

# BLACK SEA COMMISSION ON CONFLICTS:

*New security approaches  
in the Black Sea region*



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## The EDITORS'

Dear colleagues,

The given initiative presents activities launched by the group of civil society based analysts from the Black Sea region in order to enhance regional cooperation and contribute to the development of the better political management around the Black Sea – new geographical area of common security concern in Europe.

It is an initiative of the analytical community including the following domains of the common regional concern:

- Definition and inculcation in international relations of the “two-belt” system of the Black Sea security: peculiar sets of activities and policies for the literal Black Sea countries (coastal) and wider Black Sea region;
- Basing region building activities on the domestic intellectual product;
- Resolution of the conflicts existing in the Black Sea region, based on the responsible expert evaluation of the ongoing peacemaking processes, review of the inadequate peacemaking practices of the international organizations and national decision-makers along with investigation of the conditions and comprehensive support of the all categories of violence and war victims;
- Enhancement of the transborder cooperation within the new initiatives launched by European community in new organizational forms with wider participation of the civil society;
- Democratization of the political practices in the region.

Publication contains information about several international meetings, which served for the consolidation of the expert group and offers presentations and papers of the process participants, as an invitation to the enriching of the dialogue between carriers of the different political thoughts and values, as well as for widening of the expert community cooperation, which seems to be the key factor in the fair and effective decision making in the region.

We see our task in facilitation of the interaction among experts and CSOs and to organize cooperation framework and advocacy platform for the development of the public policy in the region based on European democratic values and serving as a basis for the new political management and full-fledged usage of the opportunities and benefits of the region geopolitical position as well as confronting challenges of it.

*The editors*



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# INTRODUCTION

After 15 years since the end of the Cold War, the Black Sea region stays as «terra incognita» for the European politicians. The same referring to the Black Sea states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These countries failed to develop sustainable mechanism of the political and economic cooperation. In the meantime the importance of the Black Sea as the main transport corridor between Central Asian oil and gas resources and Europe will grow year in year. “Neglected shore of Europe” already undergoes significant changes. Accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU assigned for the year 2007, launching of the negotiations between EU and Turkey in October 2005, and finally democratic revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, all created unique historical moment. The Black Sea region is setting course for democracy and development, to what extents this journey will be successful and safe, depends on strategies chosen by the Black Sea countries both at the level of bilateral and multilateral relations between each other and at the level of the common regional policy and interaction with “big players” outside the region.

The very existence of the Black Sea region is still widely questioned and it is often referred as “artificially created”, product of the analysts and politicians, in the meantime common cultural and civilization potential provides wide opportunities for the enriching of the regional cooperation strategy with the practical sense, including economic opportunities of the Black Sea.

Lack of the common regional identity and as a result efficient regional policy framework, both inside and outside the region, serves as a main factor impeding regional development.

Nevertheless there is a strong need in the structural democratization of the region, with no regard to the problems related to the combating organized crime, trafficking, smuggling of weapons and drugs, still existence of the “frozen conflicts” in the wider Black Sea region is the main obstacle in the development of the adequate regional policies, especially Abkhazian conflict, the only armed conflict on the Black Sea coast.

Today, a new generation of democratic leaders in the region openly proclaims the desire to bring their countries closer to and eventually to join the Euro-Atlantic community.

There are great challenges, but also opportunities to apply the “effective multilateral approach” to the multitude of issues in the Black Sea region, where two geoeconomic, geostrategic, and geopolitical axes cross. The most practical formula for an effective multilateral approach could involve balancing the interests of all actors in the region, as well as achieving a cooperative security partnership of states with different levels of democratic maturity, but interested in providing stability and security in the area along with development of regional identity and civil society institutions.

The world has not become a safer place since the end of the East-West conflict. But the threats to peace and security today take a new form. The number of inter-state conflicts has diminished, instead, complex internal conflicts, which endanger individuals and population groups, predominate.

The causes of conflict have also changed. New potential threats are of increasing importance: environmental degradation, lack of resources, violations of human rights, terrorism, drugs, organized crime and the proliferation of arms. And moreover, in a globalized world these causes are most closely interconnected. Poverty often brings with it damage to the environment, destitution for refugees brings with it threats to peace and security. The danger of unrest and economic

and social decline exists, where human rights are not respected. And vice versa — where peace is fragile and development regressive, human rights also suffer decline. Lasting solutions are only conceivable if people are more aware of these factual connections and if the endeavors of all actors working towards such solutions are coordinated with each other in so far as possible. What is required is an interdisciplinary, uniform and networked procedure, in short, a coherent system, in which every actor and every organization does that which it can best do. What we need is no more and no less than a new architecture of regional governance in the field of conflict prevention.

On this very background it seems extremely important and lively essential to take first step forward development and strengthening of the united Black Sea region. This step should be undertaken by the representatives of civil sector in cooperation with local communities, regional and international policy makers.

However here appraises new challenge which is not related to the security or strategizing, but rather to analytical thinking and policy analysis. There are plenty of initiatives related to the Black Sea basin and Black Sea seems to be fashionable trend both for political declarations and analytical papers. It is hard not to get missed among different views intensively focused on the relatively small sea, which lately might be called “sea of hopes and opportunities”. The last but not the least is to define whose hopes and which opportunities.

Above we provided touch on security environment within the region and some aspects of regional identity and bunch of political and security problems related to its lack, now it is time to focus on institutional environment and recent developments with this regard, in order to introduce novelty of the civil society initiative described bellow, novelty of the intellectual approach to the security ensuring and regional development which are currently enhanced by big political players within the framework of the transformations taking place in nowadays Europe.



Among three major developments are:

- Launch of the ENPI and its transborder cooperation dimension
- Black Sea Forum which took place in Bucharest this summer
- Attempt to establish Black Sea Euroregion in Constanta this March

It seems to be issue of the correct evaluation – to decide how region might benefit from these initiatives in the most efficient way and what are the exact opportunities to implement concept of the “home-based effort” in sake of regional prosperity, which lays in the heart of creation of the Black Sea Commission on Conflicts.

Regional cooperation should be used in order to find common solutions to transnational risks and threats, but also to frozen conflicts. It could be very productive to start with small, manageable steps such as cooperation in the field of education. A common security culture could be developed through educational projects and civil-military projects. Reforms should be coordinated among the different facets of the security spectrum and should be viewed in the framework of the global democratization process. Economic development as well as broad political consensus among all political forces should support security reforms. Priorities include the necessary changes in the training/education system, the adoption and implementation of a modified legal framework, and the need to be interoperable in common peacekeeping operations. By the same token, the efficiency of all force structures should be raised, and a common assessment of threats as well as a real workable national security concepts should be developed.

That serves as a purpose for our union focused on “Black Sea security puzzle”, how to balance all the existing initiatives and interests. We are just approaching this puzzle and invite you to share it with us.

# HISTORY of the INITIATIVE

SCIRS experts have elaborated a concept of the “2-belt Black Sea security system” and started consultations with partners on the issue, which had resulted in the launching of the so-called Vienna Process.

“2-belt Black Sea security system” describes necessity of the separate political cooperation frameworks for the literal Black Sea and for the countries of the wider Black Sea region, taking into account peculiarities in the interests and local conditions of these two groups of countries.

All mentioned above served as initial motivation for the development of new strategy within the region based on new multilateral tools and focused on increased role of civil society based analysts in creation of new regional governance and security.

The idea of such association appeared in course of working meeting carried out in winter, year 2004 in the office of the South Caucasus Institute for Regional Security (Tbilisi, Georgia) between Alexander Rusetsky and Ognyan Minchev. Executive directors of the well-known think tanks based in two regions suffering of conflicts or its aftermath formulated idea of the regional development as a way for overwhelming of the contradictions and difficulties existing in the countries of the former soviet area and especially those belonging to the Black Sea region. This idea received working title Golden Ring program and lived rather long life in capacity of the conception seeking new evidence for support and means for realization.

Initially main expected objectives have been formulated as:

- Promotion of creation of security system in the region and stable North Black Sea coast;
- Peacebuilding and overwhelming of “frozen conflicts”;
- Creation of wide forum for civil society representatives and intellectuals;
- Advancement of regional identity;
- Facilitation of transborder cooperation tools and culture development within the region;

This idea was put forward Research Center on Georgian-Turkish Relations and Research Center on Georgian-Ukrainian Relations attached to the SCIRS. The idea has been transformed into the project of the regional conference. In the meantime research paper on the given issue has been created by Alexander Russetsky purposed for submission to the *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*.

