem in favor of further involvement of NATO, USA and the EU in the Black Sea region. On the other hand,

⁶⁶⁸Dorian Jones and Darren Mara, "Turkey and Armenia Agree on Reconciliation Roadmap", *Deutsche Welle*, 23 April 2009, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/04201193,00.html>, accessed on 1 May 2010.

⁶⁶⁹ *The Protocol on Development of Relations Between and the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations*, signed by Turkey and Armenia, Zurich, 10 October 2009, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/turkiye-ermenistan-turkce.pdf>, accessed on 15 October 2009.

⁶⁷⁰ *The Protocol on Development of Relations Between and the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations*, signed by Turkey and Armenia, Zurich, 10 October 2009, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/turkiye-ermenistan-turkce.pdf>, accessed on 15 October 2009.

⁶⁷¹Charles Recknagel, "Armenia Suspends Ratification Of Turkey Deal", 22 April 2010, RFERL, http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenias_Ruling_Coalition_Calls_For_Suspending_Ratification_Of_Turkey_Deal/2021055.html, accessed on 5 May 2010.

⁶⁷²Charles Recknagel, "Armenia Suspends Ratification Of Turkey Deal", 22 April 2010, RFERL, http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenias_Ruling_Coalition_Calls_For_Suspending_Ratification_Of_Turkey_Deal/2021055.html, accessed on 5 May 2010.

through the regional mechanisms that it initiated, Turkey significantly contributes to the Black Sea process of regionalization. Increasing the number of direct channels of dialogue and cooperation through economic, political, academic and social projects, Ankara plays an active role in development of the process. However, although the BSEC area includes several non Black Sea littoral states, for Turkey when the Black Sea security issue is concerned, the littoral states should have a voice.⁶⁷³ In this regard, Turkey is not in favor of BSEC's involvement in hard security issues. On the other hand, the tasks of the OSH and the BLACKSEAFOR covers only the maritime security and they do not constitute a broader security mechanism in the region. In this regard, despite all its efforts to increase cooperation, stability, security and prosperity, Turkey's approach to security issues in the region, although it is similar to the approach of Russia, significantly differs from the approach of the EU and the US. The existence of such a difference among predominant actors in the region plays a restraining role for the development of the Black Sea regionalization.

4.6. Conclusion

As Dimitrios Triantaphyllou mentions, it exists of a "perception paradox" in the Black Sea region which is one of the reasons why the level of "regionness" in the Black Sea can not develop.⁶⁷⁴ According to him, this paradox is related to the fact that "the current dominant actors in the region such as the EU, the US together with NATO, Russia and Turkey have been concerned with their proper agenda in the region and this provokes the formation of a perception paradox towards Black Sea issues".⁶⁷⁵ Although the rapprochement in the relations of Turkey and Russia have positive effects on the Black Sea issues, these two important regional countries have different priorities in their foreign policies towards the Black Sea region. This difference mostly prevails in energy security topic. Turkey wants to become an energy transit hub and at

⁶⁷³Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁶⁷⁴Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 235.

⁶⁷⁵Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 235.

the same time a more influential actor in regional and world politics, while Russia is eager to return to the world politics as equally important actor that holds an important energy card in its hand to use. The US, on the other hand, tries to increase its presence at the “near abroad” of Russia as its gateway to the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Central Asia and Afghanistan. In the meantime, the EU while aiming at guarantying its energy security supply that has a direct connection with its Black Sea polities, it tries to stabilize and democratize its eastern boarder through different mechanisms.

As a result of all these differences in their Black Sea perception, “these actors have been unable to effectively promote a true culture of regional cooperation”.⁶⁷⁶ Accordingly, the different strategies pursued by regional and extra regional actors for the Black Sea area and its process of regionalization present a bunch of challenges for the increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”. In this regard, the regional and extra-regional factors play an important role on this issue and the level of “regionness” in the Black Sea area has not reached the level of “regional community” yet. Without this passage, the Black Sea area could not become a generator of peace, security and prosperity. The regional and extra-regional factors are not the only obstacles that hinder the regionalization process in the Black Sea are, there might exist also sub-regional factors that do not allow the passage from “regional society” to “regional community” as the path of the development in the regionalization process.

⁶⁷⁶Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “ The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region ”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 235.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUB-REGIONAL FACTORS AND REGIONALIZATION PROCESS IN THE BLACK SEA AREA

5.1. Introduction

In the analysis of obstacles that hinder the development of Black Sea regionalization, the role of sub-regional dynamics significantly prevails. These dynamics are mostly concentrated on economic, democratic and security structures of the Black Sea area. The fragility and vulnerability on these structures affect the increase in the level of “regionness” and accordingly, the promotion of peace, security and stability in negative ways.

Developing the level of “regionness” in a region-in-making depends on several sub-regional factors. In this context, the economic development and democratic consolidation of the regional states as well as the convergence of their interests and agendas regarding the regional stability and security present leading elements of regionalization process. For some of the Black Sea states that have post-Communist background and democracy, free market, civil society, civil democratic control of the military are the concepts that they recently met. In this regard, the unfinished process of most of the regional states regarding democratization and economic transition, their having differing interests and often unstable bilateral relations, and the existence of unresolved conflictual issues in the region present major obstacles for the regionalization process in the Black Sea area.

5.2. Economic Situation

The Black Sea area has several potential fields of regional cooperation. Nevertheless, in the meantime, there are several factors that jeopardize the development of economic cooperation in the region.

The Black Sea region has witnessed remarkable changes over the past twenty years, including the region’s economic performance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union until 1995, the Black Sea states passed through an economic transition and

faced severe economic decline.⁶⁷⁷ This period faced “collapse of the old systems of production and distribution, weak or non-existent legal frameworks, dysfunctional financial sectors, inconsistent structural reforms and macroeconomic instability”.⁶⁷⁸ In some countries these challenges doubled with nation and state building problems.⁶⁷⁹ Furthermore, “even for non-transition states like Greece and Turkey, this stage was marked by relatively high inflation, fiscal imbalances and weak or uneven growth”.⁶⁸⁰

From 1995 to 2000, the regional economies passed through a relative stabilization and consolidation period.⁶⁸¹ Nevertheless, at the same time, the economies of the Black Sea countries had to encounter “the increasing volatility of energy prices, the 1998 Russian financial crisis and the 1999 earthquake in Turkey”.⁶⁸² However, the year of 2000 was a turning point for economic growth in the region. As a remarkable development, “from 2000 to the third quarter of 2008, the region met a period of high and sustained growth and in this period, real GDP growth of the region averaged 6.0 % per annum”.⁶⁸³ In this period of time, “living standards, trade volume and investment capacity of the region” significantly improved”. However, “the 2008 financial crisis stopped short the period of high

⁶⁷⁷ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁷⁸ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁷⁹ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁸⁰ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁸¹ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁸² Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 32, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁸³ Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 4, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

growth”.⁶⁸⁴ As a result, the Black Sea regional growth decreased from positive rates to -6.4%.⁶⁸⁵

