



THE BLACK-SEA-REGION – A STRATEGIC REGION OF FIRST PRIORITY

Black Sea-Symposium
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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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Preface

The Black Sea region comes only into the spotlight of attention if there is any crisis developing. This was the case in the middle of the 19th century with the tragic Crimean War of Russia and the alliance of Britain, France and Turkey. And nobody is even talking about the military conflict in Summer 2007 between Georgia and Russia which also kept the NATO busy. But it will be in the center of interest again when Ukraine-Naftogaz is handling 80% of Russian gas exports to the West – will miss the fee payments to Moscow.



The intention of our Black Sea-Symposium was to analyse and make public the different aspects of the important link that the region has always been and will always be between Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This bridging function has even become more important as the European Union, by its members Bulgaria and Rumania, is neighbouring the Sea directly and will be involved in potential problems resulting from ex-Soviet states. We have discussed, among others, the aspects of energy supply, the economic cooperation, security threats and cultural/ religious aspects.

Thanks are due to all the highranking experts who joined us in Munich – scientists, politicians, diplomats (see list of participants) – who made this Symposium a lasting success. Special thanks we do owe to the Public Evening lecturers who transmitted the results to the audience in the Great Hall of the Munich University:

H.E. Ion Iliescu, Former State President of the Republic of Romania
Milen Lyutskanov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
Dr. Erhard Busek, Former Vice Chancellor of the Republic of Austria

That this Symposium could take place we owe to the great assistance of Robert Bosch Foundation, which feels responsible to do its best for the peaceful understanding of nations.

Dr. Horst Mahr
Chairman

Public Lecture of Ion Iliescu, Former President of the Republic of Romania on November 11th 2009 in the Great Hall of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Distinguished attendants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Two decades ago Europe witnessed a historical event, by its extensiveness and consequences: the totalitarian regimes from East Europe had felt successively, either peacefully as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic, or violently as in Romania. It had been proven that despite the reform processes in the former USSR, started by President Mikhail Gorbachev, the communism was not reformable. The only solution was its disappearance and the restoration of the democracy, political pluralism and market economy in the former socialist countries.



The phenomenon of the communism collapse must be seen in the larger context of the Cold War, that started at the beginning of the 80 a severe medium-range missile crisis in Europe and in Asia, immediately after ceasing the war in Vietnam, a new hotbed of war was broken out, this time by the invasion of USSR in Afghanistan.

Confronted with severe internal and external crises and deprived of its former influence space in East Europe, the USSR had broken up at its turn, after the coup d'état in August 1991. These powerful geo-political fractures brought, more than ever in the attention, the importance of the space adjacent to the Black Sea. The Black Sea region was always a space of articulation, of contact among cultures and civilizations, among empires, where a large variety of interests, often contradictory and even conflictive had shown up.

It was often said it is a region of great strategic interest. At the end of the Cold War, on the background of emergency of new international order, new order dominated by the American hyper power, by that single pole moment of America, this strategic relevance was not so clear. Other was the priorities and especially the points of interests at global level. The Black Sea region became interesting immediately after USSR broke up, when it was absolutely needed to put under control the nuclear weapons of the territory of the former Soviet Republics which gained their independence.

Moreover, it was not very clear what would happen in Europe after COMECON and the Warsaw Pact broke up. The former socialist countries needed a new joint security system and new markets, to compensate the loss of the COMECON

markets. Therefore, in the early 90 a series of regional and sub-regional cooperation projects were circulated and carried out that obviously could not ignore the Black Sea area.

That is how on 25 June 1992, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was born, including 11 countries. It was set up as a unique and promising model of multilateral political and economic initiatives for the purpose of stimulating the interaction and harmony between the States member as well as to assure peace, stability and prosperity and also good neighbour relations in the Black Sea region.

The 1992 Project developed, amplified and received a series of new attributions. I sincerely believe, as active attendant to the process of structuring the Organization, that it reached its goal in a large extent. Basically, we all had not only to learn, but also to gain from this experience.