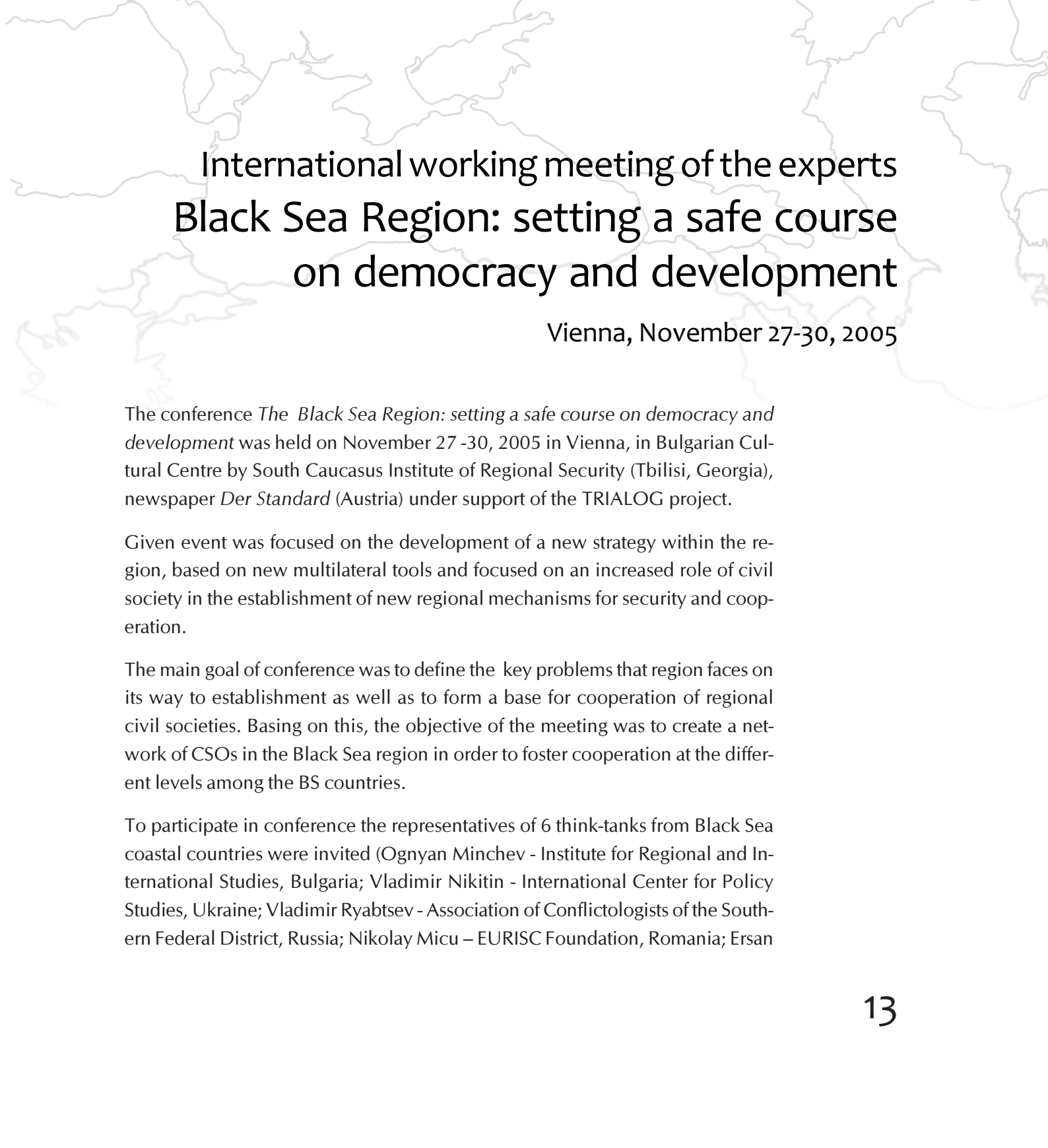
Project proposal was developed and transformed through long consultations with partnering agencies and other interested institutions. Project was also presented to the representatives of the diplomatic corp and MPs who expressed their support to the project, as well as representatives of the Ukrainian Embassy to Georgia and wide circle of civil society based analysts in Georgia and Ukraine.

Next step of project idea realization was made in spring of year 2005 by establishment of SCIRS group in Austria, coordinated by Mr. Siegfried Woeber.

In course of development of contacts with Austrian civil society and intellectuals in early May 2005 meeting with Austrian delegation: Dr. Markus Bernath, journalist of the «Der Standard» newspaper, Julia Bernath, journalist of the “Deutsche Weile” and “Reuters” and Professor Magda Peykhaka took place in

Tbilisi. As a result of the given meeting Dr. Bernath expressed on behalf of the newspaper and Bulgarian Cultural Center interest in support of the conference intended to launch cooperation process. Further preparation to the event was carried out by international group of organizers – representatives of the three SCIRS groups based in Georgia, Austria and Ukraine.

During the visit to Turkey in summer 2005 Alexander Rusetsky presented idea to the potential Turkish partners. In September 2005 Oginyan Minchev visited Georgia, and finalisation of the concept and working plan took place.



# International working meeting of the experts Black Sea Region: setting a safe course on democracy and development

Vienna, November 27-30, 2005

The conference *The Black Sea Region: setting a safe course on democracy and development* was held on November 27 -30, 2005 in Vienna, in Bulgarian Cultural Centre by South Caucasus Institute of Regional Security (Tbilisi, Georgia), newspaper *Der Standard* (Austria) under support of the TRIALOG project.

Given event was focused on the development of a new strategy within the region, based on new multilateral tools and focused on an increased role of civil society in the establishment of new regional mechanisms for security and cooperation.

The main goal of conference was to define the key problems that region faces on its way to establishment as well as to form a base for cooperation of regional civil societies. Basing on this, the objective of the meeting was to create a network of CSOs in the Black Sea region in order to foster cooperation at the different levels among the BS countries.

To participate in conference the representatives of 6 think-tanks from Black Sea coastal countries were invited (Ognyan Minchev - Institute for Regional and International Studies, Bulgaria; Vladimir Nikitin - International Center for Policy Studies, Ukraine; Vladimir Ryabtsev - Association of Conflictologists of the Southern Federal District, Russia; Nikolay Micu – EURISC Foundation, Romania; Ersan

Bocutoglu - Karadeniz Technical University - Center for Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asian Studies, Turkey; Vakhtang Kolbaya – SCIRS, Georgia). To the working group were also included : Joerg Himmelreich (Eastern Europe and Wider Black Sea Region, The German Marshall Fund of the United States of America), Siegfried Woeber (SCIRS/Austria), Markus Bernath (*Der Standard*), Lada Parizkova (TRIALOG), Alexandra Delemenchuk (SCIRS/Ukraine), Olena Banas and Antonina Nikishyna (Agency for Public Transformations, Ukraine).

The participants arrived on November 27. An informal working meeting dedicated to conference agenda was held the same day. Officially the conference was opened on November 28. Except the representatives of the regional analytical centers, on the opening ceremony were present: Joerg Himmelreich (The German Marshall Fund of the United States of America), Amb. Konstantine Zhgenti (SCIRS), Alexandra Delemenchuk (SCIRS/Ukraine), Borislav Petranov (Bulgarian Cultural Institute), Evelyn Rainer (Osterreichische Orient-Gesellschaft Hammer-Purgstall, IZK), Lada Parizkova (TRIALOG), Siegfried Woeber (SCIRS/Austria), Markus Bernath (*Der Standard*), Mrs. Doroftei (Second Secretary of Embassy of Romania to Austria), Olena Banas and Antonina Nikishyna (Agency for Public Transformations, Ukraine).

Newspaper *Der Standard* provided media-coverage of the event, featuring it through interviews with participants and background articles. The newspaper also produced an information package and took care of the public relations of the event. Other announcements have been made in the monthly TRIALOG and OEOG-HP newsletters.

