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Security in the Extended Black Sea Region
as a Means of Further European Integration

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Abstract: The objective of this paper is to highlight the importance of the security aspect in today's international relations scene, through the eyes of the European Union and put emphasis on the micro-level of security in order to achieve a higher level of security, at a macro-level. This paper relates to other work in this field by the fact that it raises up serious questions about european integration through the security aspect. The approach used in this paper was mainly a observational one, trying to point out the strong and weak points of the european system and to sketch out a possible direction for further european integration. The results, or conclusion of this paper is that integration can be achieved in the security department at a higher level by firstly doing so at a micro-level, in this particular case, in the extended Black Sea region. This paper is original through the fact that is whises to point out the importance of each individual in the complex structure that is the European Union.

Keywords: European Union; globalisation; security instruments; international conflicts; micro-level perspective

1 Introduction

Security in international relations has become a subject of discussion more and more frequently addressed and important between international actors, especially in the contemporary international relations system, where terrorist attacks, the political instability of states, authoritarian regimes and the desire of national and ethnical affirmation can be seen more and more often.

Nowadays, the Black Sea region is, in essence, the intersection of four different geopolitical dynamics. The first two dynamics are based on the interests of the two powerful states in the region, Turkey and Russia. Apart from these two, we add many countries included in the European Neighbourhood Policy. The United States, however, sees the region as a gateway to deploy its policies in the Middle East and Eurasia. The Black Sea became a crossroads of the four parties involved, Turkey, Russia, the United States and the European Union. As a result, security and stability in the Black Sea have reverberations throughout the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

2 The European Union

In the context of the European continent, the European Union plays an important role in forming and making policies that address matters related to security, even in states that are not members of the

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European Union, putting into practice the so-called European neighbourhood policy[1], the only states that have a more powerful individual policy making in the security sector, and are not part of the European Union, being the Russian Federation and Turkey.

The European Union shows to have more pronounced interests in establishing security and stability at its organisational borders, especially after the last enlargement in 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union, thus making the EU border the Black Sea and opening a new series of opportunities but also of challenges and threats for the European Union. International relations are under the umbrella of *globalisation*[2], of which can be said that has become more emphasized since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the historical Cold War[3].

2.1. Aspects of Globalisation

There are several types of globalisation, like the cultural one, the economical one, environmental but also from a security point of view. In the light of the permanent change caused by the influence of globalisation and by all the factors that result from globalisation, the desire to have security and to formulate a strategy to organise and maintain it can be seen in all the regions of the world, especially in the frameworks of the most complex institutional organism, the European Union.

What has to be understood is the fact that globalisation, even in the security sector, has to be achieved at a regional level, forming a cohesion between local international actors, in order to create stability in the area, so that, as a result, security at a larger level can be achieved. That is why the fulfilment of security at a regional level, through the European Union, in the Black Sea area, is a key aspect of today's international relations.

3 The European Union's Approach to the Security Issue

The European Union is an international actor that can be best defined by the phrase *sui generes*[4]. The European Union has evolved gradually, from the moment of the creation of its predecessor, the European Coal and Steel Community, and till this present moment, paying attention to more and more fields of activity and study, and at the same time promoting integration.

If at the beginning, this organisation was concerned only about the economical integration and achieving the goal of economical interdependence in order to avoid future armed conflicts, currently the European Union wants to achieve integration in all sectors, especially security.

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[1] The objective of the European Neighbourhood Policy is to spread the positive aspects of the European Union with states that neighbour the European Union, thus helping to strengthen stability, security and wellbeing for all those in sight. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/international/neighbourhood_policy/index_en.htm accessed at 15.03.2014

[2] The term "globalisation" is used to describe a multicausal process that has as result the fact that the events that take place in a part of the globe have more ample repercussions on societies and problems on other sides of the globe.

[3] Although the Cold War has officially ended in 1991, some political analysts argue that it is not over, given the permanent differences and opposite opinions between the two big poles of power, the United States of America and Russia. Idea taken from *U.S – Russia Relations: Facing Reality Pragmatically,* Editure Center for Strategic & Intl Studies, 2008.

[4] Term from latin, meaning "of its own kind" or "unique". In this case, the European Union being the only organisation of its kind, in which member states give up willingly a part of their sovereignty in order to achieve a higher collective good.

3.1. Strategies, Action Plans, Joint Actions, Programs

The European Union is using several strategies, programs, action plans in what concerns security. An instrument for addressing the security issue is the European Security Strategy which sketched out a framework for the European Union's interests in the region.

One of the most important areas concerning the security aspect the extended Black Sea region because of the fact that it is an important geostrategic point, having two extremely powerful countries, military and economically, as riparian countries, which are Turkey and Russia, and also the region is in the proximity of the Middle East region, where recently a number of political conflicts also known as the *Arab spring* could be seen.