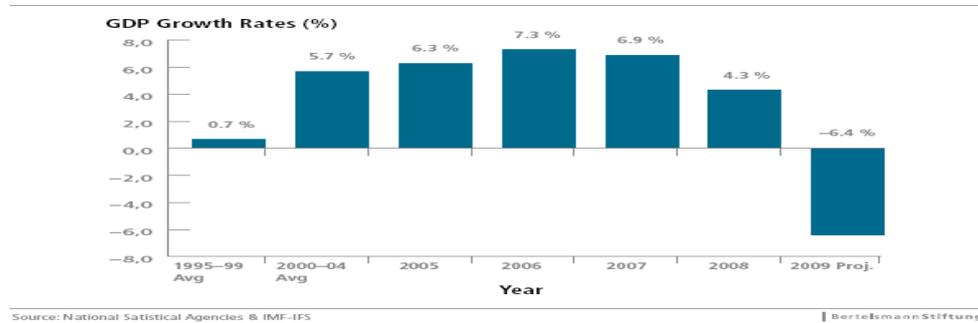


Figure 2: Black Sea Regional Growth from 1995-2009⁶⁸⁶

A similar decrease appeared concerning the foreign direct investment in the Black Sea region. While the foreign investment in the region was about 135 billion US Dollars in 2008, it decreased to 60 billion US Dollars in 2009.⁶⁸⁷

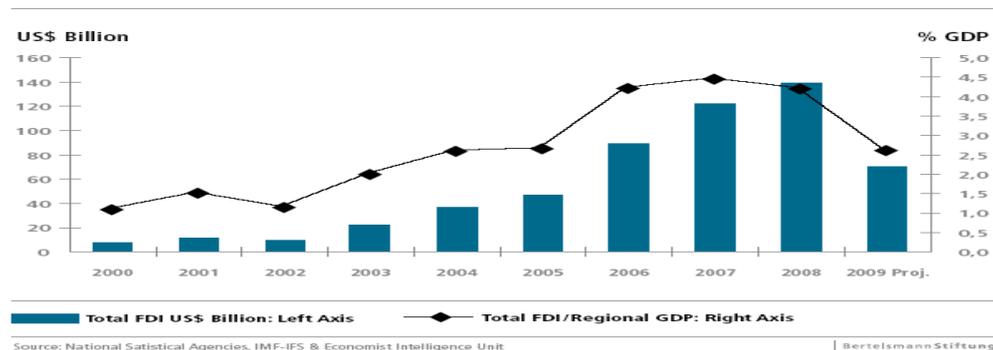


Figure 3: Foreign Direct Investment in the Black Sea Region 2000-2009⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁴Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 7-9, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁸⁵ Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 7-9, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁸⁶The figure takes place in Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 6, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%201%20Economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁸⁷Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 12, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

Individually, the Black Sea states have shown strong economic development during the past two decades. In the annual real GDP growth rate and foreign directed investment net flows, the regional countries showed a remarkable performance. However, “the countries of the Black Sea region are diverse in terms of size, economic structure and the level of development”.⁶⁸⁹ Plus, “there is evidence that income distribution is more unequal and that geographical disparities have increased”.⁶⁹⁰ Therefore, there is not an entire economic development in the region.

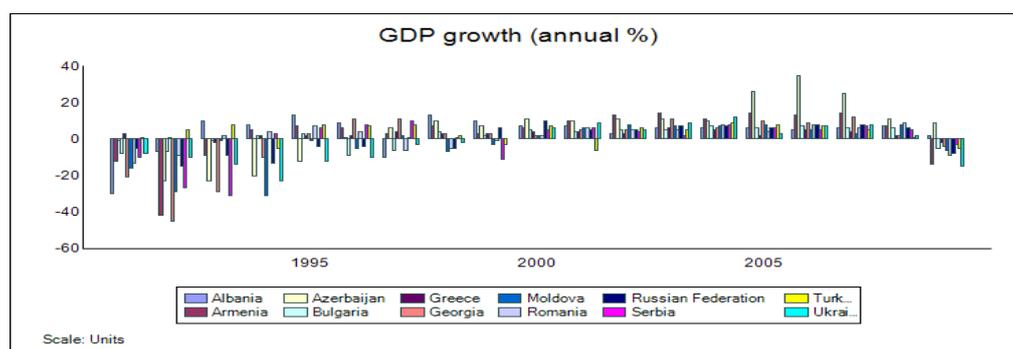


Figure 4: GDP Growth in the Black Sea States between 1992 -2009
Source: World Bank Quick Query, 2009

Despite general positive trends, the economic development in the Black Sea states still remains below satisfactory levels and the pace of economic growth severely differs between one to other Black Sea country. Most importantly, “these problems include weakness in the rule of law, corruption, excessive bureaucracy and ineffective judicial systems”.⁶⁹¹ Consequently, “all these factors limit the ability of local entrepreneurs and foreign investors to do business with the Black Sea

⁶⁸⁸The figure takes place in policy Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p.12, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁸⁹Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 15, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁹⁰Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 8, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_reporti_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

⁶⁹¹ Rossen Tsanov (ed), *Economic Development and Security in the Black Sea Region*, Report, European New Democracies Project, Center for Security and International Studies (CSIS), 2007, p. 3, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070103_blacksea.pdf, accessed on 25 October 2009.

states”.⁶⁹² Moreover, the transition to market economy has not achieved by all regional Black Sea states yet. Especially, the post-Soviet Black Sea states still suffer from the lack of implementation regarding market economy rules.⁶⁹³

In the entire Black Sea region, “deficiencies on the rule of law” and “increased corruption in public administration and the judiciary” are among the common economic problems of the regional states.⁶⁹⁴ Moreover, the regional states could not find a permanent solution for their common problem of corruption yet. According to the 2009 Annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) prepared by the *Transparency International* even Romania and Bulgaria that recently joined the EU show a high level of corruption. The below chart shows that except Greece and Turkey, the Black Sea regional countries have a low score on the corruption index.

	Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) Score 2009 Range: (0-10)	Confidence Range
Albania	3,3	3,0 - 3,3
Armenia	2,7	2,6- 2,8
Azerbaijan	2,3	2,0 - 2,6
Bulgaria	3,8	3,2- 4,5
Georgia	4,1	3,4- 4,7
Greece	3,8	3,2 -4,3
Moldova	3,3	2,7 -4,0
Romania	3,8	3,2-4,3
Russia	2,2	1,9 - 2,4
Serbia	3,5	3,4 - 3,9
Turkey	4,4	3,9 -4,9
Ukraine	2,2	2,0 - 2,6

Figure 5: Corruption Report on Black Sea States

Source: Transparency International, 2009 Annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi, accessed on 10 August 2010.

⁶⁹² Rossen Tsanov (ed), *Economic Development and Security in the Black Sea Region*, Report, European New Democracies Project, Center for Security and International Studies (CSIS), 2007, p.3, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070103_blacksea.pdf, accessed on 25 October 2009.

⁶⁹³ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 31, http://www.blackseacom.eu/file_admin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁶⁹⁴ Rossen Tsanov (ed), *Economic Development and Security in the Black Sea Region*, Report, European New Democracies Project, Center for Security and International Studies (CSIS), 2007, p.3, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070103_blacksea.pdf, accessed on 25 October 2009.