In the mid 90 of the last century a background change was produced around the Black Sea. Part of the states in the region: Romania and Bulgaria, for instance, which knew a faster and deeper process of democratization and structural change of their economy, received the perspective of joining EU and NATO, having another road and another internal and external agenda. Other countries of the region, as the Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and even Russia, remained to confront themselves with the administration of the process of breaking up the Soviet empire. This process is not yet finalized, the proof being the so-called "frozen conflicts". One of them was defrosted suddenly, in August 2008 and led to a short but extremely intense army conflict, between the Russian Federation and Georgia.

This conflict, together with the problems occurred in the delivery of the natural gas from Russia to EU, brought again the region in our attention. We believed that receiving the new members in the EU and NATO operates like a kind of automatic stabilizers in the region. It was believed the process of democratization of the countries in the region would avoid conflicts, will open the path of prosperity. It was proven the democratization is superficial and fragile and the economic development was not sufficient to stabilize the societies in the area, the extremist, nationalist temptations were plainly affirmed, various forms of fanaticism, and political, social and even religious violence have occurred.

I think it is about time to relate to the Black Sea region in another way than by the prism of global scale power plays, as until present. Generally, the contact regions between political, economic and military blocks are, by definition, unstable, whether we like it or not. The question is how could we make them stable or how could we reduce the instability.

From my point of view, the solution is in our hands, and is verified. Romania is the proof that the methods really work successfully. It is about partnerships with clear objectives between the interested parties. Or what was called the "open gates policy".

It is obvious that the European Union experiences a delicate time, where it must "digest" the enlargement of the last years. This does not mean to give up the enlargement, but only a pause in the process of enlargement. The countries in the

area which want to join EU must have a more consistent offer than until present in the process of cooperation with EU, not only an economic offer but also a political and social one. Basically, the idea of concentric circles may be adjusted to offer these states reasons to continue political, economic and social reforms and the access to a very selective market, like the EU market. We must discuss in this direction, after the Treaty of Lisbon enters in force, together with the institutions defined by it, about the future of the enlargement and about the limits of the EU enlargement.

As concerns the Black Sea region, we must say extremely clearly: Russia is also part of problems and part of solutions for its stability and predictability, for the development of ample projects of cooperation. EU must define a more coherent policy towards Russia and more independent of the past. Certainly, the former socialist countries brought within the bosom of the European Union their conflicts with Russia and their historical fears, about which we cannot say they have no ground. Moreover, the future of EU relations with the Russian Federation must not be structured on the burns of the history, but of the mutual interests of its members. Basically, the Black Sea is nobody's place: nor Turkish, or Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian. It must be more than it is now, a space of cooperation, democracy and liberty. Of peaceful, negotiated settling of conflicts and divergence. Romania, appealing to the Hague Court in its differed with the Ukraine as concerns the delimitation of the continental plateau of the Black Sea in the area of the two states, showed the way to be followed.

We cannot discuss about the future of the Black Sea region without mentioning the extremely important role of the Danube, the river making the riverside countries an additional space to the Black Sea area. The Danube structured in a way the characteristics of the political-economic entity called Central Europe. On the Danube came in Romania many emigrants of German origin, who left their mark on the culture and material civilization in Transylvania. Now the Danube is the link, by the Danube-Black Sea and the Danube-Main-Rhine channels between the Black Sea and the North Sea.

There are many development opportunities thanks to these axes that, by the recent enlargement of the EU, may be and must be better used. They will be more, when the West Balkans will joint the Union in the future. I sincerely hope that the Republic of Moldova may be included, together with the Balkan countries, in the new enlargement wave of the Union. This would give more stability and predictability to the Easter border area of the Union.

Another thing I wish to say: the cooperation at the Black Sea must not be reduced to the harsh competition for the control of the energy transportation route. Meanwhile, this competition did not led to accomplishing of any of the two projects: Nabucco and South Stream. There are many fields where mutual projects may be imagined: naval, railway, terrestrial transportation, fighting against the effects of climate changing, to protect Black Sea area, to develop tourism. Otherwise, Turkey showed us all what means to make tourism a basic economic branch, which has entailing effect upon the economy as a whole, but that bring benefits to riverside countries also.