The highest risks for the European Union in terms of this region are the many political conflicts that have resulted in the use of military force. Several examples include: The War in Georgia in 2008, which did not result in a refugee influx towards the west-european states, but it affected the transport routes for oil and natural gases, and the political and military consequences continue to affect Georgia and the neighbouring regions, thus affecting several EU partners; o military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, possibly involving Turkey and Russia, could have serious implications for the European Union; the civil war in Ukraine and the bloody confrontations continue to currently affect the Black Sea region in terms of stability, especially in the context in which Ukraine was a possible candidate to become a member state of the European Union, but the recent events may have set back Ukraine in its road to ascension.

3.3. Instruments in Realising Regional Security

Besides these issues, the weakness of the states in the region and the existence of entities that are not recognised legally attract criminal and terrorist groups and the region is susceptible to becoming an illegal trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings area. Terrorism, inefficient states, regional conflicts and organized crime are the most pressing security threats presented in the European Security Strategy. It is therefore in the interest of the Union to work on these threats together with countries in the region.

EU's response to the dynamics of security in international relations has developed a so-called common foreign and security policy, which aims to strengthen the EU's external skills through the development of military and civilian capabilities in conflict prevention and management[1] in situations crisis. What is difficult to achieve in common policy is not the setting objectives and identifying threats, but determining the means by which to pursue these objectives as being an organization consisting of 28 states, each wanting to have a voice as strong as of such decisions is difficult tracing methods for implementing strategies.

3.4. Black Sea Synergy – a Road to Integration

Another common policy instrument in the region is the Black Sea Synergy, which was formed as a result of a conference between the foreign ministers of countries bordering the Black Sea, Kiev, Ukraine, 2008. It encourages cooperation between the Black Sea Synergy Black Sea countries and enables them to address common issues while encouraging political and economic reform.

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[1] The activity and art of leadership. All activities regarding the organisation, distribution and structure of the resources.

The Black Sea Synergy aims to stimulate democratic and economic reforms, to support stability in the region and promote, facilitate practical projects in areas of common interest, to open new opportunities through coordinated actions in a regional framework and encourage conflict resolution such as those mentioned above in a peaceful manner.

Closer regional ties will foster democratic and economic reforms, support stability and promote development in the area, facilitate practical projects in areas of common interest, will open new opportunities and challenges through coordinated actions in a regional and ultimately, encourage the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region. Specific partnerships in the Black Sea Synergy will address areas such as transport, energy and the environment. Additional initiatives may result in high education, medicine and the fight against organized crime. Activities were initiated in areas such as civil society, research and the information society.

4 Perspectives for Future Security

States of the wider Black Sea region continues to have persistent challenges in terms of security, dating from the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially by armed unresolved territorial conflicts. Enlargement has brought with itself, unresolved conflicts in Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and the more and more pronounced conflict extended over the region of the North Caucasus.

 The situation in these regions is far to be stable, thus causing frustration and unresolved conflict parties resort again to the use of arms. Processes of negotiation and peacekeeping continue to be dominated by Russia, which identify more as part of the conflict, rather than a neutral mediator.

To prevent these conflicts and to secure the zone, the European Union continues to build institutions to ensure the rule of law and democratic values. In this sense, a notable progress can be seen in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, by trying to reach European standards. EU Member States also show concern that Europe is becoming increasingly dependent on Russia through energy and the need to establish an energy security strategy that does not make the EU Member States entirely dependent on Russia has become more prominent.

Thus, Europe is trying to diversify its energy sources, especially regarding natural gas. Not being under the control of Russia, the Caspian region to presents a particular interest to Europe for the future, with important deposits of natural gas, which could ensure the needs of the European countries which would ensure their energy security.

4.1. Possible Allies

Also, to ensure security in the region, the European Union should have a more active role in the negotiations and peacekeeping in the Caucasus, as it did in Transnistria. The European Union has the potential to serve as an impartial entity, which would bring much-needed legitimacy and credibility to these processes.

The European Union should develop a broader regional strategy to solve conflicts by addressing the right of small countries to sovereignty and territorial integrity. This approach should include the Russian Federation in the peace talks and also in the strategic partnership between Russia and the European Union. In parallel, the EU should actively support the development of policies to support national minorities in the countries of the region, continuing the phenomenon of integration.

The EU should also support NATO's role in the wider Black Sea region, which is crucial in advancing regional security. And, finally, the EU should develop a close partnership with the United States, and both powers should coordinate their policies towards the region, taking advantage of the strong points and complementary roles.

5. Conclusion

It can be said that security has its roots at the micro level. Starting with each individual and to supranational entities such as the European Union, the need for security has always been pronounced. The best way to ensure regional security is to first ensure national security and to solve our own local conflicts in the political, ethnic, social areas, and then we could aspire to regional security, and why not, even global security, as a whole.

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