Energy is both a matter of cooperation and competition in the region. Some regional economies are deeply dependent on Russian gas and oil. Therefore, they remain economically vulnerable to Russia as an energy superpower.⁶⁹⁵ For instance, Russia's cutting of the gas supplies to Ukraine due to an energy price dispute in 2006 and in 2009 seriously endangered the Ukrainian industry.⁶⁹⁶ This worried the European countries who are dependent on Russian gas and they took the situation as a threat to their energy supply security.⁶⁹⁷ These crises showed vulnerability of the energy supply security issue for the Black Sea region and fragility of the means and ways regarding the regional economic cooperation.

On the other hand, "the frozen conflicts" in the region present another reason for the regional economic fragmentation. This fragmentation hurts the regional potential for trade and investment and can be detrimental for regional investment climate and intra-regional trade.⁶⁹⁸ For instance, "Georgian transport links to Russia are largely blocked due to the unresolved status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia".⁶⁹⁹ Another example is that after the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia, according to the statistics based on *Economist Intelligence Unit* information, Georgia's real GDP fall down from %8.3 to %-3.9 between the second and third quarter of 2008 and by the end of 2008, the amount of the foreign direct investments in Georgia decreased significantly compared to the same period of the previous year.⁷⁰⁰ With a chain effect, this significantly affected the regional investment climate since it has created an unstable and insecure environment for foreign investors.

⁶⁹⁵Sinan Oğan, *The Black Sea: New Arena for Global Competition*, TURKSAM, <http://www.turksam.org/en/a195.html>, accessed on 19 May 2009.

⁶⁹⁶Andrei Nesterov, "Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies", *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁶⁹⁷Andrei Nesterov, "Russia-Ukraine 'Gas War' Damages Both Economies", *World Press*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/3307.cfm>, accessed on 29 October 2009.

⁶⁹⁸ Vasily Astrov and Peter Havlik, *Economic Developments in the Wider Black Sea Region*, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, Research Report, No 349, September 2008, p. 126, <http://www.wiiw.ac.at/pdf/RR349.pdf>, accessed on 30 November 2009.

⁶⁹⁹ Vasily Astrov and Peter Havlik, *Economic Developments in the Wider Black Sea Region*, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, Research Report, No 349, September 2008, p. 142- 143, <http://www.wiiw.ac.at/pdf/RR349.pdf>, accessed on 30 November 2009.

⁷⁰⁰ *Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report: Georgia*, 2009, <http://store.eiu.com/product/30000203GE.html>, accessed on 20 October 2009.

All the mentioned points above present some of the obstacles that the Black Sea region faces for the acceleration of economic cooperation and accordingly economic integration. In this sense, that lack of transparency, monitoring of rule of law and sectorial multi-dimensionality in the economic structure of Black Sea states hinder the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area. Moreover, the low volume of intra-regional trade and Russia's dominance on the trade flows due to its energy exports, present important factors, among others, regarding weakness of the regional economic cooperation in the Black Sea area.⁷⁰¹ In addition to these factors, persistence of the frozen conflicts and their spill-over effects to the national economies in the Black Sea area also take part in the long list of obstacles that the economic side of Black Sea regionalization process faces. Besides all these challenges, the recent global financial crisis also affected the regional economic integration process in the Black Sea area. As a result of the crisis, “with the remarkable exception of Azerbaijan, all Black Sea countries experienced an economic contraction in 2009, to the order of -6.4%”.⁷⁰² This not only affected the countries individually but the region as a whole. To overcome the crisis, beyond each regional state's road maps, there is a need for cooperation and coordination through regional initiatives.

5.3. Political Situation

All the Black Sea states are members of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and they have already accepted the universally established standards of human rights, rule of law and democracy. However, in terms of democratic society, the Black Sea states pose “a true mosaic of different developments and trajectories”.⁷⁰³ In most of

⁷⁰¹ Panagiota Manoli, “The European Union and its Eastern Neighbours: New Relations in the Making”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2008, p. 91.

⁷⁰² Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 32, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷⁰³ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

the post Soviet countries, organization of the effective party structures, formulating adequate electoral platforms and the art of political compromise are newly introduced concepts.⁷⁰⁴

The democratic deficit in these countries is related to the lack of civic state “where state institutions are governed by a transparent body of rules together with recognized constitutional arrangements, regular and free elections, guarantees of basic civil rights and impartial civil service and an independent judiciary”.⁷⁰⁵ Within the democratic deficit, “the post-Soviet Black Sea states suffer from high rates of corruption, weaker civil society and less political stability than post-transition states in Central Europe and the Baltics”.⁷⁰⁶ Moreover, “most of the states in the region have weak and volatile party systems with highly fragmented oppositions and the intervention of oligarchs in politics is commonplace, as is clientelism”.⁷⁰⁷

The Soviet legacy that the post-Soviet Black Sea countries share does not only negatively affect the development of democratization and market economy in the region. The legacy that also includes unsettled disputes and territorial conflicts damages promotion of peace and security in the region.⁷⁰⁸ In the framework of Soviet legacy, these countries still try to finish their state and nation building processes while they still deal with minority problems.⁷⁰⁹ All these issues represent a major obstacle for the transformation of the Black Sea region into a democratic area.

⁷⁰⁴ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 35, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷⁰⁵ James Sherr, “Democracy in the Black Sea Region: The Missing Link in the Regional Security” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 250.

⁷⁰⁶ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷⁰⁷ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 34, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷⁰⁸ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 34, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷⁰⁹ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 35, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/

Recent political developments in some Black Sea states showed that the region is fragile in terms of respect to democratic values. For instance, the “Rose revolution” occurred first in Georgia in 2003 and the “Orange revolution” occurred in Ukraine, in 2005 were considered as turning points for the process of democratization in these countries. However, following developments showed that these events are far away to be considered as “revolution” since these countries could not have significant progress on democratization issue.⁷¹⁰

In Ukraine, since the end of the Cold War, there have been always power struggle between the pro-Western and pro-Russian camps. The “Orange revolution” was considered as the success of pro-western camp and as a firm step on the way to democratization. Since 2004, “the country’s constitution that has both a directly elected president and a parliament is constantly being re-interpreted for power struggles between the pro- Western and pro-Russian camp”.⁷¹¹ This situation harms democtatization process in the country. On the other hand, In Georgia, the “Rose revolution” that had carried dreams of democratization in the country did not resulted in the expected way. Both the Georgian presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008 were criticized by the OSCE. The OSCE claimed that “the use of police force against opposition protests and short-term restrictions on media cast shadowed the President’s commitment to democratic values”.⁷¹² The Organization also highlighted “the use of administrative resources in favor of the government party as opposed to

Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20 for%20the%20 Black%20 Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷¹⁰ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷¹¹ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷¹² OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report , “Georgia, Parliamentary Elections 21 May 2008”, Warsaw, 9 December 2008, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/09/32898_en.pdf, accessed on 19 October 2009.

the OSCE democratic principles”.⁷¹³ In this regard, Georgia seems also far away from a full-fledged democratization process.

As other examples to the democratic challenges, Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic put forward that “in Russia and Azerbaijan political institutions are used to preserve elite power rather than guarantee free and fair competition.”⁷¹⁴ “The change in Russia’s presidential office from Vladimir Putin to Dmitri Medvedev or of Heidar Aliyev to his son Ilham Aliyev in Azerbaijan were carefully orchestrated transfers of power, which left the public without any choice”.⁷¹⁵ Moreover, they argue that “media and civil society are controlled and partially repressed, opposition parties marginal”.⁷¹⁶ These examples raise doubts about the democratic achievements in these countries and in the entire region.

