

# Contemporary chances towards extraversion for the Black Sea region

5th International Black Sea Symposium

“The Black Sea region as an influential crossroad  
between East and West: a path towards extroversion”

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- ▶ Today's globalised environment is the increasing visibility and relevance of regional arrangements. It is evident that many of the factors that fuel globalization are also at work at the regional level. These elements include an enhanced sense of inter-dependence among nations and peoples, the ease and intensity of the means of transport and communication, and the extent and complexity of economic interactions.
  - ▶ The conditions of proximity, manifested in shared strategic and economic concerns, very often accompanied by related historical and cultural backgrounds. In response, regional diplomacy takes on a dual direction. On the one hand, it is an inward directed process permitting consultation and cooperation among a group of neighboring states on issues of shared concern. On the other hand, it is an outward directed process permitting a group of neighboring states to adopt common positions and objectives in inter-actions at the global level.
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# Why regionally ?

- ▶ The intensification of sector specific cooperation encourages neighboring states to identify the common interests they have which can be pursued more efficiently through the pooling of resources and efforts. This platform for common action in the region also provides a window into the common deficiencies they share in their capacity to pursue these interests which can be bolstered by tapping the resources of the international community. The platform helps in broadcasting their common needs, which may more readily attract assistance as a regional project, as opposed to a multitude of national projects, which makes it more difficult for donors to identify where the capacity gaps are.
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# Regional initiatives

- ▶ In most regions, several cooperation initiatives proceed in parallel, sometimes related to each other, but very often independent of each other. Do plentiful and overlapping initiatives enhance the promotion of security and cooperation in a region or do they rather disperse resources and efforts?
- ▶ Several regional initiatives sometimes create confusion, and even from EU professionals of each country it is not easy to describe to the public the role of each initiatives and regional bodies. On first view it looks that from states point of view it is sometimes very expensive and unnecessarily, but long term effect.

# The Black Sea region

- ▶ Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the Black Sea has been a zone of contention and confrontation for centuries. From antiquity, the region was traditionally the backyard of one or two powers, which dominated and closed it to the outside world.
  - ▶ During the Cold War, it found itself on the frontline of the global struggle for dominance.
  - ▶ In the last two decades the Black Sea has changed beyond recognition. Its strategic location, between the reserves of the Caspian basin and Europe, places the Black Sea in a unique position.
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# Yesterday

- ▶ The end of the Cold War changed beyond recognition the geopolitical position of the Black Sea. The demise of communism unleashed armed conflicts and pent up historical tensions. The most sensible way to overcome the economic and security vacuum left in its wake.
- ▶ For them, participation in regional cooperation schemes was regarded as a step towards integration into broader global economic, social and political systems. There was a widespread belief that these groupings and initiatives, through the adoption of confidence-building measures, could contribute to geopolitical stability by facilitating collaborative action against the rise of new threats.

# Today

- ▶ Even in 2000 until the onset of the world economic crisis, the region had one of the fastest rates of growth in the world. Trade between countries of the region is also on the rise.
  - ▶ Because of undergone fundamental changes in terms of economic development has now secured a place on the global economic agenda.
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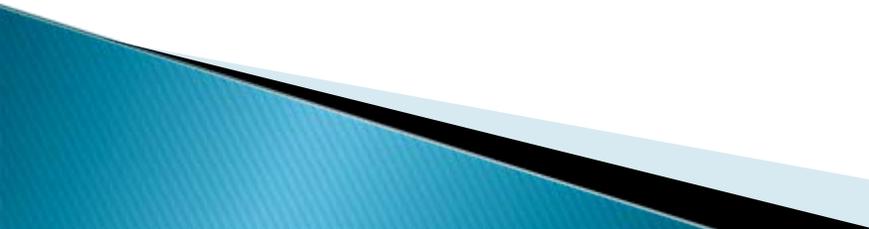
# Tomorrow