Romania assumed an active part in the Black Sea area, even if its interest for this

area was unequal during time. As I have said, priority was for a period EU and NATO accession. Now there are all the conditions that, from the perspective of its new statute of EU Member, Romania becomes more active in the area. We have special relations with the Republic of Moldova; we are the advocates of the European integration of the Republic of Moldova. We wish to be part of the process of Trans-Dniester crisis. I sincerely believe that the relations with the Ukraine will continue to be improved. Basically, there are no bilateral problems that cannot be solved by dialogue and negotiation.

Romania believes that the place of Turkey is in the EU and supportes its candidateship, moreover, I believe that Turkey may benefit of our experience in the process of negotiation for joining EU. I also believe that Turkey in EU will make the Black Sea region a point of attraction for the foreign investments and will give the EU an instrument of influencing the situation in the Middle East.

These should make from the Black Sea region a maximum interest point in Europe and Eurasia and not the frozen conflicts, which unfortunately did not find any solution. There are still great expectations and the perspective of their settling at the same time with the enlargement towards East of the EU influence.

Thank you for your attention.

Public Lecture of Milen Lyutskanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on November 11th 2009 in the Great Hall of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to address such a distinguished audience.

11th November is a special date. In 1918, at the 11th hour of the same day, the First World War has been put to an end. 90 years later we can confirm, and I hope you would agree with me, that security, stability, cooperation and partnership dialogue on the European continent have never been set on such positive note.



In the course of the last two decades we have witnessed a considerable geopolitical restructuring of the European political space marked by an intensified integration in both the European and the regional dimension. The regions of South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea are good examples of this.

The common efforts undertaken by the countries in the South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region have also been instrumental to gradually eliminate the root causes of ethnic and religious conflicts and further generate security and stability in SEE.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The threats to security and stability in the 21st century are global in character and, therefore, a global and comprehensive approach is needed to adequately address them. We are convinced that the issues related to stability and cooperation in the Black Sea region should be considered within the larger Euro-Atlantic context. To this end, any national initiative aimed at strengthening the stability in the region should not lead to its isolation or capsulation. The EU and NATO enlargement with Bulgaria and Romania turned the Black Sea into a new and important geopolitical factor which implies more active engagement of both organisations in the region.

Bulgaria supports the following principles for intensified cooperation among the Black Sea states – inclusive approach, meaning participation of all littoral states;

pragmatism and interaction between different regional initiatives; co-financing of important regional projects; coordination and cooperation between the EU, NATO, and other international and regional organisations, including non-governmental organisations; The Black Sea region has a particular importance in terms of geopolitics, economy, infrastructure, communications and energy supply. Transport, energy security, including the main transport and energy corridors and environmental protection are amongst the main areas of cooperation identified in the Black Sea region.

As one of the new European Union member states, Bulgaria has assumed new responsibilities in the context of the Union's strategic interests – European Neighbourhood Policy, transport and energy, trade and investments, transborder migration, combating illegal trafficking.

Bulgaria supports the increasing involvement of the European Union with the Eastern neighbours through the development of a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. We welcome the launch of the Eastern Partnership as a result of the strong will of the Union to further promote stability and mutual confidence building. In the same vein, we think that the new initiative will strengthen further cooperation between the EU and its Eastern neighbours, thus sending them a positive political signal at a difficult time for the region.

We believe that the Eastern Partnership should be complementary to the existing regional initiatives, the Black Sea Synergy in particular. However, we note that considerable overlapping between the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership and the Synergy does exist. The modalities of interaction between the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy on coordinating the work of both initiatives need to be clearly outlined – in terms of financial sustainability and administrative resources.

The European Union enlargement with Bulgaria and Romania brought a stronger Black Sea dimension to the Union's policy. The EU realized the challenges, the opportunities and the long term tasks for the common internal market, the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the energy security. Due to the fast technological development of both natural gas and petrol transfer and storage means and facilities, the Black Sea could be considered as part of the littoral States' territories. The Blue Stream, the South Stream and the White Stream projects are just the beginning. The Black Sea has huge potential for transferring natural gas from the Caspian region. Accordingly, Bulgaria is actively working for the realization of the Nabucco project which the EU sees as a priority. The agreement on Nabucco signed at governmental level on March 5th this year in Ankara and the positive attitude shown by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank gave a solid boost to this project. Bulgaria considers Nabucco as one of the main elements of the so called "Southern corridor".