The 2009 report prepared by the *World Democracy Audit* indicates that the Black Sea regional states are not promising in the world democracy overall ranking. In this sense, the most democratic countries in the region are presented as Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Turkey that are among the first sixty democratic countries in the world. According to the report, Armenia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Russia are considered as the least democratic countries in the Black Sea region. Since they were not even ranked in the top one hundred countries, they have a very poor ranking. In terms of political rights, especially Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia show a very low record on the regional and global ranking. For civil liberties, again

⁷¹³OSCE/ODIHR *Election Observation Mission Final Report*, “Georgia, Parliamentary Elections 21 May 2008”, Warsaw, 9 December 2008, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihhr/2008/09/32898_en.pdf, accessed on 19 October 2009.

⁷¹⁴Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 10, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷¹⁵ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 10, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷¹⁶ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 10, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

Russia and Azerbaijan present a poor performance. These are the evidences showing a deep democratic deficit in most of the regional countries.

Black Sea Region Countries	World Democracy Overall Ranking (Range: 1-150)	Political Rights Ranking (Range: 1-7)	Civil Liberties Ranking (Range: 1-7)	Press Freedom Ranking (Range: 0-150)
Albania	67	3	3	70
Armenia	102	5	4	106
Azerbaijan	131	6	5	125
Bulgaria	36	1	2	45
Georgia	90	4	4	91
Greece	34	1	2	33
Moldova	105	3	4	106
Romania	51	2	2	59
Russia	130	6	5	127
Serbia	50	3	2	50
Turkey	57	3	3	71
Ukraine	69	3	2	75

Figure 6: Ranking of Black Sea States in Terms of Democracy, Political Rights, Civil Liberties and Press Freedom

Source: Freedom House, World Democracy Audit Report, 2009

This persistence of democratic deficit in most of the Black Sea countries also affects the security environment in the Black Sea region. The deficit paves the way for intensification of existing security problems such as unresolved regional conflicts, the lack of security for energy transportation and facilitates the emergence of new security threats. James Sherr underlines this linkage between security and democracy by highlighting that “if the area of Black Sea is at risk of becoming more dangerous place rather than a more coherent region, the democratic deficit is very largely responsible”.⁷¹⁷ In this sense, the lack of necessary democratic development that can strengthen the ability of states to fight against security challenges endangers security and stability of all the regional actors. Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze express that “a weak or failed state is a security threat in itself” and “ineffective governments, porous borders, lack of political will, weak civil society, and difficulties of combating transnational crime obstruct the national efforts

⁷¹⁷ James Sherr, “Democracy in the Black Sea Region: The Missing Link in the Regional Security” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 250.

to combat new security threats in the Black Sea region”.⁷¹⁸ Furthermore, the raising feeling of insecurity may decrease the level of confidence among regional states and even raise armement in the region.⁷¹⁹ In this regard, promotion of democracy and security that goes hand in hand remains as a challenge that needs to be overcome for the Black Sea regionalization process.

Overall, for the time being, the democratic situation in the Black Sea area seems fragile. Most of the Black Sea states have long ways to achieve the full implementation of democratic values. Democratization constitutes an integral part of regionalization and without the improvement on the former it seems difficult to develop the latter.⁷²⁰ In this regard, persistence of the “frozen conflicts” in the Black Sea area not only disarrays regional economic integration but also regional democratization. These challenges represent inconveniences for the process of Black Sea regionalization and they prevent increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”.

5.4. Security Situation

The security context in the Black Sea region includes soft and hard security threats together.⁷²¹ In this regard, the region contains several threats such as “transformation of the newly independent states, regional conflicts and separatist movements, difficult process of democratisation; internal and international terrorism; security of pipelines; ecological risks and economic underdevelopment”.⁷²² Among

⁷¹⁸Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 295.

⁷¹⁹Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 295.

⁷²⁰Anastassia Obydenkova, “Democratization, Europeanization and Regionalization beyond the European Union: Search for Empirical Evidence”, *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol.10, No.1, 2006, p. 6, http://eiop.or.at/eiop/index.php/eiop/article/view/2006_001a/15, accessed on 29 March 2009.

⁷²¹Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 28, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷²²Yannis Tsantoulis, *Subregionalism in the Black Sea and the EU’s Role: Incentives, Obstacles and a New Synergy*, Center for European Integration Studies, ZEI Discussion Papers, No: C-183, 2008, p. 16-17, http://www.zei.de/download/zei_dp/dp_c183_Tsantoulis.pdf, accessed on 2 May 2009.

others, persistence of “the frozen conflicts” presents a major challenge for the procurement of security and stability in the region.

As Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze point out, “the Black Sea region has accumulated more unresolved armed conflicts than any other region of wider Europe”.⁷²³ “The frozen conflicts” are among the toughest challenges to democratization, economic development, security and stability of regional states and the region itself.⁷²⁴ The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and the Transdniestrian conflict in Moldova create threats for not only democratization, economic development and national security of the countries involved in these conflicts but also for the region and its process of regionalization.⁷²⁵ The 2008 armed conflict between Georgia and Russia has clearly demonstrated the risks that such conflicts can become unfrozen overnight. Apparently, the 2008 armed conflict did not only harm Russian-Georgian relations but threatened security and stability of the entire Black Sea region.⁷²⁶

As Dimitrios Triantaphyllou puts forward “by nature, “frozen conflicts” drain economic resources and political energies from countries”.⁷²⁷ On the other hand, “the persistence of these conflicts hampers the concerned countries’ ability to tackle other significant challenges, such as rampant corruption, increasing poverty, unemployment, social unrest, a low level of democracy and religious radicalism.”⁷²⁸

⁷²³Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004. p. 314.

⁷²⁴Mykola Kapitonenko, “Resolving Post-Soviet “Frozen” Conflicts: Is Regional Integration Helpful?”, *Caucasion Review of International Affairs*, Vol.3, No.1, Winter 2009, p.37.

⁷²⁵Mykola Kapitonenko, “Resolving Post-Soviet “Frozen” Conflicts: Is Regional Integration Helpful?”, *Caucasion Review of International Affairs*, Vol.3, No.1, Winter 2009, p.38.

⁷²⁶Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 8, <http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2008/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷²⁷ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Wider Black Sea Area and its Challenges”, 12 May 2008, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com/2008/05/wider-black-sea-area-and-its-challenges.html>, accessed on 5 May 2009.

⁷²⁸ Igor Munteanu, “The Policy of Moldova towards the Black Sea Region and the BSEC”, in Panagiota Manoli (ed.), *Unfolding the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Views from the Region*, ICBSS Xenophon Paper, No. 2, Athens: ICBSS, 2007, p. 96.

