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Lessons learned from Japan's Fukushima accident for the Black Sea region

By Dr. Zefi Dimadama

The Fukushima Dai-ichi accident has revived the issue of nuclear safety and has created strong images that will accompany future debates over nuclear energy. Up till now, policy debates have focused on increasing the role of nuclear power; they must now shift to ensuring that stricter standards are met by the existing nuclear plants, and especially the older ones. The Japanese case has shown that older reactors are the most vulnerable to failure; they are designed to lower standards than more recent ones and are not sufficiently upgraded. It has also underscored how much more the system and contemporary policies still need to change. As Japan struggles to cope with the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl, such conclusions should raise questions elsewhere, including in the Black Sea region.

It is already evident that climate change, and particularly rising temperatures, is having significant impacts on physical, biological, and human systems. Warmer temperatures are causing changes in the hydrological cycle affecting the incidence and severity of drought and floods and the availability of water, threatening in many aspects human society and industry (e.g. agriculture, rural economies, water security and food security). Sea level rise is another consequence of climate change that will

continued on next page

have an increasing impact on human settlements and infrastructure. The Black Sea area is particularly susceptible to this kind of changes, and it may well experience floods, droughts, earthquakes, sea level rise, shortage of freshwater and degradation of agricultural products (Tavitian et. al. 2008, Greening the Black Sea, p.22). Furthermore, local populations are likely to migrate due to severe economic and environmental impacts provoked by climate change.

Due to the ongoing hostilities, organised crime, corruption and poverty, environmental protection is certainly not the primary target of the governments. The economic survival of these populations usually lies in unsustainable developing practices, such as illegal over-logging and uncontrolled urban sprawl that further aggravate environmental degradation. However, the countries of the Black Sea region are aware of the environmental problems and challenges that are posed by man-induced interventions in global climate. The problem is that they still have not adopted tools of environmental risks assessment and early warning prediction scenarios about potential environmental natural and technical hazards and crisis management. It is encouraging that the recent joint declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (2010) refers explicitly to the strengthening of “collaboration on addressing common challenges by elaborating shared plans and initiatives concerning the implementation of models of environmental risks assessment, especially early warning prediction models, with the aim of taking joint measures and increasing safety precautions against disasters in the wider Black Sea area.”

Attached to the legacy of using oil, gas or nuclear energy, the Black Sea countries do not rely on renewable energy resources and they do not promote ecological security, in order to ensure long-term safety for the Black sea environment and its populations. In this regard it is important to coordinate actions towards a better balance of oil, gas and other alternative energy sources and implement high safety standards especially concerning nuclear energy power plants.

The Fukushima accident, especially because it took place in a wealthy industrialized country can be a fruitful lesson. The countries of the Black Sea should use the occasion not only to re-examine their reactors' safety systems but also the fundamentals of how they approach nuclear safety. In the Black Sea climate change is likely to create massive waves of environmental refugees; deforestation is likely to increase floods; it is a region with intense tectonic activity and we need to design with considerable foresight what this means in terms of designing our infrastructures, taking into consideration the recent disaster in Japan. So, 'human security' can only be effectively guaranteed through forward looking strategies with a regional scope.

The challenge which the region now faces is to secure a healthy Black Sea environment at a time when economic recovery and further development are also being pursued. In this regard, the adaptation to relevant international conventions becomes imperative for all the countries of the region.

In this framework, the ICBSS will take the opportunity to organize within the next months a debate among experts on nuclear energy, environment and safety issues, which have been briefly addressed in the last ICBSS Policy Brief (no. 21). As an independent think tank, the ICBSS opens a realistic discussion, a debate about positive and negative impacts and risks of nuclear use, about nuclear standardization issues and about alternative/renewable ways out. The crucial question is, can accidents such as Chernobyl or Fukushima function as a “starting point” for reflecting the new challenges for our society? Let's rethink and envision our region in a safe and environmental friendly future.

Athens, 11 April 2011

Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, The mutual useful outcome and prospects of Azerbaijan's ten years in the Council of Europe, Written Declaration

Strasbourg, 25 January 2011 [Link](#)

[...]

Following the accession of new independent states, including Azerbaijan, to the Council of Europe, important changes occurred both in this Organisation and in the new member states in the last 15 years.

The example of Azerbaijan celebrating its 10 years in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in January 2011 leads us to reflect on the outcome and future opportunities of this co-operation.

In Azerbaijan, which lived in a closed regime for 70 years, there was a speedy improvement towards democratisation and legal state-building after Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe as a fully-fledged member. The current head of the Azerbaijani state was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly and his loyalty towards the values of this organisation are among the major factors conditioning the effectiveness and intensiveness of this co-operation. During this period, Azerbaijani members contributed to the Assembly's work as authors of a number of reports of European importance.

One of the most important facets of this mutual co-operation is the Assembly's delicate approach to the occupation of 20% of Azerbaijani territories, which turned nearly one million Azerbaijanis into refugees and IDPs, and the adoption of Assembly Resolution 1416 (2005) on the matter.