The Black Sea is one of the important world corridors for energy supply. Three

million barrels of crude oil are being supplied daily through the Black Sea, more than 25 tankers cross the Straits every day, which makes 40% of the crude oil supply for the European Union. The European perspectives of the energy cooperation in the Black Sea depend also on the EU-Russia relationship in the energy domain. The EU has an interest to develop such relationship with Russia that could lead to a full implementation of the energy contracts without impeding the realisation of alternative sources and roads for energy supply. The aim of the EU-Russia energy cooperation is to define clear criteria of predictability and reciprocity. Excellent opportunities do exist for a strategic cooperation in Central Asia between the EU, Russia, the United States and other countries producers of natural gas in that region. Such cooperation would reflect the new realities in both the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea regions and would lay the basis for the creation of the necessary geopolitical balances.

At the Energy Summit held on April 25th in Sofia, the participants from 28 States, the President of the European Commission and the representative of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development stated that the common efforts have to be focused on creating strategic energy partnerships on a regional and global level. Amongst the most important conclusions from the Summit, the following could be mentioned:

- In the next 20 years Europe's demand for natural gas imports will increase and will necessitate new projects offering diverse energy suppliers, sources and supply routes for gas delivery.
- Greater interconnectivity and an enhanced principle of solidarity in the European gas networks are needed to address emergencies and generate greater market efficiencies.
- Greater diversity, competitiveness and transparency in all aspects of the supply chain boost system integrity, economic development and energy security.
- An efficient international dispute settlement mechanism is needed to deal with developments that are likely to significantly disrupt or reduce energy flows.
- Energy co-operation will further benefit from the application of the principles of sustainability, reliability, predictability, competitiveness and partnership.

At the Summit it was emphasized that the Energy Charter Treaty, notably its key principles, is an important instrument for enhancing energy security across the European continent. The participants stressed upon the geopolitical importance of the Black Sea and Caspian regions for European energy security and for the

diversification of sources and routes of supplies. South East Europe has a strategic location, linking producers – Russia, countries in Central Asia, the Caspian Sea region, the Middle East and North Africa, the transit countries of the Black Sea region and the Caucasus, with the European energy markets. In this regard, support for the realization of all infrastructure projects was voiced aimed at diversifying supply of hydrocarbons to Europe, in order to provide energy security for all countries involved.

Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, being the NATO member states in the Black Sea region, bear special responsibility and have an active role in elaborating the Alliance, and, in the near future – the EU strategy for the Black Sea region, security issues included. In this sense we believe that the good level of cooperation and interaction on a regional basis should be supplemented by a more active involvement of NATO and the EU in the security issues in the Black Sea area.

The perspectives for construction of co-owned critical energy infrastructure in the Black Sea region raise the question of its proper protection. We consider the dialogue among the littoral States and with other countries, instrumental to explore possible ways of assistance provided by NATO. In the near future, the contemporary technologies will convert the Black Sea region into an area of possibly the highest concentration of critical energy transit infrastructure.

In 2007 the United States announced a Black Sea Strategy thus defining their principles for constructive cooperation in the region. They reiterated the principle and firm support for the existing multilateral forms of cooperation in the Black Sea region.

An important fact to mention is that the Black Sea, an area of 432 000 square kilometres, does not have the so called “open sea” and its territory is practically parcelled among the six Black Sea littoral States. Around 55 000 ships of 90 different countries cross the Black Sea every year carrying over 450 million tones of different cargo with a trend of 10-17% raise yearly. Currently, there is no existing comprehensive and agreed concept on strengthening of the maritime security in the Black Sea region. An improved coordination in this key sector would contribute to the long lasting stability in the region as well as to the long term European energy policy perspectives and energy security.