Furthermore, “they also generate corruption and organized crime and prevent the consolidation of rule of law resulting in instability across the region”.⁷²⁹ In this respect, the formation of four *de facto* states in the Black Sea region under the names of “the Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic”, “the Republic of Abkhazia”, “the Republic of South Ossetia” and “the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” weaken security stability and prosperity of Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The existence of these *de facto* states in the Black Sea region also negatively affects other regional states in terms of security, stability and economic development and play a kind of domino effect to challenge regional cohesion in the Black Sea area.⁷³⁰

The persistence of “the frozen conflicts” endangers the Black Sea area also in economic terms. Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan have suffered from loss of the separatist territories within their national borders. For instance, “deprived of Transdniestria, Moldova has lost a substantial part of its industrial enterprises and potential nearly all of its energy generating capacity”.⁷³¹ On the other hand, the unresolved conflicts in the Black Sea region have presented a financial burden for the countries involved. Dealing with these conflicts has a high cost for several reasons. “Due to the possibility of raising tensions in the conflicts, railways, roads, pipelines and infrastructure facilities of these countries are in a permanent danger”.⁷³² The pipelines can be attacked during an armed conflict or their closure for even a day may cost the host country or countries to lose important amount of money. For instance, “during the 2008 five days conflict between two countries, Azerbaijan lost a

⁷²⁹Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Wider Black Sea Area and its Challenges”, 12 May 2008, <http://dimitriosworld.blogspot.com/2008/05/wider-black-sea-area-and-its-challenges.html>, accessed on 5 May 2009.

⁷³⁰James Sherr, “Democracy in the Black Sea Region: The Missing Link in the Regional Security” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004. p. 259.

⁷³¹Roy Allison, “The Unresolved Conflicts in the Black Sea Region: Threats, Impacts on Regionalism and Regional Strategies for Conflict Resolution” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004, p. 95.

⁷³²Roy Allison, “The Unresolved Conflicts in the Black Sea Region: Threats, Impacts on Regionalism and Regional Strategies for Conflict Resolution” in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East–West Institute, 2004, p. 89.

considerable sum of money owing to the closure of the pipelines”.⁷³³ On the other hand, the persistence of “frozen conflicts” may also hinder the flow of foreign direct investment to these states since foreign investors do not prefer to work in unstable and risky economic environments. In this respect, the existence of “frozen conflicts” in the region and their effects on the economic field remain as solid obstacles for the regional economic integration and cohesion.

The existence of “frozen conflicts” and unstable *de facto* states also endangers the Black Sea area in security terms. The lack of security and stability caused by “the frozen conflict” in the region facilitate the proliferation of security. For instance, the Ergneti market in South Ossetia “constituted a trading point for all kinds of legal and illegal goods, providing crucial income to the South Ossetian *de facto* government.”⁷³⁴ Similarly, “*de facto* state Transdniestria has developed into into a hub for the trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings, as well as a center for smuggling of conventional goods and counterfeiting”.⁷³⁵ These activities become not only beneficial for criminal networks in *de facto* states but also they provide significant revenues for officials that are also involved in these issues from the *de facto* states’ side.⁷³⁶ In this respect, as in the examples of Georgia and Moldova, countries, “revenues from criminal activities have therefore created strong interests that the conflicts remain unresolved”.⁷³⁷ As a result, the Black Sea area becomes

⁷³³*The Black Sea Region: New Conditions, Enduring Interests*, Chatham House, Russia and Eurasia Programme: Seminar Summary, 16 January 2009, http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/13539_160109blacksea.pdf, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷³⁴Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Washington and Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006,p. 51-52, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁷³⁵Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Washington and Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006 ,p. 52, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁷³⁶ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Washington and Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006,p. 96, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁷³⁷ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Washington and Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006,p. 54, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

more insecure and unstable because of the persistence of “frozen conflicts” and their negative impacts turn the Black Sea more insecure and unstable.

Despite international efforts provided mainly by the OSCE, the UN and the EU as well as the existence of ceasefire and confidence building agreements between involved states, there is a high potential that “the frozen conflicts” in the Black Sea region become “unfrozen” with a little spark. The 2008 armed conflict between Russia and Georgia is just an example of this possibility. In this regard, the existence of “unresolved conflicts” and *de facto* states presents a solid challenge for promotion of prosperity, security and stability in the Black Sea area. The non-settlement of “the frozen conflicts” is a major obstacle for procurement of regional integration and cohesion. The effects of these conflicts in economic and political fields impede the creation of a stable system around the Black Sea area. On the other hand, non-existence of an already established democratic, prosperous and stable system in the Black Sea area does not allow finding lasting solutions to “the frozen conflicts”. In this regard, the existence of such a vicious circle negatively affects the process of Black Sea regionalization and as a result, the Black Sea area can not turn into a Sea of peace, security and prosperity.

5.5. Cultural Situation

As Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic point out “unlike the Balkans or the Baltic Sea region, the Black Sea has not functioned as a common space with a specific regional identity for over a hundred years”.⁷³⁸ Throughout the years, with the emergence of the BSEC, the Black Sea region has looked more promising in terms of a regional identity formation. Although the BSEC tried to contribute to this formation by promoting initiatives at economic, political, cultural, societal and academic levels, the efforts and their results remained limited.

⁷³⁸Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 5, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

Several factors have complicated the formation of a common regional identity in the Black Sea area. “The crossroad-character of the region” presents one of these factors.⁷³⁹ The Black Sea area covers a wide space from the Balkans to Caucasus that can be divided into several different sub-regions. In this regard, the citizens of Black Sea states remain attached to different regional identities. Among these, the Black Sea does not come first yet.⁷⁴⁰ Furthermore, the fact that the region embraces “number of different linguistic, religious and cultural spaces including varying elements from Turkic-Muslim, Russian-Orthodox to Armenian-Christian” makes the formation of a regional identity difficult.⁷⁴¹

Preconditions to establish a regional identity do not seem fulfilled in the Black Sea area yet. These preconditions are related to “the settlement of conflicts and statehood questions, expanding economic ties and improving regional infrastructure”.⁷⁴² In this regard, the citizens living in the Black Sea area affiliate themselves more with their own national, cultural or ethical identities. As a result, “the “Black Sea identity” has been of secondary importance to their wider international agendas.”⁷⁴³ Thus, the rise of nationalism that may cause ethnic tensions remains as an important reality in the region.⁷⁴⁴ In this regard, “the coexistence of both regionalization attempts and entrenched nationalism in the

⁷³⁹Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 5, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷⁴⁰ Manoli Panagiota, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 8, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁷⁴¹Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 5, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷⁴²Iris Kempe, Kurt Klotzle, *The Balkans and the Black Sea Region: Problems, Potentials, and Policy Options*, Center for Applied Policy Research Policy Analysis, No. 2, April 2006, p. 7, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/314/balkans_Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 13 April 2008.

⁷⁴³Mustafa Aydın, “Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 59.

⁷⁴⁴Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “the Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No.3 September 2009, p. 234.

wider Black Sea presents a challenging paradox for the process of Black Sea regionalization”.⁷⁴⁵

On the other hand, there is an artificial categorization among regional post-Soviet countries to be pro-Western or pro-Russian and this also remains as another challenge to the regional identity formation. Russia is increasingly seen by some of these regional countries as a threat to their freedom and sovereignty. For instance, following the 2008 armed conflict, Georgia started to consider Russia “as a major aggressor in the Black Sea region”.⁷⁴⁶ On the other hand, Belarus, Armenia and after the 2010 presidential election Ukraine are currently known as more pro-Russian countries in the region. This kind of categorization in the region does not facilitate the formation of a solid Black Sea identity since it poses dividing lines in the region. Furthermore, the existence of regional competing schemes that are considered US led or not strengthens these dividing lines in the region. For instance, the initiatives such as ODED-GUAM, the CDC and the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership are considered by Russia as US led projects in the region with a specific agenda.⁷⁴⁷ Russia does not prefer to take part in these initiatives, criticizes the regional countries that take part of them and expresses the importance of supporting the BSEC activities rather than participating in their activities.⁷⁴⁸ In this regard, the issue of coming together around a firm regional Black Sea identity can not go beyond a discussion that is similar to the discussions between two blocs during the Cold War era.