EU-Azerbaijan: Joint declaration on Southern Gas Corridor

Baku, 13 January 2011 [Link](#)

We, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, emphasize the importance of energy security and the security of energy transportation;

We note that the diversification of the routes of gas supply from the Caspian region to Europe is one of the factors determining that energy security is ensured;

We recall the special significance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil and gas pipelines in transporting the energy resources of Azerbaijan and other countries of the Caspian region;

We reaffirm the importance of the EU - Azerbaijan en-

ergy relationships enshrined notably in the Memorandum of Understanding on strategic partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of energy signed by President Ilham Aliyev and President José Manuel Durão Barroso in Brussels in November 2006, the relevant provisions of the Baku Declaration signed in November 2008, relevant Energy Declaration of the Prague summit in May 2009;

We hereby:

1. Declare that our common objective is to see the Southern Corridor established and operational as soon as possible and to establish the Republic of Azerbaijan as a substantial contributor to – and enabler of – the Southern Gas Corridor;
2. Urge a swift allocation process for the available gas resources at the Shah Deniz 2 Project and other fields in Azerbaijan and we encourage investors to take all possible measures for the joint allocation of that gas in a timely manner;
3. State that by enabling the transport of natural gas from fields in Azerbaijan and beyond, this strategic corridor complements the existing gas corridors of the European Union, with the creation of this route from the Caspian region to the European market also corresponding to the shared strategic objective of the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan to diversify gas delivery routes and establish direct energy and transport links;
4. Consider that the Southern Gas Corridor is therefore a stepping stone in increasing European Energy security and a guarantee that the resources upon the territory of Azerbaijan can be developed in the expectation that sufficient infrastructure and markets as well as commercial conditions exist to absorb these gas quantities, with a reliable and growing market being to the long term benefit of all, and the Caspian region gas suppliers being able to build on that confidence;
5. Note that this strategic corridor will entail the creation of a sufficient dedicated infrastructure to allow for all contracts to be settled physically with Azerbaijan produced gas, thus enabling the transportation and marketing/distribution of natural gas from Azerbaijan in the European Union and South Eastern European Countries with the Commission standing ready to assist in the creation of the necessary non discriminatory legal, regulatory and commercial conditions thereto.

The Presidents praise the progress made so far and invite other interested parties, whether as suppliers of gas or as consumers to avail themselves of the opportunity of participating in further phases of development of the Southern

Gas Corridor.

Signed on the 13th of January 2011 in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan.

[...]

Council of the European Union, Conclusion of two EU agreements with Georgia on visa facilitation and readmission, Press release

Brussels, 18 January 2011 [Link](#)

The Council of the EU concluded today two agreements with Georgia: one on visa facilitation and one on readmission. Both agreements will enter into force on 1 March 2011.

Visa facilitation agreement

The visa facilitation agreement makes it easier and cheaper for Georgian citizens, in particular those who travel most, to acquire short stay visas for travels to and throughout the EU. A short stay visa is a visa for an intended stay of no more than 90 days per period of 180 days. EU citizens are already exempt from the visa obligation when traveling to or transiting through Georgia since 1 June 2006.

The agreement substantially simplifies the necessary supporting documents for a visa application for certain categories of persons, e.g. close relatives who are visiting Georgian citizens residing in the EU, businessmen, scientists, students and journalists. For some categories of frequent travelers and under certain conditions, member states are supposed to issue multi-entry visas with long periods of validity. Holders of diplomatic passports are exempted from the visa obligation.

As a general rule, the agreement stipulates that a decision upon the request to issue a visa must be taken within 10 calendar days. The agreement also reduces the visa handling fee from €60 to €35 for all Georgian citizens and provide a total exemption from the visa fee for certain categories of applicants, e.g. close relatives who are visiting Georgian citizens residing in the EU, pensioners, children below the age of 12, disabled persons, scientists, students and journalists.

On 28 November 2008, the Council gave the European Commission the mandate to start the negotiations of the visa facilitation agreement with Georgia. They were concluded in the first half of 2010 and the agreement was signed in June 2010. The European Parliament gave its consent in December 2010.

It must be noted that the United Kingdom and Ireland are not taking part in the agreement.

Readmission agreement

Visa facilitation agreements go usually hand-in-hand with readmission agreements between the EU and third countries. Readmission agreements set out clear obligations and procedures for the authorities of EU member states and the third countries concerned as to when and how to take back people who are illegally residing on the territories of the parties. They cover not only the illegally staying nationals

of both parties but also third country nationals and stateless persons being in an irregular situation provided they have a clear link with the requested party (e.g. visa or resident permit).

The agreement also includes a number of other procedural rules, such as the time-limits for the readmission applications, the modalities for the transfer of the returnees, the cost of the transfer and the protection of personal data of the returnees. A Joint Readmission Committee is established so as to monitor the application of the agreement and decide on certain technical arrangements.

Full respect of Human Rights as provided by the European Convention of Human Rights is guaranteed during the application of readmission agreements.

On 28 November 2008, the Council gave the European Commission the mandate to start the negotiations of the readmission agreement with Georgia. They were concluded in the second half of 2010 and the agreement was signed in November 2010. The European Parliament gave its consent in December 2010.

It must be noted that Ireland and Denmark are not taking part in the agreement.

Visa facilitation and readmission agreements with other third countries

So far, the EU has signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with eight countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine.

A readmission agreement also exists with Pakistan, Hong-Kong, Macao and Sri Lanka.

Besides that, negotiations are ongoing with Cape Verde (on visa facilitation and readmission), Turkey (readmission) and Morocco (readmission).

EP President Buzek Statement on Moldova's European path, Press release

Brussels, 10 February 2011 [Link](#)

The President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek met today, 10 February with Vlad Filat, Prime Minister of Moldova, to discuss the status of EU-Moldova relations. President Buzek said:

"I wished Prime Minister Vlad Filat every success for his European course during his new mandate. I trust you will be firm and consistent in it.

The EU is a clear supporter of the Moldovan reform agenda. It is the good path to continue the necessary reforms. For this, cross-party support is essential - I want to highlight again the importance of well-functioning institutions and the necessity for all political forces to agree on the necessary wide-ranging reforms. Good teamwork within the Alliance, constructive cooperation with the opposition and the unity of the country are essential. I encourage all political players of Moldova to finally find a resolution to the constitutional deadlock and to successfully elect the President of the Republic.