In December 2008 Bulgaria proposed a Concept called “Synergy of Partners Efforts” based on already signed or ratified documents and thus avoid new structures or duplication of already existing initiatives. The aim of the Concept is to optimize the Black Sea littoral States’ efforts to further strengthen maritime security in the region. In implementing the Concept, the already established by the six littoral States, Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center in Burgas may be transformed and adapted to execute tasks of a Joint Maritime Security Center for vessel traffic monitoring as a foundation for Maritime Situational Awareness in the Black Sea region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 1 November 2009 Bulgaria has assumed the Chairmanship of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The motto of our six months Presidency is “Bridging Sea, Energizing Cooperation”. “Bridging Sea” means establishing ties between countries and between people, converting the Black Sea region into an area of peace and stability. Bridging Sea is the metaphorical way of speaking about sectoral partnerships in the framework of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The sectoral partnerships in the field of energy, science and technology, tourism and “soft security measures” are among the priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office.

“Energizing Cooperation” means making it more useful, more profitable, functioning and succeeding. The necessary ground for this is the improvement of the efficiency of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation through concrete steps and common will. We are satisfied with the already approved Bulgarian proposal to change the timing of the rotation of the six-month Chairmanships of the Organisation – from January till June and from July till December. We believe that it is time for the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to consolidate as a project based and result oriented Organization.

Since August 2009, for a period of one year, Bulgaria has also assumed the Command of the BLACKSEAFOR where the Navies of all six littoral States cooperate thus further contributing to the confidence and security in the Black Sea. Bulgaria considers the BLACKSEAFOR as one of the important mechanisms of international cooperation in the security domain in the Black Sea area.

Bulgaria strongly believes in the potential and the political will of the countries situated along the coasts of our common homeland and wealth – the Black Sea – to seek and find common approaches and ways aimed at guaranteeing and strengthening peace, security and stability in the Black Sea region on an equitable and mutually beneficial basis, respecting the legitimate interests of each littoral state.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**The Black Sea Region –
A Strategic Region of First Priority
Round Table, November 11th 2009
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich
By Melanie Sully***

With the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, the Black Sea has become one of the neighbours for the European Union. After a long period of engagement in the Balkans, countries like Austria are shifting their foreign policy priorities to take note of the new challenges posed by a region threatened by political and economic instability. The EU recognises the enormous potential of the region. In August 2008 the open conflict between two littoral states viz Russia and Georgia shook Europe into rethinking its strategy. Energy supplies add a further vital dimension to the EU's interest in the region. In most of the deliberations the role played by Russia forms a central part. Yet



no one for sure seems to know what the Russian sphinx is thinking. Is it seriously interested in engaging with the EU or just playing cat and mouse? Does it see the EU at all as a partner or are the national capitals of Berlin, Paris and occasionally London of more interest as was historically the case? And does Russia not after all have more interest in looking East rather than West? These questions and more were discussed in a round table debate in Munich hosted by the Foreign Affairs Association. It was especially productive since there were speakers from not only Bulgaria and Romania but also the Russian Federation.

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Association, Dr. Horst Mahr, opened the session and welcomed the participants to Munich. He reflected on the significance of the date (11 November) for German and European history, the end of the First World War and so say "the war to end all wars". Now in 2009 there is a united Germany and a round table can take place with participants eg from Romania, Bulgaria and Russia.

Dr. Mahr invited Dr. Reinhold Brender, Deputy Head of the Unit for Relations with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Caucasus (EU Commission/ RELEX) to take the floor and give the view from Brussels.

Dr. Brender said the EU has only over time come to develop a specific approach to the Black Sea region. The countries that have emerged from the old Soviet Union are becoming adults and are fully autonomous and should be economic-

ally viable. Dr. Brender said it was in the interest of the EU to engage with these countries, now new neighbours, and develop economic, political and energy relationships. The aim was to promote peace, stability and prosperity.

At the same time Dr. Brender said the region under review was diverse. The challenge was to design a policy to match this diversity. The speaker thought for Russia the EU must be important too since EU members are important in shaping the global order. In addition there are strong economic and trade links between Russia and the European Union. Russia has an interest also eastwards, in Central Asia and in relations with China. Dr. Brender insisted that the EU did not view the Black Sea through the eyes of Russia alone although it plays a prominent role. It is however, he said, necessary to work with Russia on questions such as migration and energy to update a partnership and cooperation agreement to include provisions for a free trade area between Europe and Russia. Before this can happen Russia has to join the WTO.