On the first working session moderated by Siegfried Woeber and Markus Bernath participants delivered presentations focused on the following issues:

- The Black Sea Region in face of the new Europe: seeking for the new strategy
- The Black Sea Region and wider South Caucasus

- South Caucasus Black Sea Coast and European Security
- Multilateral framework for the Black Sea regional cooperation: case of BSEC
- Black Sea regional cooperation: economic dimension of the common security
- Shaping of common policies as a condition for strengthening of common security

Mostly presentations were focused on shaping of the Black Sea region, existing experience of international contacts, EU policy toward the region and each member state.

Thus, Ognyan Minchev admitted that the Black Sea region emerged only after the end of the Cold War, when small nations got free from confrontation of two big empires (Russian and Ottoman) and regimes (capitalistic and communistic). Also Mr. Minchev drew attention to non-equal activity of Black Sea coastal countries in establishment of regional cooperation and facilitation of “frozen conflicts” resolution — one of the main problems of the region.

Vakhtang Kolbaya also mentioned that resolution of active and “frozen conflicts” is one of the most important objectives in Black Sea regional security formation process, as well as European security system in a whole. He described new concept of the South Caucasus regional dimension in relation to the new definition of the Black Sea region.

As previous contributors, Ambassador Micu paid attention to the great importance of regional efforts on conflict resolution and combating organized crime by concluding interstate agreements and enhancing of the state efforts by significant contribution of the civil society led by analytical community. Ambassador Micu on example of BSEC has shown relevance of well-defined orga-

nizational structure and regular meetings as key elements of international networking project.

Vladimir Ryabtsev presented his point of view on the possible ways of regional development, stressing on the importance of new European policy toward the region.

Ersan Bocutoglu outlined two levels of regional cooperation – micro (civil societies) and macro (interstate cooperation) patterns. He considered combination of activities at the both levels as the most efficient model of region building.

Vladimir Nikitin referred to the lack of effective mechanisms for the organization of the cooperation. He also underlined bunch of problems related to the absence of common perceptions and regional perception and identity. Mr. Nikitin drew attention of the audience to the public policy mechanisms as a way to harmonize regional governance and legal environment in accordance with European standards.

At the second session participants discussed the presentations which had already been carried out. The participants shaped out common interests and possible ways of region consolidation and development, cooperation with the European Union. During discussion the experts determined, that in case of CSO network creation the main tasks of it will be facilitation of the conflict resolution process, shift from system of bilateral economical and political relations between states of the Black Sea region to multilateral approach, shaping of the region, development of regional identity.

The third session (moderated by Siegfried Woeber) was devoted to the CSO networking. Questions of perspectives of such project implementation, schemes and possibilities of fundraising were discussed. Ognyan Minchev, as one of the founders of this initiative briefly informed other participants concerning the his-



tory of the idea about regional Civil Society partnership as a part of “Golden Ring project”.

Alexandra Delemenchuk presented a project of CSO network informational support, which was prepared by SCIRS/Georgia and Agency for Public Transformations, Ukraine. The key elements of this project are:

- Web-site of Network that will give an opportunity for experts, network members and other interested persons to discuss possible and current activities of the Network in the region. Secretariat of the Network will use web-site as an effective communicational channel between network members for organizational purposes. Besides, by using the web-site on-line conferences and consultations will be available.
- Informational electronic newsletter, which will be distributed among Network members every 3 months and will contain regional analytical materials.

Third working session was concluded by discussing advantages and disadvantages of such kind of networking projects and possible forms of regional CSO cooperation: network, commission, Open University Network was chosen as the most considerable option of the organizational form. Questions of network membership, forms of joint work procedures, fundraising and agenda were left open for the discussions and were postponed for the next working session of November 29 and further planned meetings of the Organizational Committee.

Initiative structure of Network has such structural elements:

- **Secretariat** that has organizational function and coordinates work of Network — Agency for Public Transformations

- **Council** of the Network that is representative organ. For the organizational period representative functions holds **Executive Director** — Alexander Rusetsky
- **Secretary of the Council** — Siegfried Woeber

A great impact for future regional activities planning made the first work session on November 29, was devoted to the questions of human security (moderator: Adam Novak). Except regional experts, representatives of TRIALOG, SCIRS, Agency for Public Transformations and Embassy of Romania to Austria, representatives of international organizations and Austrian civil society took part in the meeting.

In the framework of conference *the Black Sea Region: setting a safe course on democracy and development* on November 29 a Public Conference with the participation of Austrian government representatives, the Black Sea region experts, representatives of Austrian NGOs, journalists and all interested persons was held. Conference was opened by Dr. Markus Bernath who greeted participants on behalf of newspaper *Der Standard* and Organizational Committee. H.E. Amb. Hanns Porias, director of the Austrian MFA's department for Eastern- and South Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia presented his view on the possible regional development within Black Sea area with regard to the Austrian presidency in the EU. Dr. Peter Seifert, General Manager Central/Eastern Europe & Russia; OMV Exploration & Production GmbH evaluated process of cooperation between Western Europe and Black Sea region from the point of view of energy resources transportation. He also touched upon issues of regional mentality and development of positive investment climate as a key factor in promotion of the regional potential.

Then floor has been given to the representatives of the Black Sea region, experts and public activists – Prof. Dr. Ognyan Minchev, executive director of IRIS, Sofia,

and Prof. Dr. Ersan Bocutoglu, director of the Center for Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asian Studies, Karadeniz University, Trabzon. They described different aspects of the Black Sea perspective in European and global policies. Dr. Bocutoglu made retrospective of the international relations within the region basing on the case of Trabzon. Dr. Minchev evaluated existing European strategy towards the Black Sea region and stated that it was extremely important for the European Union to export European values to the wider circle of the states which would not join the EU in the nearest future, but have aspiration to share mentioned above values and act with regard to the all-European agenda.

This working meeting of experts and the conference were the first events in the process of uniting regional expert community.

*Document*

# **Black Sea: setting safe course on democracy and development**

Vienna, November 27-30, 2005 Wittgenstein Haus, Vienna,

**PROTOCOL** of the Organizational Committee meeting #1/11.29.05

**Participants:** Members of the Organizational Committee: Ognian Minchev - Institute for Regional and International Studies, Bulgaria; Vladimir Nikitin - International Center for Policy Studies, Ukraine; Vladimir Ryabtsev - Association of Conflictologists of the Southern Federal District, Russia; Nikolay Micu - EURISC Foundation, Romania; Ersan Bocutoglu - Karadeniz Technical university - Center for Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asian Studies, Turkey; Alexandra Delemenchuk, SCIRS/Ukraine; Olena Banas Agency for Public Transformation, Ukraine; Antonina Nikishyna, Agency for Public Transformation, Ukraine; Siegfried Woeber, SCIRS/Austria; Markus Bernath, Der Standart, Austria; Observers: Lada Parizkova, TRIALOG; H.E. Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Georgia to Austria, Hungary and Chekh Republic Konstantine Zhgenti, affiliated expert of SCIRS; Joerg Himmelreich, Eastern Europe and Wider Black Sea Region, The German Marshall Fund of the United States;

The **Chairman** of the meeting was Prof. Dr. Vladimir Nikitin (Deputy Chairman of the International Center for Policy Studies, Ukraine).

The **Secretary** of the meeting was Olena Banas (Agency for Public Transformations, Ukraine).

The following questions were put on **the agenda**:

1. Creation of the Network of the Black Sea region CSOs
2. Structure of the Network
3. Action plan of the Network
4. Miscellaneous

The participants made statements on involving of wider circle of region-based CSOs into the network. They also advocated opinion about amplification of network's sphere of activities to deal with conflict management, public policy and advocacy and discussed possible mechanisms for the working cycle organization. The following **decisions** have been taken:

1. To create Network of the Black Sea region think tanks – Black Sea Commission on conflicts
2. To proceed activities of the Commission with such a structure:
  - Secretariat: Agency for Public Transformations
  - Representation bodies: Executive Director (Alexander Russetsky) and Council (to be elected during next organizational meeting)
  - Secretary of the Council: Siegfried Woeber
3. To adopt draft action plan:
  - a) Organizational issues: additional members; inventory of resources; structural organization of working cycle; procedures of interaction; inner newsletter.

b) Basics of the Network: language; ideology; topics; principles of interaction with other subjects

c) Projects

- Sharing conference materials
- Inner publication
- Report on the BSR with regard to the EU interests
- 2 policy papers concerning regional issues
- Seminars on public diplomacy in Sofia
- Black Sea Regional school of the European policy, which could be turned into the University
- “Black Sea Barometer”: monitoring of the public opinion
- Security of local communities (especially city communities)
- Educational programs/seminars for policy makers
- Public meeting (raising of awareness on the issues of regional importance among public at large)
- School of conflict management

4. To carry out the next meeting of the Organizational Committee in Tbilisi, Georgia in April 2006

*November 29, 2005*

*Olena Banas*



## **Georgian-Turkish ties and Black Sea Dimension: round table held by SCIRS**

On December 12-14, 2005 South Caucasus Institute for Regional Security hosted group of experts from Turkey. On 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2005 round table *Perspectives of the Georgian-Turkish relations* was held. The event was supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and patroned by Embassy of Turkey to Georgia.