The European Parliament is encouraging "people to people" approach. I welcome the Commission's action plan for visa liberalisation. We also fully support the ongoing talks on the Association Agreement and look forward to the start of the negotiations on a deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area. Moldova should not lose sight of the necessary reforms such as the fight against corruption, the establishment of genuine rule of law, constitutional and judiciary changes. These are important steps to get Moldova closer to the EU. Moldova's citizens have much to gain from their political leaders' keeping the European course.

I welcome the plans to re-launch full-fledged international talks on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. Dialogue is the main tool to solve long-standing disputes. The EU is strongly committed to the settlement of the conflict. A stable, democratic and prosperous Moldova will be more successful in reuniting the country.

You have a lot of work in front of you. Europe stands on the side of Moldova. Your success is important to us."

Statement by President Barroso following his meeting with Vladimir Filat, Prime Minister of Moldova, Press release

Brussels, 10 February 2011 [Link](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was a pleasure to receive Prime Minister Filat today in Brussels. We have had several occasions of meetings in the last year and in fact last year was a year of progress in the relations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union.

I congratulated the Prime Minister on his reappointment.

I am confident that his government will build on the substantial progress achieved last year in EU-Moldova relations.

In fact, the Republic of Moldova has been rightly lauded for its recent reform efforts and for its policy of ever closer cooperation with the European Union.

Last year, we achieved a lot in record time:

Considerable progress was made towards an Association Agreement;

We have a forward-looking dialogue on visa liberalisation;

And active preparations are underway towards a free trade area that will give Moldovan businesses unrestricted access to the largest single market in the world – the EU's internal market.

These efforts are bringing very tangible results. The EU is supporting Moldova in practical ways through our technical and financial assistance, which we will continue to step up in the years to come.

This experience has shown that positive, constructive engagement with the European Union generates concrete benefits for the citizens.

In the same vein of constructive cooperation, we expect that Moldova's political leaders will show a sense of responsibility and compromise to end the current impasse over the election of a President.

Moldova should consolidate its reform momentum. This will allow difficult changes and efforts towards EU integration to go ahead and bear fruit faster. Therefore, the inclusive political discussions launched a few days ago should continue.

I have also reaffirmed to Prime Minister Filat our political will to step up our efforts for the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, in the framework of the "5+2" format.

Prime Minister, thank you again for coming to Brussels! I look forward to continuing our cooperation both in bilateral terms as in the wider context of the Eastern Partnership. We know your commitment to this partnership and we once again congratulate you for your reappointment and wish you and your country all the best.

Vice President Almunia signs cooperation agreement with Russian competition authority, Press release

Brussels, 10 March 2011 [Link](#)

Joaquín Almunia said: "This Memorandum of Understanding will give new impetus to our cooperation with Russia on competition issues. Today, we have formalised the basis for our future cooperation and signed our commitment to intensify ties".

The Memorandum of Understanding constitutes a framework for dialogue on competition policy matters and for sharing views and non-confidential information on individual cases. Russia is a major economy and an important trading partner for the EU. Intensifying cooperation on competition matters will benefit both the EU and Russia. The MoU foresees that the parties endeavour to meet, as necessary, to discuss developments in competition policy, legislation and enforcement, to exchange information on economic sectors of common interest and to exchange views on competition issues.

Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding are the Competition Directorate-General of the European Commission and the Federal Anti Monopoly Service of the Russian Federation ("FAS").

The European Commission enforces competition rules for the European Union as a whole notably for what concerns the review of mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (defined in Article 1 of the Merger Regulation in force since 1990) and the fight against cartels and abuses of dominant positions (respectively Articles 101 and 102 of the EU Treaty).

The Commission has engaged actively in cooperation with competition authorities of many countries outside the EU. Cooperation with some of them is based on bilateral agreements dedicated entirely to competition (so-called "dedicated agreements"). In other cases, competition provisions are included as part of wider general agreements such as free Trade Agreements, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Association Agreements, etc.

Statement of President Barroso following the meeting of the European Commission with the Russian Government, Press release

Brussels, 24 February 2011 [Link](#)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

Let me say to you how happy I am to receive today here Prime Minister Putin. I think it is very important to have this meeting between the European Commission and the Russian government led by Prime Minister Putin

In fact, we had a very fruitful and constructive meeting with the Russian Government.

The depth and quality of our discussions, in this largest executive-to-executive meeting ever, reflects the importance we both give to our dynamic strategic Partnership.

In this sense, we have also discussed today important issues that are very high on the international agenda. We will also agree on a joint statement on the Middle East and North Africa, that have been the centre of intense dialogue, namely between Cathy Ashton as EU High Representative and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. We con-

demn and consider unacceptable, the use of military force to break up peaceful demonstrations, as well as any other manifestation of violence. In particular, we highly condemn the violence and the use of force against civilians in Libya, which has resulted in the death of hundreds of people. We express deep regret and condolence for the loss of human lives. We urge all parties involved to show responsibility, respect human rights and international humanitarian law, and ensure the safety of civilians and foreign nationals. Supporting the peoples of Arab countries in their aspirations for a more just and prosperous life, we stand ready to provide economic and other assistance to interested countries at their request.

But of course, a great part of our very constructive, very concrete discussions, was in terms of the EU-Russia relationship.

This meeting has shown – yet again – how important are our common interests. Russia is our third largest trading partner. The EU is the biggest market and investor in Russia - 80% of FDI in Russia comes from EU companies. Russian energy is key to keeping Europe going. Our industries, our households are very much linked to Russia energy.

We believe it is our interest to work together for modernisation and to increase opportunities for citizens both in Russia and the EU.

Today, we have discussed how we can further boost these strong common interests, and how we can resolve a number of outstanding issues.

We welcomed the substantial progress made on the Partnership for Modernization. Our work-plan for the Partnership is now under implementation and giving results.