For the region in general Dr. Brender mentioned the Eastern Partnership building on the ENP. This should offer the vision for the immediate neighbours of the EU to join a wide package excepting full membership. Here he said it will also be necessary to engage civil society.

In these relationships of the EU with Russia and Central Europe comes the Black Sea region. Here Turkey is a big player and not a country from the "post Soviet space". The EU should aim to design an approach which brings interests together in the region eg on environment and energy. Dr. Brender added that responsibility also lies with the countries in the region themselves to implement the necessary economic and political reforms.

In the discussion that followed Mr. Ivaylo Kalfin (former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria and now EU Member of Parliament), reminded the audience that it was under the German presidency of the EU that the Black Sea synergy was first launched. Prof. Ioan Pascu (former Romanian Minister of Defence, Member of the EU Parliament and Vice Chairman on the Committee of Foreign Affairs) said the EU should make up its mind about Turkey. Prof. Dr. Melanie Sully (Vice President, Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions and Diplomatic Academy, Vienna) thought Russia would continue to "renationalise" its foreign policy and develop its bilateral relations with EU member states. It was clear Russia has very good relations with Berlin and also Paris. This would not change so much in the foreseeable future. Christian Wehrschütz (Austrian Radio and TV correspondent South East Europe) lamented the absence of regional cooperation in the Black Sea and stressed the importance of the Danube in playing a role.

Next to speak was Mrs. Katrin aus dem Siepen (Policy Planning Unit, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin) who pointed out that the Russian Federation had an ambiguous position in enhancing its role in the Black Sea region. She saw the relationship between Russia and Turkey as being especially important, something that was stressed by other participants during the session.

This prompted Ambassador Murat Sungar (former First Deputy Secretary Gene-

ral of the BSEC and former Secretary General for EU Affairs, Turkey) to say that both Turkey and Russia felt they were left out of some EU plans and that without Russia there cannot be much cooperation in the region.

Ambassador Prof. Evgeny Kutovoy (former Secretary General of the BSEC, Diplomatic Academy, Moscow, MFA) protested against the use of the term “post Soviet space” saying noone talked of post imperial Britain when discussing Pakistan. He saw the Black Sea as an important hub of international relations going well beyond the littoral states. Prof. Kutovoy mentioned the upcoming meeting of PABSEC in Moscow which should discuss projects not just transport and energy but also modernisation of industry and technology.

Dr. Brender countered that Russia did not want to be a party to the ENP but could still take part in its individual activities. He recalled that the Eastern Partnership does not include Turkey or Russia and remarked that PABSEC for all its importance does not develop very concrete projects.

The next speaker was Colonel Harmut Bühl (publisher of the “European Security and Defence Union”, Vice President EADS ret., Brussels). The region he said was the key to the well-being of Europe. Turkey was an important card but had to prove its reliability in securing energy supplies. There was urgent need of environmental security eg in dealing with weapons and waste left over from the former Soviet Union. Furthermore trafficking in nuclear weapons, terrorism and organised crime is connected with the Black Sea region and pose a major threat to security. He suggested looking “upstream” ie to the Caspian Sea to resolve security problems. The EU member states should coordinate their foreign policies vis a vis Russia to secure their energy supplies. On expanded NATO members he thought it was better to say “No” than to stimulate conflict.

The question surrounding the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationed in the Crimea has to be solved. Col Bühl urged the use of all fora in and around the region to get to an agreement before the treaty ran out in 2017 between Russia and Ukraine.