The team of the Research Center on Georgian-Turkish Relations headed by Vakhtang Kolbaya prepared meaningful agenda which gave impulse for plenty of discussions, development of concrete initiatives and arrangement of agreements for further activities.

Program of the visit consisted of meetings held in the SCIRS office with the representatives of the leading Turkish analytical centers and educational entities, such as SAM, TESEV, Karadeniz University, Istanbul University, and Georgian experts; round-table and joint planning of the activity agenda for the further development of the Georgian-Turkish relations in the nearest future.

Round table hosted wide circle of Georgian civil society based analysts (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Caucasus Institute of Peace, Democracy and Development, Strategic Research Center etc.), government officials, diplomats, journalists and representatives of the international organizations.

H.E. Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Turkey to Georgia Ertan Tezgor and Mr. Konstantine Gabashvili, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee

on the International Relations greeted participants and contributed to the discussion referring to the political will to deepen cooperation expressed lately by both governments – Georgian and Turkish.

The main issues discussed during the round-table were the following:

**AGAT project** – initiative aimed at establishing partnership between Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey on the way of European integration. This program already launched by SCIRS Research Center on Georgian-Turkish Relations under support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. All the activities held during the year will result in conference planned to be carried out in Tbilisi in the fall 2006. Participants discussed geopolitical fundamentals and possible developments of the program, among which involvement of Russia to the initiative was proposed.

**Transborder cooperation** along Georgian-Turkish border and the whole set of the related transportation, trade and business development issues.

**Conflict in Abkhazia** and role of Turkey in resolution process with regard to the development of the dialogue between Georgian and Abkhazian diasporas in Turkey.

**Cooperation within the Black Sea region** as strategic priority in foreign policies of both Georgia and Turkey.

**Terrorism and political violence** in the Caucasus and Middle East as an obstacle for appropriate development of the comprehensive cooperation within the Euro-Atlantic security system.

At the round table special presentation was dedicated to the Vienna process outcomes and multilateral framework for the regional cooperation within the Black Sea area. Presentation was held by Mr. Alexander Russetsky (Executive director of SCIRS), Dr. Ersan Bocutoglu (Director of the Center for the Black Sea,



Caucasus and Central Asian Studies Karadeniz Technical University) and Ms. Alexandra Delemenchuk (Coordinator of the Research Center on Georgian-Ukrainian Relations, Executive Secretary of the Organizational Committee).

Possibility to organize meeting on the issue of Abkhazian conflict in summer in Turkey within the framework of the Network was discussed. It was proposed to accompany meeting of analysts, scholars and decision-makers with meeting of Abkhazian divided society members.

During the discussion many present public activists expressed their interest and decided to contribute to the process.

Also as a result of event Dr. Bocutoglu took responsibility for organizing activities for developing cross-border cooperation between Georgia and Turkey, as it was planned in Vienna. Currently Dr. Bocutoglu is organizing the civil society organizations focused on cross-border trade in Turkish side. SCIRS Research Center on the Georgian-Turkish Relations will be responsible for the preparation process on the Georgian side.



# International working meeting of the experts *Innovative approaches to the Black Seasecurity system*

International working meeting of the experts *Innovative approaches to the Black Sea security system* held on May 19, 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia was focused on the three main dimensions: conceptual approaches to the conflict resolution, security and regional cooperation in the Black Sea region; civil society policy initiatives in the region in process of approaching Euro-Atlantic community; institutionalization and strategic plan review of the Black Sea Commission on Conflicts.

## **Overall objective:**

Promotion of the comprehensive development of the Black Sea Region through elaboration of new better policies and technologies for conflict resolution based on realistic integrative approach, democratic values and common regional identity.

## **Objectives:**

- Development and institutionalization of ties and cooperation between representatives of the Black Sea regional analytical community working in the field of security and conflict resolution.
- Discussion and presentation of the new analytical approaches to the development of Black Sea and South Caucasus regional security systems.

- Informing representatives of the diplomatic corps and representatives of the international organizations about initiatives of the BCC and building of effective partnership with them.

During the preparation period Organizational Committee established relations and secured the backing of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of some participating states and international organizations and recommendations that were developed during the discussion were presented to the decision-makers at the national level as well as at the international level.

Meeting was carried out to serve as sequence of the conference carried out by SCIRS under support of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in April 2005. The above mentioned meeting was dedicated to the democratic principles of the efficient negotiation processes, current meeting is deepening discussion on the application of the democratic principles to the whole cycle of the conflict resolution process and is aimed to explore not only regional South Caucasus dimension, but also Black Sea regional dimension, with particular spotlight on the common security threats on the “Europe’s next shore”.

There was created the Black Sea Commission on Conflicts according to the results of the conference. Priority trends of the Commission were determined:

- Advancement of adequate understanding of the regions’ borders and possibilities of building effective security system – inculcation into political analysis and international relations the concept of “ 2 belt Black sea security”, “big and minor Black Sea Coast”
- Evaluation of the decision making process in the region in general and peace-making process in particular;
- Settlement of Abkhazian conflict – the only armed conflict at the Black Sea coast;

- Ensuring of the human rights protection and human security all over the region and in the conflict zones;
- Activation of trans-border cooperation in the Black Sea region;

According to the representative of the Black Sea Technical Institute Mr. Ertan Bozhut Oglu, the next session of the Commission on conflicts is planned to held in Trabzon.

In the result of additional consultations there was new positioning of the AGAT and AGAT + as sub regional projects or programs within the frameworks of the Black Sea format.

Below you can find presentations of the participants.



# Welcoming remarks

**ALEXANDER RUSETSKY,**  
***head of the South Caucasus Institute for Regional Security***

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first of all greet all those who decided to participate in our event and expressed interest towards issues put on the agenda. Let me express my excuses about being a bit late with the start of the working meeting and get down to the agenda.

The main aim of our meeting is to define strategy for the Black Sea security system. We will of course discuss other directions and among them values, on which our Commission will be based and in the meantime those which should be taken into consideration in the resolution of the conflicts in the Black Sea region and comprise so-called Charter of Values for conflict resolution. We shall be discussing specific ideas related to the settlement of Abkhazian conflict which is practically only armed conflict at the Black Sea coast and also we should dedicate time to the issues of transborder cooperation, also issues related to the subregional cooperation. And in the evening we will have possibility to present results of our work to the representatives of the international organizations and diplomatic corps.

On behalf of Organizational committee I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Mr. Gunter Fichtner. This foundation has been our partner for many years already and SCIRS has established very strong partnership with Foundation and actually Ebert Foundation is co-founder of the Institute itself, and we are very happy that this initiative has developed and our cooperation has been continued. So, I would like to give floor to Gunter Fichtner.

**GUENTHER FICHTNER,**

**Head of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Co-ordination Office for the South Caucasus**

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

On behalf of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation I would like to welcome you on such a pleasant morning and for those who came from afar – welcome to Tbilisi, welcome to Georgia.

I also want to congratulate our partner SCIRS and its head, Alexander Rusetsky, for the effective and timely organization of this conference on the Black Sea security system. Friedrich Ebert Foundation considers this event as a contribution of the South Caucasus civil society to peace, stability and democratization in the entire region and we are only too happy to be able to foster this process.

Georgia puts emphasis on the integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, the Black Sea area as an important element in this desire. No wonder, as the Black Sea and its countries are immediately bordering its western boundaries or shores. It is also in this context that the SCIRS – as a Georgian based organization – accept the task to integrate elements of the respective civil societies of the region in this process, a process which will eventually also be beneficial for the solution of Georgia's internal conflicts.