A successful modernisation strategy, to which the Russian Government has committed itself, must address the economy, technology and the rule of law and involve society at large. The Commission will spare no efforts to make the Partnership a success.

We also discussed our partnership in terms of the rule of law and the human rights. In a very detailed and constructive meeting together with Prime Minister Putin we have addressed these issues – the issues of human rights, fundamental freedoms, including some specific cases.

Strengthening the rule of law and fundamental freedoms is a shared commitment and we expect Russia to respect its international commitments in the field of human rights.

It is important that we keep an open, firm and constructive dialogue on these matters to make progress on these issues, not least because the rule of law is crucial for any modernization efforts.

We will therefore continue this work, not least in the dedicated Human Rights Consultations that we have with Russia. And once again I would like to thank Prime Minister Putin for the very open (I think around one hour) discus-

sion we had on these matters where PM Putin was expressing to me the positions of Russia on these very sensitive issues.

We also agreed to give a further push to the negotiations on our Agreement.

We would like to see this agreement have substantial trade and investment provisions, including on energy. We believe this deal is critical to unlock the full potential of our relations. We should make progress soon, in the interest of our businesses and citizens.

In the same line, the Commission stressed its continued support for an early Russian accession to the WTO.

I welcome Prime Minister Putin's commitment on this. We hope that the multilateral negotiations will now be completed soon. I am confident that it will be possible to come to a final deal with the WTO soon.

Energy is a further key element of our relations and a good example of the importance of the constructive management of our shared economic interests. Yes, we have also had differences in the past, but we have also shown that we can solve issues together.

A substantive part of our discussions was precisely on energy. We discussed ways to make progress on the energy provisions. I also encouraged our sides to engage in more detailed discussions in some matters related to the Internal Market package for energy. I understand there are some concerns on the Russian side and in fact, Commissioner Oettinger and Minister Shmatko will sign several important documents today which demonstrate that our Energy Dialogue moves forward.

Another point where we were along the same lines was innovation, scientific and technical cooperation. We are speaking the same language there. We believe innovation and scientific technical cooperation can be extremely important for our joint interest and our economies.

On the visa issue, which is of great importance to Russia and the EU, we have launched joint work on a list of common steps towards a possible visa-free travel regime, as agreed last year. As soon as our Member States have agreed on the draft common steps, we will discuss these steps with Russia. We are also willing to launch negotiations on amending our visa facilitation agreement. I believe it is possible if there is good will from both sides to achieve progress on the visa issues.

The fruitful discussions today and the good atmosphere in which they were held show that our strategic partnership is delivering and that its momentum is growing.

Like good partners, we have discussed issues frankly, openly and constructively, including topics on which we may not agree completely.

But what I have seen in my talks with Prime Minister Putin, and also in the plenary meeting with the Russian

government (I think 13 members of the government of Russia are with Prime Minister Putin and almost all Commissioners were there); what I have seen during this meeting, was a common willingness to make progress, the understanding that we have indeed strategic interests and in that spirit we will work to remove some of the obstacles and to make clear our common interests.

The Commission and I therefore look forward to continuing our work with Prime Minister Putin and his team. And once again thank you for coming to Brussels and to engaging in these very deep consultations.

Statement by Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on ratification by the Russian Federation Council of the START Treaty

Brussels, 26 January 2011 [Link](#)

Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today:

"I congratulate the Russian State Duma and Federation Council on their ratification of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with the US.

In approving the treaty today, the Russian parliament has paved the way for the United States and Russia - which possess 95 percent of global stockpile of nuclear weapons - to make progress in fulfilling their disarmament commitments set in this landmark agreement.

Both countries are showing that they are willing to enhance global security by reducing the number of deployed strategic warheads and their delivery systems and by establishing a verification system to the benefit of both sides.

The ratification of the new START treaty will strengthen arms control and the global nonproliferation regime. The European Union has long stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to all these issues. A combined effort by the international community is required to strengthen disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, which are joint security interests for all.

In this context, the European Union reiterates its full support to efforts of the Governments of the United States and Russia".

Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, Joint press conference with Foreign Minister Gryshchenko

Kiev, 10 January 2011 [Link](#)

I'm very happy to be here in Ukraine for the 4th time in the past 10 months. Your country is one of the countries I have visited the most since my appointment. This demonstrates the connected, dynamic and open relations the EU shares with your country, as well as the importance I personally attach to our relations.

This time, my visit aimed to capitalize on the constructive EU-Ukraine summit held recently in Brussels and to be an opportunity for me to share my vision of the priorities for the year ahead, hear from my Ukrainian interlocutors what they expect from the EU and agree on concrete steps to take together in the months ahead. It was also a unique occasion to hear from all stakeholders their perception of the current situation in Ukraine.

In my talks with the Ukrainian authorities, we focused on the challenges of 2011, in the framework of the Eastern Partnership, including in particular the wider reform agenda, and in this context first and foremost progress on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, implementation of the Visa Action Plan, and the situation regarding human rights, democratic principles and the independence of the judicial system.

Our first common priority will be the Association Agreement. My Ukrainian partners and I confirmed our determination to conclude negotiations in the course of the year. This will not be easy. There is still much work to do. Negotiations on the Agreement - particularly its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area aspects (DCFTA) – are complex and demanding. It is key for Ukraine to step up its efforts so we can see a substantial move forward on the DCFTA in the coming months.

The next efforts should concentrate on the Visa Action Plan. I attach great importance to the long term prospect of a free visa regime. This will offer unique stimulus to EU-Ukraine relations and concretely benefit Ukrainian citizens. The onus is now on you to undertake the reforms necessary to reach the various benchmarks. President Yanukovich underlined the efforts your country is making. Please be assured that the EU will continue to support you in this task.