The formation of a regional identity constitutes a precondition for the deepening in the process of regionalization. According to Björn Hettne’s levels of “regionness” concept, the passage from the level of “regional society” to the “regional community” and then “regional institutionalized polity” can be achieved

⁷⁴⁵Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “the Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No.3 September 2009, p. 234.

⁷⁴⁶ C. J. Chivers, “Russia Keeps Troops in Georgia, Defying Deal”, *New York Times*, 2 April 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/world/europe/03georgia.html>, accessed on 2 August 2009.

⁷⁴⁷Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 14, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

⁷⁴⁸Ognyan Minchev, *Major Interests and Strategies for the Black Sea Region*, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Framework Analytical Review, 2006, p. 14, <http://www.iris-bg.org/files/Black%20Sea%20Framework%20Analytical%20Review.pdf>, accessed on 5 February 2010.

together with the formation of a distinct regional identity. Taking into account the current situation, this seems missing in the process of Black Sea regionalization.

5.6. Conclusion

The Black Sea region faces economic, democratic challenges as well as lack of a regional identity in an environment torn by “the frozen conflicts”. For the development in the process of regionalization and the increase in the level of “regionness”, the regional countries need to overcome their economic and democratic challenges while having a more cooperative structure in the region. However, the Black Sea countries and the region seem far away from carrying these sub-regional factors. The regional post-Soviet countries still deal with their economic and political transition to market economy and democratic governance. Moreover, the existence of territorial conflicts in the region that are named “frozen” but very close to be “unfrozen” with a spark shows the fragility of security and stability in the Black Sea region. Thus, the 2008 armed conflict between Russia and Georgia proved how the relative security and stability environment in the Black Sea area would be endangered in a short period of time. Furthermore, there are several obstacles for the formation of a regional Black Sea identity. In this regard, neither in economic nor in political area, the region has represented the peculiarities of forming a “regional community”. The process of regionalization face several sub-regional challenges in terms of economic development, democratization, promotion of security and regional identity formation that do not allow the increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”. Due to these obstacles, the regionalization process can not turn the Black Sea into a region that generates prosperity, cooperation and security within and beyond its borders

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The thesis studied the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region. While analysing the process, it focused on the level of “regionness” of the Black Sea area. The thesis argued that the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region has not transformed the region from the level of “regional society” to the level of “regional institutionalized community” due to the pressures of extra-regional, regional and sub-regional factors, and underlined that the present situation undermines the basis for regional security and prosperity. In addition, the thesis explored the obstacles that the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region faces.

The second chapter touched upon the conceptualization of region, regionalism, regionalization and levels of “regionness”. In addition, it examined the regionalization process in the EU and the Northern Europe. This chapter that entails theoretical framework as well as significant examples of the regionalization progress gave us a guideline to analyze the regionalization process in the Black Sea region in order to find out its achievements and failures in the following chapters.

After making the literature view about the concept of region and regionalism, the second chapter took up the new regionalism approach in detail. According to the new regionalism approach, now, when we refer to a region, we mention about a region-in-making that gets through a process of regionalization. In this regard, “regional groupings have different backgrounds and perspectives in the integration processes, they contribute to counteracting the establishment of new dividing lines by creating a multi-layered, trans-boundary, co-operative network”.⁷⁴⁹ The process usually starts with the establishment of a regional organization that can build a sense of common interest among regional member states to obtain increased dialogue, cooperation, peace, prosperity and security in the region.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁹ Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 78.

⁷⁵⁰ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “The New Regionalism Approach”, *Politeia*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1998, p. 10.

As theorized by Björn Hettne, within the process, there are five levels of “regionness” entitled “regional space”, “regional complex”, “regional society”, “regional community” and “regional institutionalized polity”.⁷⁵¹ These levels are necessary to evaluate the process of regionalization because as opposed to the common belief, the process of regionalization may not always bring to a region-in-making stability, security and prosperity. The process of regionalization within the EU is considered as a successful example of regionalization process since the level of regionness in the EU reached as the most developed regional integration scheme.⁷⁵² This coincides with the level of “institutionalized polity” that is the last stage of the regionalization process. In this regard, the EU has become a regional actor as well as a promoter of peace, security and prosperity within and beyond its borders.⁷⁵³ On the other hand, the Northern Europe, although it went beyond the level of “regional society” remained at the level of “regional community” since it is not able to represent an acting subject with a distinct identity together with a separate structure of decision-making yet.⁷⁵⁴ These analyses gave us an idea to better understand the level of regionness in the Black Sea region.

In third chapter, while analyzing the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area that started after the end of the Cold War, the role of the BSEC in the process was explored. The chapter concentrated on the historical background of the Black Sea area until the establishment of the BSEC and then touched upon the motivations of the member states while establishing the BSEC, the structure and the mission of the Organization and its institutions, its organizational transformation. Meanwhile, the chapter analyzed the contributions of the BSEC to the

⁷⁵¹ Björn Hettne, “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia, in Toshşro Tabaka and Tanashi Inoguchi (eds.) *Globalism and Regionalism*, Selected Papers Delivered at the United Nations University Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session, 2-6 September 1996, Hayama, Japan, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/globalism.html>, accessed on 10 October 2008.

⁷⁵² Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, “EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From “New regionalism” to Third Generation Regionalism?” in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds), *European Union Identity*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 87.

⁷⁵³ Ana-Cristina Costea and Luc Van Langenhove, “EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?” in Jessica Bain and Martin Holland (eds). *European Union Identity*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007, p. 89.

⁷⁵⁴ Seminar Report of “European Regionalism: Perspective from Northern Europe and the Black Sea” event organized by International Center for Black Sea Studies held in November 2006, in Athens, p.2-3, <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=89>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

regionalization process of the Black Sea area whereas it also explored the limitations that the BSEC has to deepen this process.

When we look at the picture of regionalization process in the Black Sea area, we see that in the aftermath of the Cold War, the political, economic and social configuration of the Black Sea region entered a new era. The impact of the bipolar system on the area was over, the number of the regional actors was increased and these actors hoped to have a more cooperative environment.⁷⁵⁵ On the other hand, the Black Sea area was left with economic, political and security vacuums hosting “the frozen conflicts” as well as other challenges in their territories. This paradoxal situation was not promising to establish peace, stability and prosperity in this area. To overcome all these challenges, the name of the game was determined as “regionalization” and the tool of this trend was set as “increasing cooperation”. Thus, in line with new regionalism approach, following the example of European integration, in several parts of the world, regionalism as a project and regionalization as a process were often preferred for the establishment of peace, stability and prosperity in a region-in-making.⁷⁵⁶ The Black Sea regional actors followed this trend and chose the economic field not only to provide economic integration in the region but also to create a platform for confidence building among regional states to turn it more stable, prosperous and secure.⁷⁵⁷ The BSEC was established with this aim. However, during the establishment process, the motivation of member states and their expectations from the BSEC were not converged.⁷⁵⁸ This was one of the first cracks in the process of Black Sea regionalization, but not the least.