- ▶ There is thus a need to clarify the Union's status with regard to the formulation of regional policies and outputs.
  - ▶ The region's future lies in further democratization and economic integration with the wider world. It also needs an enhanced sense of security, strengthened political stability, sustained efforts to solve its protracted conflicts and the renunciation of the use of force for their settlement.
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# Results

- ▶ Considering that about half of the countries in the region have had little experience of sovereign statehood, the political transformations of the past two decades have been impressive.
  - ▶ Progress towards the establishment and proper functioning of democratic institutions and the rule of law has proved uneven and been marked by occasional setbacks and reversals.
  - ▶ The tendency among some of the region's post-Soviet states to drift towards authoritarianism and restrictive economic policies, coupled with the challenges raised by separatist
  - ▶ Movements and inter-state disputes have inhibited the promotion of cooperative attitudes.
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# The regional approach

- ▶ The states in question should be encouraged to seek regional solutions for regional problems and the Black Sea already possesses the institutional wherewithal to address its challenges directly.
  - ▶ However stakeholders must face up to the need to tackle tasks together and allow for non-state actors such as the business sector, NGOs and civil society to play a real role in shaping solutions.
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# 20 years of cooperation

- ▶ 20th anniversary of BSEC is an opportunity to renew the commitment of its members to regional cooperation and to inaugurate an overhauled BSEC in order to make it a more relevant organization.

# Advantage

- ▶ The establishment of BSEC has been termed a success in itself, since it represents a cooperative organization in a region otherwise divided by conflicts and tension.

An important advantage of BSEC is that it has been formed and developed by the Black Sea states themselves and includes all states around the Black Sea, thus enjoying a high degree of political legitimacy.

# Disadvantages

- ▶ BSEC has in several ways proven a problematic venue for cooperation around the Black Sea. The considerably lower level of economic exchanges between the Black Sea littoral states has often provided for questioning BSEC's progress regarding its main objective.
- ▶ The amount of funds allocated to BSEC's budget on the part of its member states does not indicate that cooperation in this form is highly prioritized and it remains unclear to which extent the member states are willing to grant BSEC room for initiative. Moreover, members' priorities concerning Black Sea cooperation within the framework of BSEC are unclear.

# BSEC's Structure

- ▶ The inclusive nature of BSEC is linked to its comprehensive Institutional structures which assure a focus on relevant thematic issues. Although it avoids addressing security issues as such, it should be noted that these are dealt with in the context of its parliamentary assembly and its related research centre.
  - ▶ A serious issue that needs consideration is the top-down, strictly intergovernmental nature of the organization and the inability or unwillingness of its stakeholders to give it any autonomy or open it up to the initiatives of civil society or the business community.
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According to many BSEC is  
in need of rebirth. How we  
can achieve it?



# Engage Publics

- ▶ We must recognize the reality of a revolutionized media landscape in which letting others have their say is just as important as getting your own point across. Megaphone diplomacy does not breed trust and dictating the conversation will go nowhere.
  - ▶ If you can inform the conversation around the subjects that matter to you – becoming an active participant within that conversation and accepting the dispersal of authority – you will help re-build trust, particularly trust in yourself and your argument, and this will ultimately serve the objectives
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# The goal of public diplomacy

- ▶ Public diplomacy has generally been considered a function of states. Yet we see that a wide range of activities are undertaken and huge sums are spent on press relations and communications by international organizations. Is this public diplomacy?

# Positive perception

- ▶ The target for such efforts must be either their own publics, or the government and opinion-formers of non-member states, or both.
- ▶ To ensure a positive perception of their activities among opinion formers, the media, and members of the public who will consequently support continued involvement by their governments in the organization's activities. This will involve persuading their audiences that the activities they undertake are relevant and yield positive benefits.