Let me once again congratulate our partner for the organization of this event and hope that it will contribute to the more stable, prosperous and peaceful environment not only in the South Caucasus, but in the entire Black Sea area.

Thank you very much I wish you to have good day, intensive and fruitful discussions. Thank you.

**H.E. ERTAN TEZGOR,**

***Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkey to Georgia***

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, good morning,

Well, at least I'm happy that being by coincidence the only ambassador of the Black sea country presented here, I would be in the position to represent all Black Sea countries with which we have very constructive cooperation and it's going on. We all know that the Black Sea region is in the focus of increasing strategic, geopolitical and security interests. This stresses the necessity of taking stock of the challenges existing in the region.

In addition to that, there are other difficulties peculiar to the region – management of the borders, migration, human trafficking, spread of small arms and light weapons, smuggling of drugs and organized crime are at the first lines of the list. Economic cooperation and partnership is a corner stone of regional stability and could be a practical mechanism for reducing political risks and conflicts, thus contributing to the stability. But of course the core will be the countries in the Black Sea, in this regard Turkey strongly supports regional cooperation and places BSEC high on its foreign policy priorities. Mechanism such as BSEC is much needed for the prosperity and stability in the Black Sea region. Currently, it is the only regional platform, where countries having problems with each other can meet and discuss common priorities of economic nature, on the other hand we are aware of the fact that BSEC lags behind its potential. The BSEC-EU interaction is a significant dimension, which attracts attention of the all BSEC member-states; intellectual, technical and financial assistance of the EU also might be useful incentive for our projects.

Lastly, if we think of the Caspian basin, the Caucasus and the Black Sea basin, it's a very-very important huge area and, beyond points, there are conflicting areas, and as I mentioned before BSEC, also the BLACKSEAFOR and plus "Har-

mony" Operation, these are the core points. If we would start to add in the future more forums or kinds of organizations, this might delude importance of the Black Sea area, it may instead of bringing positive elements, it may effect negatively. So, we should be all careful.

These are things that I would like to raise at this very prominent floor. I wish you success and I'm absolutely sure that this meeting will contribute a lot. We have a close cooperation with the SCIRS and what they are doing not only for the Black Sea but for the whole Caucasian region, that for me an outstanding work. So, I thank you very much to the Institute of course with the great assistance of German side. Thank you.





# Presentations

**ALEXANDER RUSETSKY,**  
***head of the South Caucasus Institute for Regional Security***

First of all couple of words regarding motivation of the setting up the Black Sea Commission on Conflicts, the motivation was as in case with creation of the SCIRS itself, we saw that expert community of the Black Sea region as well as expert community of the South Caucasus, need to cooperate more actively to provide common intellectual production, common output. On the state level there are serious changes recently, our statesmen are participating in the different processes, steer-up these processes, they have done many positive things over the last years, but in my view the role of analytical groups, of think tanks, is to put forward new ideas and to proceed them at the state level and to be presented during the discussions at the governmental level on the problems which are existing, the same applies to the discussion of the new and old threats in the Black Sea region.

The very notion of the Black Sea region might be comprehended in a different ways. In analytical literature and practice of the international relations they mainly refer to the notion of so-called “wider Black Sea region”. The most part of the cooperation entities, organizations, which has been set up, cover this wider area, uniting not only literal Black Sea countries, but also neighbors of these countries, thus, this in some respect has strengthened resource base for the potential economic cooperation and in the meantime set up some hitches for more effective cooperation at the level of immediate neighbors. Analyzing situation within our institution, we singled out two directions, two belts of the Black Sea security. The first one is so called “small” Black Sea region or literal, costal Black Sea

countries and the second belt of security comprises neighbors of these littoral states. The same of course refers to the conflict resolution.

There are different formats existing for Abkhazian conflict resolution, but the Black Sea format so far has not been existing, this happening under the circumstances, that Abkhazian conflict is sole armed conflict along Black Sea coast and if we are coming to security of the Black Sea area we first of all need to secure the area from armed conflicts and prevent armed violence. So, Abkhazian conflict is a symbol of violence, manifestation of the other social and political phenomena having place in the littoral and wider Black Sea regions, this maybe Tskhinvali conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, these tense situations, these hot spots which are operating near by coast line, and our task is in an optimal way to deliberate what are additional resources in order to in reality put these resources in motion, in order to resolve these conflicts, to get rid of the violence.

I would like to return once again to the motivation for creation of our institution, it is related to the fact that representatives of the other countries, people from outside the region of South Caucasus, are preparing recommendations for its development, when our domestic experts are not working over the topic, how to develop this region. The same applies to the security threats in the Black Sea region. In our view regional countries should actively cooperate in order to eliminate common security threats. With this regard I want to touch upon initiative of Ukrainian government, which is actually circulating for several years and now is fixed in the *Ukraine-NATO Action Plan for the year 2006* – to organize international conference on the issue of the Abkhazian conflict. The process of preparation is underway and our institution has been participating in the consultations. Thus, here we again see real opportunities for the realization of concept of linkage between regional civil society and regional decision-makers and in the meantime demonstration of the vital interests of the neighboring countries in stability and security in the coastal zone of the Black Sea area. With regard to this linkage

it is also very important to mark presence of Mr. Chelidze, who is adviser to Mr. Irakli Alasania, Special Representative of the President of Georgia on the issue of Abkhazian Resolution. We have rather optimistic experience of cooperation and we hope that Black Sea initiative and format also will be considered under auspices of the Special Representative of the President of Georgia.

I think it would be very important and beneficial for the countries of the Black Sea region if the necessary attention will be paid to “Black Sea Format of Abkhazian resolution”. I’m not saying that resolution format should solely going down to the Black Sea format, but we are thinking about working in the several formats and diversification within negotiation and peacemaking processes may be positive. Black Sea countries may act as leaders at the new stage of resolution.

We are ready to come up with this idea and present package of the recommendations for the regional policy-makers, for Georgian leadership, GUAM countries. We are using the fact that GUAM Summit will take place and our colleagues from Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Georgia expressed their consent to bring our recommendations to the Summit providing positive evaluation of our initiative. That is why it is extremely important to define how Black Sea countries, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Turkey can contribute to the resolution process in Abkhazia first of all and in future to the other conflicts existing and emerging in the region, building of mutual understanding and creation of zone of peace and welfare in the region. I leave the space open for any contribution made by the representatives of the regional expert community who appear to be nowadays key persons in regional development and key advocates of the peaceful resolution of all confrontations and security.

**DR. OGNYAN MINCHEV,**

***Executive director of the Institute of Regional and International Studies***

Region of the Black Sea is the region which undergoes formation process. Until now it is not fully clear that such region is clearly effaced. During the centuries Black Sea region has been historically put under influence of bipolar competition of the big empires, Russian and Ottoman. Then in modern history during the Cold War period this bipolar division has been transformed into confrontation in the geopolitical sphere between the USSR and the West. Turkey represented “West” in this region during the Cold War.

For the first time during by-past years, currently we are facing possibility to reconstruct the Black Sea region as the region of integration, cooperation, interdependence and democracy. Into region, where both “small” and “big” countries, small and big communities will be ensured with adequate chances to take part in the strategizing on mutual development, as well as frame own attitudes and interests. Given context refers to the so-called Charter of Values, which has been unveiled by Mr. Rusetsky in his welcoming remarks. Black Sea region consists of countries which are subjected to the dramatic transformation, shift from one political system to another, but what is more, it is shift from one dominating group of values to another, passage to the alternative level of understanding and organization of political and community life, which prescribes passage to the new group of values of course.

Given transition period led us to the confrontation between values, however being people who seek practical approaches to the solutions of the problems, we should not focus only on values, but seek to explore linkages between value and policy. It is values that are in the core of 4 main modern political strategies.

First one, can be called metaphorically, – “new empire policy”, approach of super-power, based on political thinking of XIX century. This approach may be described by the formula: all which lost for others pertains to us and all what is

lost by us pertains to others. It practically leads to permanent endless confrontation. Referring to this I'm not talking about one or two countries, but about every strategic approach based on unilateral treatment of the region. This approach contributes to the ethno-territorial atomism and redistribution of power, which are the methods always applied by empires.