Let's turn to the business and investment climate. The Ukrainian market has an enormous potential. The EU is however preoccupied by the many obstacles which economic operators have faced in Ukraine. Ukraine needs to make real progress to improve it.

Let me now turn to a particularly important part of EU-Ukraine relations, which is crucial for Ukraine's future

development. I speak now of our common values, those which constitute the foundation of a healthy democracy. These values are respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. In the 21st Century, democratic authority can not be sustained without an independent judiciary and media: this is a question of moral leadership. I would therefore like to recall the need to ensure that criminal law is not used for political ends, and that the principles of a fair, impartial and independent legal process are fully respected. Once more, we had an open and frank discussion on these issues.

Speech of Cecilia Malmström, Member of the European Commission responsible for Home Affairs, on The way forward for EU Home Affairs cooperation with Eastern Partners

Chisinau, 25 January 2011 [Link](#)

[...]

Over the last couple of years, the EU has focused on visa issues with the Western Balkans. This has not been an easy process, not least since visa liberalisation demands sometimes painful and costly structural reforms in many aspects of the home affairs area, such as the rule of law and biometric passports.

That being said, our Balkan friends have come a long way. In 2009 we managed to grant visa liberalisation with Serbia, Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Just before Christmas last year, visa liberalisation entered into force also for the citizens of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am very pleased about that.

As I stand here today, both Moldova and Ukraine are in the process of making the reforms needed to be able to enjoy visa free travel to the EU. Other countries are also aiming for that same goal. I intend to propose the start of negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan before the summer, and the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Georgia will enter into force on 1 March.

However, many EU Member States are getting more and more reluctant towards further opening up the EU borders. After the visa liberalisation agreement with Serbia became effective, many Member States experienced a large inflow of Serbian migrants applying for asylum or wanting to stay within the EU beyond the 90 days authorised period. This is not what the visa liberalisation agreements are for. They are instead meant to make lives easier for our citizens, making it simpler to travel. To give people better means to meet each other is a huge achievement, but it must not be abused.

Against this background, I see all the more reason to continue our visa dialogue with both Moldova and Ukraine. The visa liberalisation action plan that I presented yesterday is key in this process. It outlines a two-phased approach. A first set of benchmarks on legislation and planning and a second set of more specific benchmarks, covering implementation and results on the ground.

The progress towards visa liberalisation will therefore depend on two factors; the partner country's ability to secure already achieved targets and that it continues to implement the reform agenda. There is no automaticity in this process; progress on the road towards visa free travel will depend solely on concrete achievements of our partner country. But I can assure you that the Commission's expertise and financial support are available to those willing to pursue the reform agenda. This is a long-term process that will take some time, but if you follow this plan, we will reach the goal. The European Commission stands by your side.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It will be of interest to both our Eastern Partners and the EU to seek ways to better manage migration and promote legal mobility. Mobility Partnerships constitute a political and practical framework for addressing all the relevant issues in a comprehensive manner.

I was very pleased that the Mobility Partnership between the EU and the Republic of Moldova was the first one to be signed in this region. It is a useful tool to better manage migration and mobility. Please allow me to express my appreciation for the way you have committed in making this Partnership fruitful.

In this respect, I want to mention a project, coordinated from Sweden, that brings together a network of around half of the EU labour market agencies with the Moldovan labour market agency. The aim is capacity building with a view to assist the Moldovan authorities to work with job seekers, by both providing information to potential migrants about legal migration opportunities and providing assistance to migrants returning to Moldova. This project could serve as a source of inspiration to other similar initiatives in the region.

The EU has also signed a Mobility Partnership with Georgia, in November 2009. Some thirty actions are currently being implemented, covering areas such as the strengthening of Georgia's capacity to manage labour migration, support return and reintegration of migrants, strengthening Georgia's capacity to monitor migration flows, border management, and strengthening its capacity in the field of asylum policy, as well as supporting Georgia in its efforts to implement the readmission agreement with the EU.

Recently, an EU financed initiative of 3 million euro started in Georgia. It is being led by the Czech Minister of Interior, in partnership with eight other EU Member

States, and it is aiming at reinforcing Georgia's capacities to manage return migration and readmission, support social and economic reintegration of Georgian nationals and provide information campaigns for Georgian communities abroad, relevant Georgian organizations and Georgian general public on legal migration channels and sharing experiences on labour migration, including circular migration.

All these initiatives will also be relevant for the citizens of our Eastern partners. Mobility Partnerships have proven useful and I am committed to expand them with more Eastern partners over time, provided that there is sufficient interest on both sides.

In the field of visa liberalisation and migration policy, there are also other useful initiatives. I would like to mention the initiative of the Hungarian and the incoming Polish EU Presidency to promote the regional "Building Migration Partnership" Prague process, which started in 2009. I expect that the results will be complementary initiatives to migration-related activities under the Eastern Partnership.

We will need to be careful to avoid duplication among all the initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Eastern Europe is one of the priority regions for the EU Global Approach on Migration. Unfortunately, the current economic climate is not the best ground for promoting migration policies. But the truth is that the EU is facing structural demographic challenges. Last year, there were more deaths than newborns on our continent, and the European workforce has already started to decline. It might be hard to imagine, but although unemployment rates all across Europe are high today, in a few years time we will not be able to sustain our way of living without immigrants.

One part of the solution is to attract migrants with different skills, and we need well managed migration policies. This year, we will present a communication on addressing labour shortages through migration in EU Member States.

Within the EU, it is up to each Member State to decide on the volumes of migrant workers to admit, and this has to be fully respected. But this is not in contradiction to the fact that we need to make the EU more attractive, or that we need a common framework with clear admission rules and rights of migrant workers. We have already taken important steps in that direction, with the EU Blue Card Directive and proposed legislation on seasonal workers and intra-corporate transferees last summer. But we need to do more.