Prof. Pascu agreed that Russia would have to do something on this soon and maybe there could be a new agreement. Dr. Sully suggested that a deal could be hammered out whereby Russia paid Ukraine more to keep the fleet in Sevastopol. Prof. Pascu said the fleet could also think of going elsewhere on the Black Sea. He also wanted to know from Russia, if there was a security package agreed by the EU, would Moscow join it? How committed seriously was Russia to engaging or was it just playing and wanting to keep its distance? Russia he added, has other interests. Following on this Mr. Wehrschütz said the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia had been important in determining the way Russia reacts in the Black Sea region. He feared that if Ukraine joined NATO the country would be divided posing a threat to European security in general. Speakers and participants were agreed that the military value of the Black Sea Fleet was low. Dr. Sully remarked that the presence of the fleet on the Crimea was an important symbol for Russia and symbols were important in international politics (eg Berlin when divided). She thought the predominantly Russian-speaking Crimea and

jobs connected with the fleet would make it difficult for Russia to simply pull out even if they have other options along the Black Sea. Russia could lose face here and leave the door open for the EU to move in and offer people some hope. It was a delicate situation. NATO membership for either Ukraine or Georgia would for Russia mean a fundamental change in the balance in the region which anyway is very sensitive. Colonel Bühl said former president of the USA George Bush had put Russia down but what was needed was more understanding between the US and Russia. It was vital to treat Russia with respect and it seems with President Obama the atmosphere has improved although its early days. Mrs. aus dem Siepen stressed that cooperation with the Russian Federation was practised.

Prof. Zahari Zahariev (President Slavyani Foundation, Sofia, Bulgaria) said of course Russia was a Great Power traditionally and a necessary player on the board. He warned though that a new President in Ukraine (2010) could lean more to Moscow than currently. Dr. Sully thought Ukrainian domestic politics were difficult to predict and that candidates for the presidency would make Moscow friendly noises and try to steer a course between Europe and Russia in a type of third way.

Mr. Kalfin started a lively discussion by insisting Russia aims to dissolve NATO by arguing it is no longer necessary in the post-cold war era. He thought we should not give in to Russia and let Ukraine and Georgia down. He said there should be "red lines" for the EU regarding its policy to Russia. After all Moscow has its "red lines". "Why should we do everything Russia wants?" he asked rhetorically.

Ambassador Sungar thought it was necessary to avoid escalation and create interdependency in the region. This should aim to involve Russia. Later this was picked up by chairman Dr. Mahr as an important point and he recalled the beginnings of the European Union and the building of interdependency as a way of avoiding conflict between historical enemies.

Dr. Brender said the countries in the EU and their neighbours have to decide for themselves and not Russia. He thought Russia has a vision of the world which sees it in essence in opposition and competition to Moscow. This makes it really difficult to genuinely cooperate with Russia. Prof. Kutovoy said it was clear there was a move afoot to influence public opinion in Ukraine to change its negative attitude to NATO. At the moment public opinion polls point to a rejection of NATO membership for Ukraine. The question would have to go to a referendum.

In addition to these points the Round Table discussed the relationship of the Balkans to the Caucasus. Here problems of definition were mentioned. For example Bulgaria is a country in the Balkans but also the Black Sea. Mr. Wehrschütz believed that an EU country viz. Greece was guilty of destabilising the area in its position over Macedonia. The discussion that followed mentioned the lack of internal communications in the Black Sea region which hamper an identity and cooperation. Flights across the Black Sea region are mostly not possible and eg flight connections between Odessa and Georgia mean a change in Vienna. The

flights are expensive and regional cooperation or contacts between peoples in the Black Sea region are arguably not so intense as in the Soviet period. A visa regime also holds back integration in the region. Russia is also an important power in the Balkans and recent visits in Serbia by president Medvedev underline this. Serbia is seen as always as the little brother Slav needing help from Moscow although the problem of Kosovo remains. The recognition of Kosovo had repercussions for dramatic events in the Caucasus and the Black Sea region in August 2008 when Russia continually cited the case of Kosovo and the need for the recognition of Abkazia and South Ossetia. These break away republics remain largely isolated and different from each other. Dr. Sully mentioned an article by a leading expert on the Black Sea, Neal Ascherson, who has recently argued for a different policy to Abkazia since it does not want to be a protectorate of Russia. With no diplomatic recognition forming ties which could be important for the EU is difficult. Ascherson argues that there could at least be scientific and cultural exchanges with Abkazia.