In the upcoming years, the region, rich in energy resource, has become a new strategic arena for major regional and extra-regional actors. The 9/11 attacks

⁷⁵⁵ Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea economic cooperation and regional security”, *Perceptions*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (SAM), Vol. 2, No. 3, September-November 1997, p. 77.

⁷⁵⁶ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 233.

⁷⁵⁷ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 6.

⁷⁵⁸ Yannis Valinakis, “The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe”, *Institut d’Etudes de Securite*, Chaillot Paper, No. 36, July 1999, p. 23.

paved the way for the concentration on the Black Sea region that became considered as a potential gateway to other unstable regions certain actors.⁷⁵⁹ NATO and EU enlargements towards the Black Sea region increased the Euro-Atlantic interest in the region.⁷⁶⁰ These enlargements faced Russia's solid discontent and accordingly, Russia started to become more aggressive to apply its own political agenda in its "backyard".⁷⁶¹ The "Color revolutions" occurred in Ukraine and Georgia brought once again the region into the agenda of international politics. Finally, the August 2008 armed conflict between Georgia and Russia marked a solid turning point for the region to show the maintenance of its vulnerability towards security threats and "it has triggered some major shifts in regional geopolitics".⁷⁶² Under these circumstances, the Black Sea region gradually developed its geopolitical significance. However, while its significance in the international politics was increased, its process of regionalization as well as level of "regionness" remained limited.

In more than 20 years, the process of regionalization in the Black Sea region could not be deepened because of regional, extra-regional and sub-regional factors. Beyond the discussion if the Black Sea area is a "real region" or not, according to the levels of "regionness" set by Björn Hettne, the region through sharing a geographical and social unit presented a "regional space". Through the years, by facing deep-rooted balance of power issues and conflicts among regional states, it turned into a "regional complex". With its role to increase interaction and cooperation among regional state and non-state actors, the BSEC accomplished a remarkable success for development of the Black Sea regionalization process and formation of a "regional

⁷⁵⁹ Ronald D. Asmus, *Developing a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Istanbul Paper, No. 2, 2004, p. 20, http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/special/Istanbul_PAPER2.pdf, accessed on 28 September 2009.

⁷⁶⁰ Ronald Hatto and Odette Tomescu, *The EU and the Wider Black Sea Region: Challenges and Policy Options*, Garnet Policy Brief, No. 5, January 2007, p.1, http://www.garnet-eu.org/fileadmin/documents/policy_briefs/Garnet_Policy_Brief_No_5.pdf, accessed on 5 November 2009.

⁷⁶¹ Irina Kobrinskaya, *The Black Sea Region in Russia's Current Foreign Policy Paradigm*, PONARS, Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 41, December 2008, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/379/Transformations%20BLack%20Sea%20Region%20PONARS.pdf>, accessed on 4 February 2010.

⁷⁶² Igor Torbakov, "The Georgia Crisis and Russia-Turkey Relations", *the Jamestown Foundation*, 2008, p. 5, <http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/GeorgiaCrisisTorbakov.pdf>, accessed on 12 April 2010.

society” in the Black Sea area. However, despite all the efforts spent mostly by the BSEC, the Black Sea region could not be turned into the Sea that is able to promote democratization, sustainable development, welfare, security and social communication. Furthermore, the BSEC could not be vocal for the establishment of a strong Black Sea identity. The absence of these items has complicated the formation of the fourth level of “regionness” that is “regional community” and respectively, the region can not reach the fifth level as the “regional institutional polity” that requires the consideration of region as “an acting subject with a distinct identity, actor capability and structure of decision-making”.⁷⁶³ In this regard, the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area could not be as successful as it was expected just after the Cold War.

For the time being, although it is the most effective cooperation mechanism in the regionalization process, the BSEC is not able to deepen regional cooperation. The intra-trade volume remains below the expectations and the BSEC seems far away from providing regional economic integration.⁷⁶⁴ Moreover, the Organization can not be a direct promoter of stability and security in the region since it is not equipped with instruments in conflict management and post conflict rehabilitation.⁷⁶⁵ In this regard, the BSEC seems in need of “rejuvenation”.⁷⁶⁶ The members of the BSEC need to come up with an agreed vision for the future of the Black Sea region. The commitment of regional countries to allocate necessary motivation and resources for regional projects and their management is highly needed to overcome the challenges that the process of Black Sea regionalization faces. In this respect, the finalization of the on-going major projects such as “Black Sea Ring Highway” and “Motorways of

⁷⁶³ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorizing the Rise of “Regionness”, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2000, p. 467.

⁷⁶⁴ Berdal Aral, “The Black Sea Economic Co-operation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?”, *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, N-o. 4, Winter 2002, p. 78.

⁷⁶⁵ Mustafa Aydın, “Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2009, p. 279.

⁷⁶⁶ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds.), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 13, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

the Sea” has an utmost important.⁷⁶⁷ These projects are important to accelerate economic cooperation in the region and to make valuable contribution to the development of Black Sea regionalization process by marking a concrete difference in the lives of people and raising awareness among these people on Black Sea issues. On the other hand, the BSEC needs to set a public diplomacy strategy to transmit information about its policies, priorities and projects not only to the people within its borders but also to the international community. The formulation of such a strategy will also pave the way for formation of a strong Black Sea identity among people in the Black Sea region to make them aware of the Black Sea “regionness”.

In forth chapter, the role of regional and extra-regional actors’ having different strategies was touched upon. The enlargement of NATO and the EU towards the Black Sea region constitutes a significant change for the configuration of Black Sea politics.⁷⁶⁸ Currently, the US, NATO, the EU, Russia and Turkey are dominant actors in the region and they are significant stakeholders in the Black Sea issues.⁷⁶⁹ While the US aims at increasing its presence in the Black Sea region by making bilateral deals with some regional countries and trying to engage NATO in the Black Sea issues, the EU works on becoming more active in the Black Sea region by implying new policies on the Black Sea issues.⁷⁷⁰ The increased attention of the US and the EU towards the region irritates Russia that prefers to be the key actor in its “backyard”.⁷⁷¹ As a result, Russia uses means to show its capacity to dominate the regional Black Sea politics and its cut of gas supply to Ukraine in 2006 and in 2009

⁷⁶⁷ Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos , “ The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Its Role in the Eurasian Region”, 11th Eurasian Economic Summit, Istanbul, 2 May 2008, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsecnews/BSECinMedia/Downloads/INTERVIEW%20WITH%20SG%20BY%20G%20IRO%20DI%20VITE-January%202009.pdf>, accessed on 5 May 2010.

⁷⁶⁸ Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds.), *A 2020 Vision for the Black Sea Region*, Commission on the Black Sea, May 2010, p. 23, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/A%202020%20Vision%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 20 May 2010.