We must improve labour matching and invest more in recognising qualifications and skills. And we must be more transparent about the realities of migration. The Commission has funded projects in both Ukraine and Moldova, where migration information centres provide basic infor

mation on the legal conditions of entry and stay in the EU. I am convinced that to be able to meet the challenges ahead, we must continue to open up more legal ways to Europe.

Our Moldovan hosts did well in taking the Stockholm Programme as the point of reference for this conference. I was Swedish Minister for EU Affairs at the time when the Programme was endorsed in Brussels. Translating it into concrete initiatives, by finalising the Stockholm Programme Action Plan, was one of my first priorities when I took office as EU Commissioner for Home Affairs a year ago.

It has already been two years since we embarked on the Eastern Partnership project. As you all know, in the area of justice and home affairs, important progress have been made since then. Sub-committees on justice and home affairs and migration dialogues have been established with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. And most Eastern Partnership countries have further pursued a reform agenda, resulting in progress as regards the reform of the police and the judiciary, the fight against organized crime and corruption. Such reforms take time and much still remains to be done. Nonetheless, these steps are crucial for the rule of law in the region.

This year, we will review and deepen our cooperation. There is a ministerial conference of the European Neighbourhood partner countries next week; in April the Commission intends to issue a policy paper with a strategic review of the cooperation; and in May the Eastern Partnership Summit will take place. You can count on the European Commission as a constructive partner in all of this.

Increased cooperation is in everybody's interest. That is why I intend to present, in June this year, an Action Plan on how to continue our fruitful cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries in the area of justice and home affairs. This is envisaged in the Stockholm Programme, and I look forward to continuing to work and to exchange ideas on how we can achieve our joint objectives.

As you know, these joint objectives do not only cover visa issues and migration. Other challenges where we need increased cooperation are the fight against corruption and organised crime, protecting fundamental rights, and reforms of the judiciary and the police. These issues go hand in hand, and I therefore encourage all Eastern partners to pursue further reforms. This is of course important in its own right, but it is also an indispensable aspect of increasing mobility.

When I leave you to your discussions in a little while, I will go to visit a shelter for victims of trafficking in human beings. Human trafficking is a horrible form of organised crime, and a gross violation of human rights. This is a crime that we need to fight together. There is broad political agreement within the EU to do this, and I am very

pleased that the European Parliament recently voted in favour of new EU legislation that I had proposed to see tougher action against the criminals and better protection of the victims.

To fight this modern-day slavery is one of my key priorities. Just before Christmas, we launched an anti-trafficking website, and at the same time I appointed for the first time an EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to bring together all different policy areas in this very important fight. These are important steps, but we must also be realistic – trafficking in human beings will never be totally eradicated. Continued efforts will be needed to fight the criminals profiting from other people's misery. We look forward to continued cooperation with our Eastern partners in this area.

To summarise, all these areas go hand in hand. Visa liberalisation, migration, mobility, regional cooperation, protecting fundamental rights, and fighting corruption, cross-border and organised crime are all vital for continuing to make our cooperation fruitful in the future.

[...]

European Council, Conclusions

Brussels, 4 February 2011 [Link](#)

[...]

11. There is a need for better coordination of EU and Member States' activities with a view to ensuring consistency and coherence in the EU's external relations with key producer, transit, and consumer countries. The Commission is invited to submit by June 2011 a communication on security of supply and international cooperation aimed at further improving the consistency and coherence of the EU's external action in the field of energy. The Member States are invited to inform from 1 January 2012 the Commission on all their new and existing bilateral energy agreements with third countries; the Commission will make this information available to all other Member states in an appropriate form, having regard to the need for protection of commercially sensitive information. The High Representative is invited to take fully account of the energy security dimension in her work. Energy security should also be fully reflected in the EU's neighbourhood policy.

12. The EU should take initiatives in line with the Treaties in the relevant international fora and develop mutually beneficial energy partnerships with key players and around strategic corridors, covering a wide range of issues, including regulatory approaches, on all subjects of common interest, such as energy security, safe and sustainable low carbon technologies, energy efficiency, investment environment maintaining and promoting the highest standards for nuclear safety. It should encourage neighbouring countries

to embrace its relevant internal energy market rules, notably by extending and deepening the Energy Community Treaty and promoting regional cooperation initiatives. In the context of the Energy Strategy 2020 it should also develop measures as necessary to ensure a level playing field for EU power producers vis-à-vis producers outside the European Economic Area. Europe needs to diversify its routes and sources of supply. The Commission is accordingly invited to continue its efforts to facilitate the development of strategic corridors for the transport of large volumes of gas such as the Southern Corridor.

13. Work should be taken forward as early as possible to develop a reliable, transparent and rules-based partnership with Russia in areas of common interest in the field of energy and as part of the negotiations on the post-Partnership and Cooperation Agreement process and in the light of ongoing work on the Partnership for Modernization and the Energy Dialogue.

14. The EU will cooperate with third countries in order to address the volatility of energy prices and will take this work forward within the G20.

[...]