The second strategic approach is also based on old political thinking routed in XIX century, but it has been developing during XX century too. It is strategy of "authoritarian nationalism". This strategy is peculiar for the small countries which got beyond the control of empires, which were dominating them over centuries. These countries exercise their right to form independent states that relates to the problem of confined resources, existing political values, traditions, and opportunities, which are at disposal. All mentioned above unfortunately leads to construction of authoritarian nationalistic state rather than classical liberal political system. Of course authoritarian nationalism makes to pay its price, which is interethnic confrontation. It refers to the next political strategy – radical ethnocentrism of the small communities. This approach is often called by sociologists "postmodern tribalism" and rests with dynamic processes resulting in setting up of more radical political structures and may be described by "phenomena of nested doll". There is always next doll inside of one larger you have in your hands. There is always next community which has impression of being oppressed inside larger community. The process of finding new dolls is also endless and the smallest one is hidden so deep that could hardly be found at glance. This strategy of the ethnical radicalism from the one hand serves as demonstration of national state crisis and on the other hand it is manifestation of reversion to the traditional societies in postmodern world. We can say that these political realities lay solid ground for conflicts.

However, there is fourth model of values and political order, being to certain extent based on 3 mentioned above or rather, confronting them, given model

might contribute to the political development in the Black Sea area. This is model of interdependence, which is based on democratic principles. Not being stable current model, nevertheless, provides chance to take reasonable risk and construct pluralistic community from former enemies. Trying to create such kind of community in our region we should bare in mind that Europe has already passed this period in political development in order to overwhelm contradictions existing in the past. Nowadays Europe faces asperities, retaining European structures' stability and gaining local support for them. These difficulties prove that Europe is not perfect example, but there is no other choice for the Black Sea region rather than application to the democratic values and principles, which are still of current interest nowadays, through system of interdependence and consolidation at the regional level. It is not advanced guarantee of success, it is one of the options of political development. In my view it might be beneficial to use this model in order to develop Black Sea region within the framework of conflict resolution. One additional argument for that is the fact that structure of ethnical diversity could be addressed in a democratic manner only at regional level. It is very hard, especially here in Georgia, in South Caucasus, though it is evident, that it is very difficult to create democratic political system at the national level only. You have to have a regional approach and apply to regional approach for this purpose. I will end up with several notes on some more practical considerations. We speak about values, we speak about strategic design, but when we apply those designs in the practice, we need to see the basic dividing line, which is between modernizing reformist political elites on one side helped by civil society and traditionalist elites on the other side helped by intense organized criminal networks operating thought the countries of transition. This is the division line which is seen at the all levels of power sharing and it is not possible to foresee success of this fragile unity between reformists and civil society without support of this institutional framework which represents present Europe and Euro-Atlantic community. I think that this support is in favor of all countries and all

societies in the region, big and small, established and transitional. As I said Europe represents this particular democratic design of mutual dependence, that I think possible and desirable to apply here, and secondly Euro-Atlantic community as a whole have resources to help us catch up with process of reforms which end up at the level of regional stability, regional security and regional cooperation, which will make us adequate partner within the system of present world democracy.

**DR. ALLA YAZKOVA,**  
**Head of the Center on Mediterranean-Black Sea Studies**  
**of the Institute of Europe (RAS)**

Given topic is very wide and it is extremely difficult to cover all at once so I would like to present for your consideration some points related to the scope of the problem. Role of the trans-border cooperation is quite known in the theory and practice of the international relations. I would like to focus your attention on the forms of transborder cooperation within the conflict zones. With this regard we first of all should be aware that we are talking not only about cooperation along officially recognized state borders, but also former administrative-territorial borders, as for example in case of Abkhazia.

It is extremely interesting to track on role and functions of the trans-border cooperation, especially with participation of the regions which are notable for their ethnic diversity. Such factors as ethno-economical stratification, ethnic consolidation of non-resident groups of population, difficulties of their integration to the alien linguistic and cultural environment might act both as factors of cooperation and factors of antagonism. Process of trans-border migration as one of the trans-border cooperation forms also plays two-fold role. First of all we should refer to the groups of population which are forced to migrate because of hostilities and oppression during violent conflict, as in case of Georgia or Azerbaijan after Abkhazian, South-Ossetian and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. We do not refer to them as refugees as far as in the eyes of international law they did not cross borders of the own country. They are considered to be IDPs. All mentioned above also describes dynamic processes of migrations in the post-conflict areas, which are hardly may be estimated as legal. If observing example of Abkhazia and even no touching upon issue of granting of Russian passports to the population of break-away region, we may say that migration here played negative role contributing to the strengthening of the breakaway region and formation of its de-facto political



and social systems and what is even more dangerous – to strengthening of the organized crime on the territories which are not controlled by international law, national governments, international and civil society organizations.

In 1994-1999 during the blockade of Abkhazia illegal cross-border trade has been actively carried out, namely of citrus, tea and bay leaf with Krasnodarsky kray (region). Corruption was widespread at the border crossing points as well as racket in the breakaway region. In the ensuing years extension of the forms and methods of uncontrolled cooperation between residents of the breakaway region of Abkhazia and Russia has been observed.

On the one hand purposeful migration might act as form of reclamation of the post conflict under-populated zones, as in case of Turkish resettlement to the non-recognized republic North Cyprus, especially in line with social investments. On the other hand exceedence of the tolerable share of migrants (10%) in populous regions causes growth of conflict potential, e.g. business migration of Armenians from the Krasnodarskiy kray (region) to Abkhazia. Forced migration in the conflict zones as I already mentioned might play its role in growth of trans-border tensions, e.g. migration path South Ossetia – North Ossetia – Ingushetia.

Cooperation initiatives in the bordering regions might be both positive, contributing to the conflict resolution and those hampering resolution process.

As one of the positive examples of the trans-border cooperation with conflict zone can serve launch in April 2006 of the joint project by organizations of disabled from Tbilisi and Sokhumi on producing of the wheelchairs, elaborated with assistance of international nonprofit organizations *Wheelchair International*, *International Alert*, *World Institute of Disability*. Project is appealed for confidence building between Georgian and Abkhazian communities, economical development and social-economic integration of the disabled persons. For our soviet mentality it is not trans-border cooperation, as far as it is cooperation via

administrative border. However whether we agree or not factual border line is existing along Inguri. It may be small step forward anyway.

In case of Nagorno-Karabakh – existence of the Lachinskiy corridor for the Armenian side seems to be extremely important, as interlink between self-proclaimed NKR and Armenia (during years 1991-1992 foodstuffs and armaments have been delivered to NKR by air which handicapped contacts with breakaway region). In the meantime Lachin is one of the occupied districts of Azerbaijan and its status can be decided only in course of general conflict resolution. Presence of the occupied territories serves as obstacle for the development of transborder cooperation with Armenia. The both adversaries feel need in restoration of the transportation infrastructure which existed in the past, recognize damage which has been caused by the conflict to the pipeline project Tbilisi-Baku-Ceyhan.

If consider situation in Kosovo – majority of the foodstuffs and manufactured goods are delivered to Kosovo from Serbia, they are cheaper than local and, what is more, between Serbia and Kosovo, as its de jure part, there are no customs frontier and rates, nevertheless mutual estrangement is kept on the back of propaganda campaigns carried out by both parties. Hoc anno 2006 resolution of the Kosovo problem is anticipated as “functional, independent on certain conditions state” (“conditional independence”). *International Crisis Group* proposes creation in the Northern part of Kosovo (Kosovska-Mitrovitsa) of special conditions under which gradually could be achieved more or less fair consensus between Serbians and Albanians and real existing autonomy would be created for Serbians.

As obvious, named forms of the transborder cooperation to the very low extent contribute to release of tensions and development of the interregional (interstate cooperation) so far. In the meanwhile drug trafficking, smuggling of weapons

even with low nuclear components proliferates in the trans-border territories of the non-recognized formations, as well as on the territories deprived of the efficient state or international control, in the so-called “grey zones”. It is very necessary to impose efficient state or international control over the transportation of services and commodities over the border of “grey zones”.

Initiatives of trans-border cooperation could not be successful as a tool for conflict resolution and effective development of regions without solution of more general problems. Supposedly interim actions should be taken, usage of sustained forms of trans-border cooperation to the benefit of resolution of ethno-political conflicts. Finally mutual recognition of the state borders is necessary as a basis of efficient trans-border cooperation.