⁷⁶⁹ Iris Kempe, Kurt Klotzle, *The Balkans and the Black Sea Region: Problems, Potentials, and Policy Options*, Center for Applied Policy Research Policy Analysis, No. 2, April 2006, p. 5, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/314/balkans_Black%20Sea.pdf, accessed on 13 April 2008.

⁷⁷⁰ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “ The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region ”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 234-235.

⁷⁷¹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “ The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region ”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 234-235.

and its use of force in the 2008 armed conflict with Georgia present some examples of Russian efforts to this end.⁷⁷²

On the other hand, Turkey as the initiator of the BSEC, gives importance to increase economic cooperation in the region as well as it attaches an utmost importance to provide sustainable regional security and stability.⁷⁷³ Turkey differentiates maritime and territorial security of the Black Sea region.⁷⁷⁴ In terms of maritime security, it pays attention to the preservation of *the Montreux regime* in the Black Sea and underlines that the security in the Black Sea can be provided only by regional actors.⁷⁷⁵ In this regard, it considers mechanisms such as the BLACKSEFOR and the OBSH as cornerstone of the Black Sea maritime security.⁷⁷⁶ In terms of territorial security, by proposing the establishment of the CSCP, Turkey had an important step to take part actively in the promotion of regional peace, security and prosperity.⁷⁷⁷ On the other hand, Turkey, by aiming at becoming an energy hub, leads important pipeline projects in the region.⁷⁷⁸ For instance, the construction of the Nabucco pipeline that will transport natural gas from the Caspian region to Europe constitutes a mainstream project for Turkey to this end. However, this pipeline project and the other similar ones are not welcomed by Russia who does not want another powerful actor that will threaten its supremacy on regional energy

⁷⁷² Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p. 78, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

⁷⁷³ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁷⁷⁵ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁷⁷⁶ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 544.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with Ambassador Ünal Çeviköz, Deputy Undersecretary responsible for Bilateral Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 24 May 2009.

In this regard, the fact that the US, NATO, the EU, Russia and Turkey have differing and sometimes conflictual strategies towards the Black Sea region does not contribute to the development of regionalization process in the Black Sea area and present rather an obstacle to the increase in the level of Black Sea “regionness”.⁷⁷⁹ Each of these predominant actors looks at the region from its own perspective putting its own priorities regarding the region. However, the difference becomes particularly evident concerning the power play between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community as it was seen in the case of 2008 August armed conflict between Russia and Georgia. Therefore, some legacies of Cold War era, especially regarding security issues seem to survive in the Black Sea region. In this regard, the developments in the relations between the EU, US, NATO and Russia will be determining for whether a cooperative or competitive scheme will dominate in the region. Moreover, the nature of relations between Turkey and Russia and an increase in their cooperation towards the Black Sea region will be inspiring for other regional countries to deepen their cooperation regarding the Black Sea issues.⁷⁸⁰ In this respect, the level of Black Sea “regionness” will be upgraded according to the complementarity in the regional policies of all the predominant actors.

In fifth chapter, the process of Black Sea regionalization that faces limitations stemming from sub-regional dynamics was explored. Within these limitations, problems concerning economic, political and security issues come first. Most of the regional states suffer from challenges regarding democratization and economic development whereas corruption and clientalism at administrative level are very common issues.⁷⁸¹ Moreover, the access to free market economy has not been achieved in all Black Sea states.⁷⁸² Thus, “the intra-BSEC trade volume comprises

⁷⁷⁹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The Security Paradoxes of the Black Sea Region”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 September 2009, p. 236.

⁷⁸⁰ Suat Kınıklıoğlu and Valeriy Morkva, “An Anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2007, p. 548.

⁷⁸¹ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷⁸² Panagiotis Gavras, *Current State of Economic Development in the Black Sea Region*, Commission on Black Sea, Report No. 1, February 2010, p. 5, http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/411/black_sea_policy_report1_economy.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2010.

only 20 percent of the region's total trade volume".⁷⁸³ On the other hand, in the field of democratic achievements, the region does not have a good reputation. Most of the Black Sea states have a low score in terms of political rights, civil liberties and press freedom in the world ranking. Moreover, they are not usually governed by a coherent and transparent body of rules, together with regular and free election system and an independent judiciary.⁷⁸⁴ In this regard, the current economic and political situation does not reinforce the process of Black Sea regionalization.

The persistence of the "frozen conflicts" and regional disputes cause not only the increase in bilateral tensions between regional states, but also it turns the region more vulnerable to security threats. The insecure climate in the region can also obstruct the economic and democratic development of the regional states and the entire region.⁷⁸⁵ The regional countries that are part of these conflicts can not concentrate enough on their economic and democratic development since they spend more effort on dealing with the conflicts, and as a vicious circle, with having economic and democratic challenges, these countries can not find effective and sustainable solutions to the peaceful settlement of the conflicts.⁷⁸⁶ In this regard, from different perspectives, the existence of security problems in the region presents a solid obstacle to carry the Black Sea "regionness" to upper levels. In this sense, the promotion of confidence building measures and a security dialogue on security issues among regional actors constitute important elements to put an end to these conflicts and to eradicate its political, economic and societal effects in the region.

⁷⁸³ Panagiota Manoli, *Reinvigorating Black Sea Cooperation: A Policy Discussion*, Commission on the Black Sea, Policy Report III, 2010, p. 14, http://www.blackseacom.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Paper/Black%20Sea%20Policy%20Report%20III%20Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 28 February 2009.

⁷⁸⁴ Daniel Grotzky and Mirela Isic, *The Black Sea Region: Clashing Identities and Risks to European Stability*, Center for Applied Policy Research, Research Group on European Affairs, No. 4, October 2008, p. 9, <http://www.harvard-bssp.org/static/files/397/CAP-Policy-Analysis-2008-04.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2009.

⁷⁸⁵ Roy Allison, "The Unresolved Conflicts in the Black Sea Region: Threats, Impacts on Regionalism and Regional Strategies for Conflict Resolution" in Oleksander Pavliuk and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, (eds.), *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe and East-West Institute, 2004, p. 95.

⁷⁸⁶ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Haggström, *The Wider Black Sea Region: An Emerging Hub in European Security*, Silk Road Paper, Uppsala: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2006, p. 53-55, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0612Blacksea_P.pdf, accessed on 14 October 2010.

All points mentioned above show that, for the moment, transformation of the Black Sea region into a “political institutionalized entity” seems difficult to happen. The level of “regionness” remains at “regional society” according to chart of levels of “regionness” as theorized by Björn Hettne. In this regard, as opposed to the new regionalism hypotheses, it is difficult to argue that regionalization can always bring peace, security and prosperity for all region-in-makings.⁷⁸⁷ If the process of regionalization is interrupted by severe obstacles stemming from regional, extra-regional and sub-regional factors, it may not end with expected results. Similarly, the process of regionalization in the Black Sea area has not led to the establishment of sustainable regional stability, security and prosperity yet since the region faces obstacles stemming from regional, extra-regional and sub-regional factors and accordingly can not move beyond the level of “regional society”. In this regard, there is a long way to go for the region to reach the stage of becoming a real promoter of security, stability and prosperity within its borders and beyond.

⁷⁸⁷ Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Perils of Regionalism: Regional Integration as a Source of Instability in the Horn of Africa?”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, p. 1.

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