

Seminar of the European Ideas Network and Institute of Popular Studies

Neighbourhood policy and regional cooperation frameworks in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 18-19 November 2010

Note by Prof Anthony Glees, Rapporteur, WG 7, 23.11.10

It was clear that the new democracies of eastern Europe bring a commitment and vitality to the security debate that affects them and the whole of the European Union so fundamentally. This important and path-breaking seminar which brought together political leaders and experts from a variety of nations demonstrated that to the delivery of security to the Black Sea area requires careful analysis of numerous, highly complex issues. Perhaps the most important of these was the position taken in respect of security by Russia. To some observers, Russia seeks 19<sup>th</sup> century solutions, based on the requirement that the entire Black Sea region be regarded as in its 'sphere of influence', to what should be seen as the 21<sup>st</sup> century concerns expressed by the EU members in this part of Europe as well as those not in the EU but who are also partners in NATO. Dealing with Russia in a workmanlike manner required not just the affirmation of the values of the EU and, indeed, of NATO, but their reasoned articulation within the EP by its parliamentarians. It was not always easy for those on the western end of the EU to see with sufficient clarity that those on its south eastern flank are not just an important safeguard of the entire security of the EU but also are able, especially in the field of energy supply, to offer the EU key resources. This seminar explored both current areas of potential conflict but also some of the 'frozen conflicts' which will, before long, require a solution. NATO and the EU and its values offer the only rational way forward if a rational security architecture is to be established, safeguarding the rights of all the actors in the Black Sea region. This seminar reflected on the remedies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, espoused by Clausewitz, and those of modern times, associated with Jean Monnet – and for the most part opted for modernity.

Anthony Glees

Iulian Fola, Presidential Advisor, described the regional identity of the nations bordering the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and the fact that volatile Middle East was not far away. Events shaping the EU and NATO are influenced by the changing attitudes of those in this region. Security and prosperity demanded their further evolution and the implications of the 2008 Georgian-Russian war still lacked wider understanding. There was here an opportunity to develop energy provision which offered a huge possibility for economic cooperation. But this needed to be managed properly. For this to happen the EU needed to pay close attention to the Black and Caspian Sea areas. Economic modernization but also a new relationship between NATO and Russia and between Russia and its neighbours in the region were required. Russia was needed as a partner but this was still not easy to achieve. It was to be hoped that the Lisbon NATO meeting would take an important step towards this. There deserved to be increasing confidence in the region and in the extent to which it was now able to cooperate. Above all, the entire Black Sea region needed to be secured for democracy; it required protection but also good governance for which expertise was needed. The EU Charter on Good Governance could be applied to all states in the area along with environmental protection. The Danube Strategy would add its part to bringing together the whole EU from the western reaches to the Black Sea.

Ognyan Minchev said it is vital to realise that the Black Sea was a border area where the EU met the Middle East and Russia. It was a strategic corridor between the EU and Central Asia and also an area of transition. The elements in the security paradigm here consisted of interdependence of newly independent states of the former USSR, of nation building and an awareness that Russia liked to think of 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas based on the notion of spheres of influence. To these should be added the influence of post-Kemalist Turkey. All were matched by the new post-Communist geopolitical system which involved the extension of the western value system to the east.

The security challenges were severe: there was economic and environmental organised crime and a new second wave related to the resurgence of Russia. Within Russia there was growing support for the idea that the new eastern part of the post-Soviet space should not develop as the western part did, namely independently of Russian power. In the case of Turkey, a new strategic depth was emerging and with it the dilemmas and security threats associated with restructuring. A very intense arms race was being conducted in the South Caucasus, a product of US and NATO withdrawal.

Many states in the region were fragile and at an initial stage of nation-building. A mixture of 'hard' security (NATO) and 'soft' security choices existed but it was also necessary to confront organised crime, corruption and the transformation of political elites from pre-EU days into oligarchic elites today. To many in the region, the EU's vital interests were at stake here and the promises made in 1989 to support all countries who had opted for democracy should not be forgotten. What might be required would vary from state to state: some already had strong dissenting traditions in Soviet times. Above all, a flexible energy security policy was required with an understanding of how the various pipelines in the region raised different concerns. But the region also had its own resources and these should be a bargaining chip in any dealings with Russia's Gazprom. The significance of Turkey should not be forgotten. The EU should develop its conflict management potential; this had not worked well in Georgia and above all offer intermediate strategies for enlargement to the EU rather than halting it.