Recent Publications on the Black Sea Region

The following are selected recent publications pertinent to the Black Sea region

March 2011

- Sinkkonen, Teemu. *Getting cold in the Caucasus: Can the EU prevent the freezing of the Georgian-Russian conflict?* FIIA Briefing Paper 78. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 31 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Kostanyan, Hrant. "Spillovers from the Arab Revolts: Is Armenia next in line?" *CEPS Policy Briefs*. Brussels: CEPS, 15 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Göksel, Diba Nigar. "Europe and Turkey - Back to the Future?" *On Turkey*. Washington, D.C.: GMFUS, 15 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Grätz, Jonas, and Westphal Kirsten. "Die Ukraine in der Energiegemeinschaft: Die Zukunft des Gastransits (Der ukrainische Gasmarkt zwischen Monopolisierung und Entflechtung)." *SWP-Aktuell*. Berlin: SWP, 13 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Flikke, Geir, ed., et al. "The Shifting Geopolitics of the Black Sea Region: Actors, Drivers and Challenges." *NUPI Report*. Oslo: NUPI, 15 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Halbach, Uwe, and Musayev Kamran. "EU-Aserbaidshan: Nicht nur Energiepartner (Politische Reformen und friedliche Konfliktbearbeitung sollten mehr Gewicht bekommen)." *SWP-Aktuell*. Berlin: SWP, 11 March 2011. [Link](#)
- Messerlin, Patrick, et al. *An Appraisal of the EU's Trade Policy towards its Eastern Neighbours: The Case of Georgia*. Brussels: CEPS, 1 March 2011. [Link](#)
- MacFarlane, S. Neil. "Post-Revolutionary Georgia on the Edge?" *Chatham House Briefing Paper*. London: Chatham House, March 2011. [Link](#)
- Grant, Charles. "A new neighbourhood policy for the EU." *CER Policy Brief*. London: CER, March 2011. [Link](#)
- Lesser, Ian. "The Revolutions in Turkey's Near Abroad." *On Turkey*. Washington, D.C.: GMFUS, 16 February 2011. [Link](#)
- White, Stacey. "Emerging Powers, Emerging Donors: Teasing Out Developing Patterns." A report of the CSIS program on crisis, conflict, and cooperation. Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 14 February 2011. [Link](#)
- Pynnöniemi, Katri. "Securing Russia? New security law raises more questions than it answers." *FIIA Comment 2*. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 14 February 2011. [Link](#)
- Kegö, Leijonmarck, and Janina Romanova. "New Life" for Russia." *ISDP Policy Brief*, no. 54. Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 9 February 2011. [Link](#)
- Alasania, Irakli. "Georgia Facing Transition." *REP Event Summary 02/2011*. London: Chatham House, February 2011. [Link](#)

January 2011

- Balfour, Rosa. "Why does the EU fear change in its neighbourhood?" *EPC Commentary*. Brussels: EPC, 27 January 2011. [Link](#)
- Paul, Amanda. "The Turkey-EU deadlock." *EPC Commentary*. Brussels: EPC, January 26 2011. [Link](#)
- Solanko, Laura. "How to succeed with a thousand TWh reform? Restructuring the Russian power sector." *FIIA Working Paper*. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 18 January 2011. [Link](#)
- Füle, Štefan. "Future Prospects for EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy." Transcript. London: Chatham House, 13 January 2011. [Link](#)
- Ryann, A.L., and Perkins N.J., eds. *The Black Sea: Dynamics, Ecology and Conservation*. Nova Science Pub Inc, January 2011 [Link](#)
- Flikke, Geir. "Ukraine: Precarious Post-electoral Reversals." *NUPI Policy Briefs*, no. 1. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), January 2011. [Link](#)
- Ghia, Nodia. "Dilemmas in Georgia's New Regional

News and Events

The 4th International Black Sea Symposium

The International Black Sea Symposium (IBSS) project has reached its fourth year and this year's event on **"The Black Sea Region in Transition: New Challenges and Concepts"** is taking place in the Coastal zone of Attica, Vouliagmeni, Greece. From *19 September to 23 September 2011* the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) will welcome young professionals and international experts for an intensive course on Black Sea issues. The event's working language will be English.

About the International Black Sea Symposium project



The International Black Sea Symposium (IBSS) project was launched in 2008, aiming to contribute to understanding and cooperation in the Black Sea region and beyond.

It does so by providing a forum for study, dialogue and networking in a multicultural and interdisciplinary environment. Young professionals (22-35 years old), such as policy-makers, academics, journalists, diplomats, Members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders and researchers (post docs and PhD candidates), primarily from the countries of the wider Black Sea area, EU member states, the United States and Central Asia are the Symposium target group.

More about the 4th IBSS

A maximum of 20 participants will have the unique opportunity to gain insights into issues of importance for the Black Sea region during a three-day intensive course led by prominent experts. In this context various sessions will address the following issues: i) Security concerns: energy, euro-atlantic institutions and transnational risks, ii) Environmental governance, iii) Regional cooperation and sustainable development, iv) Institutional reforms and participation. Relevant reading material will be provided in advance and participants will receive a certificate of atten-

dance. Participants will also have the chance to experience beautiful days in the picturesque coastal zone of Attica and visit the archaeological site of Sounio.

How to get involved

Young professionals with proficiency in English and a proven interest in the Black Sea region are welcome to apply **until 31 May 2011**. For more information on the application process please see the [application form](#) or visit the [IBSS website](#). All applicants should send their filled application form by e-mail to symposium@icbss.org or by fax to +30 210 324 2244.

In order to implement the International Black Sea Symposium the ICBSS is collaborating with an invaluable network of partners and co-funders whose generous contributions of funds and expertise only make this initiative possible. If you are interested in supporting the 4th International Symposium, please contact Ms. Olga Borou, Symposium Coordinator, using the online contact form link or via telephone +30 210 324 2321.

The 4th International Black Sea Symposium is

Organised by:



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2011 Summer School on "Rescaling Government: Reforming public administration and local government"



The 2011 Summer School in "Rescaling Government: Reforming public administration and local government",

supported by EURA (European Urban Research Association) and EUROLOC will be hosted and financially supported by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS). This year's summer school will take place from Sunday 18 until Friday 23 September 2011 on the coastal zone of Athens, Vouliagmeni.