**H.E. NICOLAE MICU,**  
***Editor-in-chief of the Romanian Journal of the International and Regional Studies,***  
***Director of Studies and Publications of Romanian Institute of International Studies***

It was a very good idea to include into the subjects of this meeting the very important subject of transborder cooperation, because it is very essential part of the Black Sea regional cooperation, which has been in process for a number of years. When we speak of transborder cooperation, certainly we take it as a means, as important means of promoting conflict resolution as it is stated in the program, but it is also very helpful instrument for promotion of cooperation between communities on the both sides along the frontiers in problems of common interest – development of particular infrastructure, protection of environment, fighting organized crime, which has this aspect of transit over borders. Transborder cooperation is also an instrument for mutual confidence building. The question of ethnic minorities is also one of the issues of common interest, particularly in our part of the Europe, which is rich in cultural and spiritual diversity.

I will refer a little bit further to the recent initiative concerning establishment of the European region in the Black Sea area, an important initiative taken by Council of Europe. In general this concept of euro regions means cooperation at the level of regional and local elected authorities, they are everywhere in Europe and some of them are quite successful, e.g. Euro region Carpathians uniting Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, has been established more than 10 years ago and it is successful experiment. Recent enlargement of the EU, which works close with the Council of Europe, stimulated Council of Europe to come up with 3 initiatives to establish Euro regions around 3 close regions situated along 3 seas: The Baltic, The Adriatic, and The Black Sea. The process of establishment of the Adriatic Sea Euro region has been launched in February in Venice. The Black Sea Euro region was launched in Constanta in the end of March. Baltic

Euro region functions successfully. The basic idea is to open new channels of cooperation, new bridges of cooperation between those countries which are members of the EU and countries which are not yet members or will not be members for sometime.

Cooperation at the level of local and regional authorities also has very much to do with general European idea, value of the democratic development, because elected local authorities are involved in the immediate cooperation. Development of cooperation at this level is substantial support for those forms of cooperation which are developed following the decisions of central governments.

In the context of the Black Sea, we have so far 3 main levels of the cooperation – intergovernmental, which is BSEC organization, interparliamentary, which is Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea countries, and of academic community, which is Network of the Black Sea Universities. More than 100 universities from the whole area got together and they have periodic congresses, the next one is in September in Varna, very important one, as far as they try to harmonize curricula and approaches.

In Constanta it was reached an agreement in principle to establish this Euroregion. Representatives of governments have been invited and they agreed in principle to support this initiative of local authorities. Governmental representatives adopted mentioned Declaration on creation of Euroregion, which has not been signed. Representatives of the Russian Federation explained that consultations were not sufficient to come to final agreement, but Declaration was accepted, opening the process which will continue during the next year. There is a commitment to establish Euro region until the end of the next year. They will have in the fall conference in Turkey, probably in Antalya or Trabzon to continue process of formulating the legal status of the Euro region and certainly establishing the structure – Secretariat and communication authorities.

Speaking of transborder cooperation I will just make one another reference, I will take existing instrument of transborder cooperation. We have it in the context of South-Eastern Europe – the Regional Center for Combating Organized Crime, in its wide sense including trafficking and illegal migration. This Center is in Bucharest established 7 years ago. It is well-structured, there are 12 countries involved, each country has 2 permanent representatives – one is from police and one is from customs service. This center has been quite efficient in stopping drugs from crossing borders. 7 of those countries participating are also members of the BSEC. We should say that in case of BSEC we had set interstate agreement on combating crime few years ago. As far as crime takes different forms, such as terrorism for example, the Protocol, mechanism, has been established for combating this negative phenomenon. Each country has an officer, they established the Group of liaison officers who communicate with each other on the implementation of the mentioned Convention on combating crime and terrorism. There is discussion going on about the prospect of creation active communication between the Center which covers South-Eastern Europe and Group of liaison officers, in order to create unified system which will cover all the Southern Europe and Black Sea region.

***DR. ERSAN BOCUTOGLU,***  
***director of the Center for Black Sea,***  
***Caucasus and Central Asian Studies, Karadeniz University***

Today we face necessity to define the region, to adopt this definition and then use to analyze economic and political processes going in line. The problem always laid in frequent separation of these two objectively interconnected processes in analytical thinking and strategizing. Nevertheless economic component of the cooperation always was estimated as very important and gave birth to the only steady regional cooperation entity – BSEC – in the meantime it has not been used to the full extent, sometimes being tintured with political implications or even substituted by them. In some respect it caused lack of economic cohesion in the region and inappropriate level of regional consolidation.

The region is strategically important for the West as a trade link and area of transit, and because of its fossil fuel deposits. As crises in the Balkans, Caucasus and Caspian have shown, however, ethnic animosities, economic crises, refugees, environmental problems and disparities in military power make the area prone to instability. As well as constituting a divisive factor, the existence of large oil and gas reserves encourages cooperation, involving multinational consortia and external states. The major actors in the area are Russia and the United States. For Russia, the region is a natural bulwark, a gateway to the world's oceans and an area in which it seeks to re-establish its influence. The United States has had two main goals in the region: to support US commercial involvement in oil production and export, and to reduce its dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf. For mainly geostrategic and economic reasons respectively, Turkey and Iran also play important roles in the region; the importance of oil makes them both potential rivals and partners.

Speaking about economic conflicts in the Black Sea area wanting or not we will track to the routes of other conflicts of violent nature, which take place and to

the parties and stake holders of these major conflicts, which now are involved within the economic confrontations in the Black Sea area. This can be illustrated by the recent well-known issue of embargos faced by Georgia and Moldova. It appears that economic measures which are supposed to be positive for any regional development in our region often have negative impact as far as sometimes contain element of violence being used as argument in political debate, which of course is not in favor of appropriate development of regional trade and other forms of economic cooperation.

Economic dimension of the regional development potential should be analyzed in accordance with degree of readiness to take part in the international trade and transportation. Black Sea region possess great potential, but because of number of reasons, among which political contradictions, different levels of political and economic development and different affiliations of the countries of the region, disputable borders, undeveloped transport infrastructure and frozen conflicts, this potential is not used to the full extent.

Nevertheless, lately potential of the Black Sea region and its parts as transportation knots, both for goods and, what is even more important, for gas and oil, has grown along with interest from the side of supra-powers and international entities. Crucially, we need to develop alternative oil and gas pipelines and transport routes from the Caspian basin via the Black Sea region to the European Union. Making full use of the transit potential of the Black Sea region is essential, both to its economic and democratic development, and to Europe's energy supplies.

In this context, it is possible to conclude that "security" is no longer the sole preserve of the military. Human, economic and environmental securities have become complementary components of politico-military security. In line with the newly emerging understanding of security, focus is shifting from the security of the State to the security of the individual. The sustainability of the prosperity of



the societies, which lies also at the core of the existing economic cooperation instruments within our region

While mentioning economic cooperation within the Black Sea region, we observe also big changes in our economic and commercial life which occurred in the past two decades. With economic transition and return to the economic growth throughout the former Eastern Bloc, commercial traffic across, into and out of the Black Sea took off. Sea ports whence it is carried to markets in Europe and elsewhere.

In essence, the Black Sea has been transformed into a busy commercial thoroughfare connecting Europe's heartland, via its southeastern shores, to the Caucasus and other parts of Asia.

In the framework of rapidly increasing economic and commercial ties among the Black Sea countries, the existing cooperative mechanisms such as the BSEC may also be instrumental in promoting growth, as well as facilitating the Region's integration with the wider European structures.

However, increasing international interest to the region give new perspective for the region in all regards and in the meantime make BSEC fail as its structure and approaches does not allow to use regional potential to full extent and seeking to fulfill their interests countries of the region more rely on bilateral projects then on regional or multilateral. Our task as for experts is to make our communities believe that their task and potential benefit is to make international organizations to treat them collectively, as a region.

**OLGA DOROKHINA,**

***Coordinator of the SCIRS Caucasian Center for Transborder Cooperation***

The center, I am representing is working on the research of borders and transboundary territories in order to build up confidence near by the borders and we are carrying out the complex analysis of the Caucasian countries in the sphere of transborder cooperation and also research of the European experience and culture of the transborder cooperation within CEE. Creation of our Center was not accidental due to the conflicts existing. In our region most of the conflicts used to emerge in the transboundary zones and we can say that carrying out of reasonable well-thought policy in the transboundary regions and stimulation of cooperation may turn out to be the important fact in overall region.