Leonid Gusev examined the relationship between Russia and Ukraine as an example of what he termed a 'contested neighbourhood'. The region's dynamics were changing. Russia had and would insist on a position of influence around all its borders and wanted and would have a say on all energy issues and curbing any further expansion of NATO. Ukraine had been offered a ten year discount on Russian gas in return for a twenty-five year extension on its Black Sea lease which once ratified will generate a thirty per cent discount with \$100m being paid for its naval base. Ukraine had been paying one of the highest prices in Europe for its gas. Alongside this arrangement there had been a further security agreement between the two states which would help fight internal terrorism, cyber crime, international crime, drugs, illegal immigration, the protection of atomic energy and provide effective counter-intelligence cooperation. The exchange of information between Ukraine and Russia was thereby ensured. All in all this demonstrated the determination of Russia and Ukraine to work together for Black Sea security.

Andrey Kovatchev MEP described how the diversity of the Black Sea region had been used to further separatism, smuggling and organised crime. The principal actors here were the USA, the EU and Russia. Turkey, as a NATO member, played a significant role. Yet the EU's role in the Black Sea was limited and, rightly, the EP was dissatisfied with this with Traian Ungureanu MEP playing a leading role here. The EU's new External Service must address this matter also and provide sufficient funding and administrative capacity for the region.

It was important to examine Turkey's Black Sea role both in respect of the anti-missile shield and the prospect of Iranian nuclear weapons. The shield was a priority for the region and the argument that

it would reduce the deterrent power of such weapons was invalid. The 'frozen conflicts' of the region (for example, over Nagorno Karabakh or Armenia) had shown the EU's capacity to support both sides in seeking to resolve conflict. But until this was done there would be significant problems for the supply of gas and oil through this region. In Georgia it was vital to bring the parties to the same table, not an easy task given the lack of constructive Russian plans at present. Yet Moldova and Transylvania were working towards integration with a joint fight against organised crime and a common commercial plan. The EU's attitude towards Turkey was not helpful.

More stable democracies in the region would assist in establishing democratic security. The Schengen regulations had already been put in place in the border with Bulgaria. The elections in Ukraine had not been entirely positive. Elsewhere, those who controlled oil revenues were those with political power and democratic practice was the best means of addressing the problem. Finally, effective surveillance strategies were required for the region with effective internet monitoring of what could, alas, become a conflict zone.

Can Oztas began with an account of the changing perception, through history, of the Black Sea region. It had gone from being an area of terror to the first ancient Greeks, with its dark and cruel waters, to being seen as a 'welcoming' sea. Surely it was this latter definition that corresponded to what the EU would wish for the region. The Sea provided a common heritage and the task was now to exploit this. It was true that, compared with the Mediterranean, it was harder to find signs of a shared culture and likely that ethnic and religious differences had hindered its development. There were regional and non-regional actors of whom account needed to be taken but even so the Black Sea's history was more peaceful than that of the Mediterranean and it this was how it was perceived. Of course there were frozen conflicts and indeed tensions between Russia and the regional players. Energy security was a complicating factor along with rivalry between states. But the pipe line to the Balkans was a pipe line for peace.

That said, the tensions in the region were a cause for serious concern and wider cooperation involving Turkey was needed. The Black Sea Task Force (which included Turkish participation) was a most useful tool for search and rescue operations. Whilst there were currently tensions too between Turkey and the USA, attempts were being made to resolve and overcome them. The aim of everyone involved should be to establish a common economic area under the umbrella of the EU and with Turkish control of the Straits and no reason to believe this wish could not be realised.

Ranier Fsadani argued that the themes that were touched in an earlier session – energy, economics and politics; alliances and leverage in respect of pipe lines – were all key. Indeed even access to pipe lines affected the legitimacy of the states involved. There was a crisis here and it needed to be considered by the EU. Legal aspects of regional potential conflicts were raised in working on Mediterranean conflicts, in connection with oil deposits in Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon and Israel. What had been learned was that trust was the key to resolution. Malta and Italy made competing claims to seabed resources but trustfulness would prevent any conflict. The question was: what kind of peace was desired, the kind advanced by Clausewitz or by Jean Monnet? Sustaining peace was an EU mission. Chinese activities in Africa were about access to resources; they presented a challenge to the environment and were contrary to the values of the EPP and the EIN. In this region, it was necessary to go a different route where peace was seen as a creative activity and was not simply the absence of conflict. Shared governance was a way forward but so, too, were good communications.

In the Discussion it was noted that the EU needed an understanding of the global picture that was emerging, one with a more geopolitical aspect. Equal partners in an evolving neighbourhood policy would eschew conflict. Stressing cohesion policies would also make a difference and lessons for the

**4 | Neighbourhood Policy and Regional Cooperation  
Frameworks in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the  
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development of a Black Sea strategy might be gleaned from the Baltic Sea Strategy which involved Norway and Russia as well as EU states.