The main topics of this summer school are going to be:

- 1a) Does "scale" matter for achieving effective governance? Territorial restructuring (P. Getimis/ N.-K. Hlepas)
- 1b) Do "institutions" matter? Local government systems and territorial reforms (P. Getimis/ N.-K. Hlepas)

- 2) Does “size” matter for local democracy? Accountability, effectiveness and legitimacy (H. Heinelt/ B. Denters)
- 3) How to measure the results of institutional reforms? Evaluation of institutional change and performance of newly established institutional settings (S. Kuhlmann)
- 4) How to explain administrative reforms? (B. Denters)

Aims:

The 2011 Summer School aims at organizing specialized courses for Ph.D. students whose research topics are related to the field of public policies and local government. Given the latest institutional reforms that have been made in countries such as Denmark and Greece, this year’s Summer School gives emphasis on the evaluation of territorial and functional reforms and the methodology used for this purpose.

Apart from the scientific exchange among Ph.D. candidates and acknowledged teachers, the Summer School seeks to create linkages among the participants of different national and cultural backgrounds. For this purpose, the local organizers have planned an excursion to one of the most important archaeological sites of Attica, Cape Sounio.

Programme:

The local organizers have planned an interactive programme for on-going research and several workshops with constant guidance from the tutors. The final programme of the 2011 Summer School will soon be available in the relevant websites of EURA, EUROLOC and ICBSS.

How to get involved:

PhD students fluent in English are welcome to submit an abstract (350 words) of their on-going research and apply until 31 May 2011. Registration Fees for participants will be 250 Euros. Accommodation, breakfast and one meal per day will be offered by the organizers. Travel costs will be covered by the participants themselves. For more information on the application process please see the application form. All applicants should send their filled application form to the following e-mail address: summer.school@icbss.org

All practical information regarding the Summer School can be found on the websites of:

EURA <http://www.eura.org/>

EUROLOC <http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/soz/avps/euroloc/>

and ICBSS <http://www.icbss.org/>

Joint mission to the South Caucasus and Central Asia

Within the context of the *Science and Technology International Cooperation Network for Central Asian and South Caucasus Countries* project (IncoNet CA/SC), the ICBSS has participated in a mission to the countries of the South Caucasus, with the aim to prepare a better ground for the participation of the region in the European Union Framework Programmes (FP).

During the mission in March 2011, a delegation formed of project partners from Germany, France and the Project Coordinator from the ICBSS, has visited key research institutions and conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

More information on the mission to South Caucasus and the mission to Central Asia is available on the project website <http://inco-casc.net> and on the incrEAST web portal www.incrEAST.eu.

Official Visit to the Diplomatic Academy of Azerbaijan, Baku, 9-10 March 2011

ICBSS Director General, Dr. Zefi Dimadama and Alternate Director General, Ambassador Tedo Japaridze made an

official visit to the [Diplomatic Academy of Azerbaijan](#) in order to present the activities and objectives of the ICBSS, as well as to explore possible ways of cooperation between the two organisations.

ELIAMEP Conference on “The Impact of Climate Change in the Mediterranean – Designing Adaptation and Implementation Strategies”, Athens 24-25 February 2011

Focusing on the Mediterranean basin and particularly on the designation of adaptation and implementation strategies, the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) organised a two-day conference in Athens on 24 and 25 February 2011. This event gave the

opportunity to leading scholars and experts in the field to make individual presentations and exchange views on various issues ranging from potential consequences of climate change to possible mitigation and adaptation remedies proposed by various organisations and the international community. Among other speakers, Dr. Zefi Dimadama made a presentation on “[Climate Change and the Black Sea Environment: Greening Energy Policy.](#)”

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- Statement by Dr. Zefi Diamadama, Director General of the ICBSS at the 23rd meeting of the Council of Ministers of the BSEC, Thessaloniki, 26 November 2010
- Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers Meeting, Chair's Conclusions
- European Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee, "EU Plans to Promote the Black Sea Region Need More Staff and Fresh Money"
- President Van Rompuy and President Barroso Following the EU-Russia Summit, Press Release
- Joint Declaration on Combating Climate Change in the Wider Black Sea Area, Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- Delegations of the Russian Federation and the European Union, Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Conclusion of the Bilateral Talks on the Key Issues in the Accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO
- Council of the European Union, 14th EU-Ukraine Summit, Joint Press Statement Russia Summit, Joint Statement on the Partnership for Modernisation
- Lisbon Summit Declaration, Press Release
- NATO-Russia Council, Joint Statement
- Declaration of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
- Visa Free Regime for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina: the European Commission Welcomes the Council's Decision, Press Release
- Štefan Füle European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, European Neighbourhood Policy Review, Press Release
- EU Foreign Affairs Council, Conclusions on Eastern Partnership
- EU Foreign Affairs Council, Conclusions on the Republic of Moldova
- EU General Affairs Council, 3040th Council Meeting, Conclusions on Serbia, Press Release
- Meeting of the Ministers of Energy of the BSEC Member States, Nafplion Declaration on the "Green Energy Development Initiative" for the Black Sea Region
- European Commission – External Relations, Civil Society Forum Working Groups Meetings
- Štefan Füle European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, Opening Remarks on Cross Border Co-operation under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, European Parliament Plenary Session
- Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly: The Functioning of Democratic Institutions in Ukraine
- European Council, Conclusions on Relations with Strategic Partners
- EU General Affairs Council, Conclusions on Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania
- Council of the European Union, EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, Press Release
- EU Foreign Affairs Council, Conclusions on European Neighborhood Policy, Press Release

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THE BLACK SEA MONITOR

The ICBSS has identified the need for a special circular on developments in and around the Black Sea region that goes beyond the mere news brief format. Therefore, the Centre has set up an electronic review focused particularly on the Black Sea region, aiming to provide stakeholders and other interested parties around the globe with an exclusive information service. The Monitor offers brief commentaries and refers key documents, publications and events of interest that impact on the wider Black Sea region.