A brief discussion followed on the important and active role of Austria in the region which has cultural initiatives in the Odessa region supported by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the international department of the City of Vienna. This has resulted also in a publication series on the Black Sea region published by the Diplomatic Academy Vienna, editor Dr. Sully. She said Austria had supported culture transfer projects in the southern Ukraine in partnership with the French Austrian centre in the Diplomatic Academy. Cultural and academic events with civil society were important in increasing an awareness of the common historical roots with European history. For example on the persecution of Jewish families from southern Ukraine at the turn of the twentieth century. Émigrés to Vienna and also France brought with them culture from the Black Sea. Their tragic fate is a reminder of the dark side of European history including countries in the Black Sea region.

Prof. Zahriev returned to the question of the security of energy supplies. He criticised the Yalta system and said now there are new challenges. The economic crisis was one aspect of what he called a “civilisation crisis of the world”. The energy crisis was only one element. On Russia he said there were only two possibilities: one was to accept Russia as a European state with European culture. Without Russia it was impossible to create European security. The second option was a vision that sees Russia somewhere else, as another culture, another world. To these scenarios he continued there are two possible Russian reactions: one is a Russia more flexible and prepared for a real dialogue with Europe with a Russia looking for its normal place to be integrated. The second reaction was a Russia interested in other alternatives ie to the East and China.

Prof. Pascu said security can be divided into three components: one is security of supply, the second is physical security of transportation and the third is the security of storage at the place of consumption.

Dr. Brender saw it important to get round the dependence on Russian gas. On average there is about a 25% dependency of EU countries on Russian supplies with some particularly vulnerable as we have seen in the past. Countries them-

selves can store gas in advance of an expected winter crisis. He accused Russia of using gas as a political weapon. Here there were some audible protests from Prof. Kutovoy. Dr. Brender directly asked Prof. Kutovoy if he did not agree that Russia used gas as a political weapon. Prof. Kutovoy jovially replied if he said “no” he would not be believed. “Then say yes”, assisted Prof. Pascu helpfully. Dr. Mahr remarked to the question is Russia using energy as a kind of weapon, we could paraphrase Kissinger and ask “why not”? It was after all Realpolitik. Prof. Kutovoy said it was not correct to discuss the energy question purely in terms of supply but demand. Russia needed assurances that the demand would be guaranteed. Mrs. aus dem Siepen stressed the need for the EU to diversify and develop a better monitoring system.

Questions and answers were taken from the public and the round table discussion concluded with summaries from the main protagonists.

* This summary was compiled by Dr. Melanie Sully, Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions, Vienna (melanie.sully@parlamentarismus.at) – it is not intended to be a comprehensive protocol of the round table but notes taken from a personal point of view as participant.

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Program – Round Table

November 11, 2009

Location: Ludwig-Maximilians-University
Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, Munich
Senatssaal

The necessity of a coherent strategy of partnership of the EU and the Black Sea States

EU's growing responsibility for political and economic stability in post-Soviet-States (Session 1)

Push Statement: **Dr. Reinhold Brender**

European Commission – Directorate General for External Relations, Brussels;
Deputy Head of Unit for Relations with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Southern Caucasus

A multilateral security system to avoid escalation of conflicts (Session 2)

Push Statement: **Colonel ret. Hartmut Bühl**

Publisher of "The European – Security and Defense Union",
EADS Vice President ret., Brussels

Bridging function vis à vis the Balkans and the Caucasus (Session 3)

Push Statement: **Christian Wehrschütz**

ORF-Correspondent, South East Europe, Belgrad

Security of energy supplies (Session 4)

Push Statement: **Professor Zahari Zahariev**

President Slavyani Foundation, Sofia

Program – Public Evening Lecture

November 11, 2009

Location: Ludwig-Maximilians-University
Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, Munich
Große Aula

The Black-Sea-Region – A Strategic Region of First Priority

Dr. Horst Mahr, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Association (German)

Milen Lyutskanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria (English)

Ion Iliescu, Former President of the Republic of Romania (English)

Dr. Erhard Busek, Former Vice Chancellor of the Republic of Austria (German)

Photographs



*v.r.n.l.: Amb. Prof. Evogeny Kutovoy,
Dr. Melanie Sully, Ion Iliescu*



*v.r.n.l.: ..., Generalkonsulin Brandusa Pre-
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