Right now we are dealing with the Black Sea region, which is very important region for the stability of the whole Europe. There is certain experience of the transborder initiatives in the Black Sea region, among which cooperation on creation of new information systems between Bulgarian cities Varna and Burgas and Romanian city Galati, project of the environmental monitoring, into which Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Georgia have been involved. As an example of the transborder cooperation also could serve project of the wildlife sanctuary between Turkey and Bulgaria as continuation of *Stranfja National Park* situated in the near-border coastal territory.

Taking into consideration linkage of the Black Sea with the Central Europe, as well as its geographical location at the confluence of the East and West, Black Sea region poses special importance for Europe.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Romania initiated creation of the Euroregion Black Sea and on 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 in the Romanian city Constanta within the framework of the international conference *Interregional cooperation in the Black Sea basin* representatives of 10 countries, among which

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Turkey, Romania, Russia and Ukraine, gained an offering to exchange views on the issue of creation of the Euroregion Black Sea. Participants of the conference recognized necessity of joining the efforts in the development of the Black Sea basin, stabilization and strengthening of social and economic cohesion in the region. Declaration on creation of the Euroregion has not officially been signed, as far as Russia has certain objections. It was said by the representative of the Russian MFA that Russian party paying necessary attention to the enhancement of multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea basin, but this idea seems to prescribe creation of supra-structure which seeks to regulate existing structures. Nevertheless given point is controversial, as well as other issues related to the problem, anyway transborder cooperation in the Black Sea region will evolve. I would like to emphasize that transborder cooperation in the Black Sea region gained financial support of the EU. Following the results of the conference *Crossborder cooperation (CBC) within the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) for years 2007-2013* 13.3 millions of Euro have been allocated for the development of transborder cooperation in the Black Sea region.

At the conference in Constanta it was decided to create Euroregion Black Sea by the end of the year 2007 on the pattern of the Euroregion Adriatic. Nevertheless it is extremely important to apply to the experience of the Euroregion Adriatic; necessity of usage of Baltic States experience in the field of transborder cooperation is also obvious. As far as Baltic Sea cooperation system is more established institutionalized structure, within which cooperation is carried out beginning with issues of security and defense and up to development of tourism and solution of the ecological problems. Secondly, if refer to conflicts, there are examples of the successful conflict resolution in the Baltic Sea region, in particular settlements of the conflict on Aland Islands, model of which is proposed for Nagorno-Karabakh resolution. Last year special tour of Caucasian civil society activists

and experts has been organized to the Aland Islands in order to explore existing experience. Thirdly, Russian Federation, namely Kaliningrad oblast (region), is successfully involved in the activities of the given Euroregion. Thus, experience accumulated within the Baltic Euroregion might play positive role in the development of the Black Sea region. As I have already said the EU is introducing new instruments for financing transboundary activities and for the Black Sea we will have two financial instruments – ENPI and Pre-accession Financial Instrument. Through these instruments they will finance development of transborder cooperation in our region. It is very important that the EU is allocating funds for development.

But it is very important to ensure adequacy of allocation. My point is that recently in the mass media appeared information that out of 7 billions of Euro allocated within TACIS Program in the region 5 billions has been used in inappropriate way. Right now question of the efficient use of the finances which will be allocated by the EU rises namely for transborder cooperation.

In my understanding within the framework of the Black Sea Commission, we are intended to create it would be beneficial to set up working group of experts which will focus on the issues of efficient application to the mechanisms of transborder cooperation in the Black Sea region in line with monitoring of the already existing initiatives in the field. It is very important to activate initiatives of the civil society because it may assist to strengthening of the local communities and in the meantime provide ground for closer regional cooperation.

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Issues of regional cooperation become more and more topical and foreground, including for such a complicated region as South Caucasus, where majority of the existing problems hampering development of the countries are interconnected.

Till this day regional relationships between Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were not developed to the sufficient extent with no regard to certain important achievements. What is also very important, country did not have common priorities; however this situation changed rapidly after all three countries declared European integration as one of the foreign policy priorities. And all three countries became involved into the New European Neighborhood Policy. Nevertheless Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan strive to Europe, they become more and more estranged of each other. While approaching to the European community is impossible until region is divided by conflicts, which may possibly lead to the new violence and war. Democracy building and conflict resolution are one of the major conditions for the EU involvement in the Caucasus, as far as security sometimes is more important than economics.

Process occurring in the South Caucasus often influence situation in the Black Sea region, with assumption that Georgia is a part of both the Black Sea region and South Caucasus. In the meantime such powerful Black Sea state as Turkey also is South Caucasian country, as far as North and North-East provinces of Turkey geographically are parts of the South Caucasus. Countries of the South Caucasus should first of all should align own dialogue in order to speak out themselves at the European level.

The best format for the aligning of the dialogue seems to be – AGAT – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey. AGAT is new initiative, new quadruple format

of the regional relations in the South Caucasus, anticipating promotion of democratic processes, and formation of the advantageous environment for the carrying out of the dialog between countries of the region. AGAT/AGAT+ INITIATIVE – counter-initiative of analytical community of the South Caucasus to the European Neighborhood Policy

Initiatives of the EU in the region and regional course on European integration did not avoid observation of the regional analytical community. This topic is widely discussed and as a result of the discussion new models of regional cooperation have been put forward by reference to the European integration. What should be done in order to organize counter initiative in the most efficient way? According to traditional approaches South Caucasus includes Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. According to certain experts, North-Eastern part of the Turkey also is part of the Southern Caucasus. As it was mentioned before Turkey bordering with Georgia and Armenia is the only state in the region which has started negotiations process on EU accession officially. In such a way Turkey might play positive role in the process of the European integration of its neighbors, new perspectives and opportunities emerge for regional cooperation. For another thing resources of the EU are not used to the sufficient extent in the region, nevertheless growth of potential of their usage is obvious.

#### **Goals and tasks of the program**

Promotion of the integration of the South Caucasus countries to the European structures by means of the widening of the regional format

#### **Tasks**

- Investigation of the problems impeding integration both between countries of the region and their integration to the European community
- Investigation of the possible common strategic agenda

- Creation of the “road map” – joint program for the integration for the South Caucasian countries to the EU
- Development of the long-termed ties between analytical groups of the South Caucasus countries.

Hallmark of the AGAT project lays in changing of the geopolitical boundaries of the region, as far as according to the masterminds of the project South Caucasus includes 4 countries, which is vigorously described by its title – acronym of the first letters of countries’ names. Certain opponents might raise voice against proposed regional format, appealing to the fact that integration to the EU and other European structures did not serve as impetus for stir of the South Caucasus countries to each other and for the solution of the urgent problems, first of all settlement of the conflicts.

However regional format AGAT does not seek to establish integrated political space in the region at the current stage. Given project has been created for legalization of the existing problems and in the meantime is positioned as an attempt for their joint solution, which might exercise only positive influence on the whole region. AGAT is not political initiative; it prescribes only facilitation of the dialogue between analysts from 4 countries. In the meantime cooperation between analysts should serve as a guarantee, that parties would disengage themselves from the political bonds and their dialogue will be of constructive character.

In order to avoid isolation of the region and for obtainment of the intellectual support from outside format AGAT+ is prescribed, which includes Southern regions of Russia, the EU, USA and international organizations. South Caucasus is both geographically and geopolitically wider than we used to think and consider while strategizing. Without involvement of Turkey and South Regions of Russian Federation it would be impossible to improve regional conditions.



**SCIRS** – non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit, transnational think tank, working on the security issues.

SCIRS promotes establishment of peace and security in Georgia, South Caucasus and geopolitical neighborhood, putting special attention to investigation of the reasons of emerging and resolution methodology of conflicts.

SCIRS is institute of public policy sponsoring creation and development of the target-based think tanks, which carry out interdisciplinary researches based on the joint action of the representatives of the all 3 society sectors and complex approach to the problems.

Experts of SCIRS carry out scientific and educational activities within the framework of the institute, elaborate new methodic of conflict prevention and resolution, human security issues and deficient international relations, promote inculcation of the research results at the national and international levels.

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