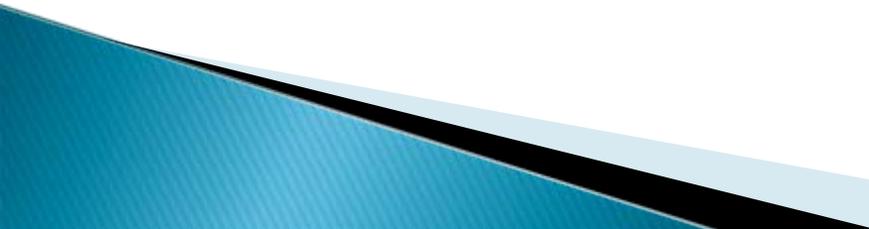
# PD strategies

- ▶ As a regional organization could explore the potential for using low-cost technology, and developing partnerships with non-state actors. Identifying issues which will resonate with the public and exploring opportunities to partner with other regional organizations in maximizing outreach could be one avenue.
- ▶ Exploiting the potential of special events, such as anniversaries or one-off events related to sports or culture or international conferences, should be considered. But developing effective PD strategies requires understanding and commitment not only within the organization but from all the member states who should be aware of the importance of allocating sufficient resources.

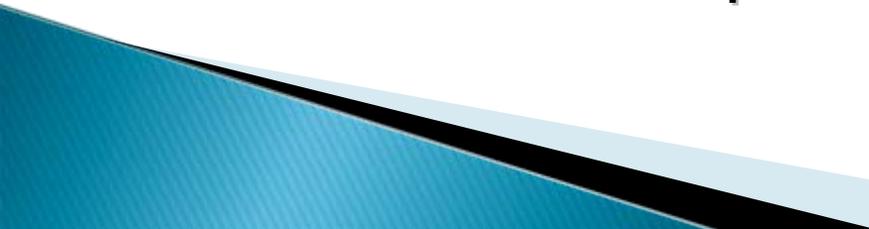
# To implement a successful communication channels

- ▶ BSEC must be clear and unanimous about its goals and the message it wants to convey. Organization secretariats should embrace new technology and imaginative methods of spreading their messages, identify ways to accommodate the circumstances of the membership.
  - ▶ All member states should promote the objectives and values of the organization in question and should play their part by providing the necessary financial resources, expertise, information, and technology to allow the staff to project the right image and message.
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# Challenges

- ▶ It is clear that public diplomacy in BSEC's case poses its own challenges because of the split responsibility between different institutions and member states and the particular difficulties where the views of member states diverge.
  - ▶ But there seems to be a consensus that, in general, BSEC should undertake public diplomacy activities to educate the public about the BSEC's goals and activities; to persuade the public to support the organization and their government's commitment to it; to support fund-raising activities; to offer accountability to public taxpayers for their governments' financial commitments.
  - ▶ Outreach is particularly important in regions where the BSEC's is not well-known or where perceptions are negative or outdated. This last point applies equally to the populations of states which are members of the organizations and to those in non-member countries.
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# Establish credibility

- ▶ Consistency of messaging is essential both within the organization and between the organization and its member states to establish and maintain credibility.
  - ▶ Establishing a good relationship with influential media and other non-state bodies, eg NGOs, academic institutions, can help both for longer-term PD efforts and with crisis management.
  - ▶ More effort should be taken to advertise success stories and to publicize little-known activities which can build positive perceptions.
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# Youth Participation

- ▶ Youth should be a serious focus.
  - ▶ BSEC should look for youth-friendly means to disseminate their message which will attract attention, perhaps in partnership with educational institutions or other NSAs, for example cultural ,student -youth & sports organizations.
  - ▶ The use of celebrities to attract public attention in terms of raising public awareness and fund-raising is on the whole viewed as a success.
  - ▶ Using social media and other modern ICT tools is essential to capture attention given that this is the preferred medium for many young people.
  - ▶ BSEC should use whatever methods might be most appropriate to their audience, which may in some cases mean more traditional means of communication.
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# Conclusion

Let's start from ourselves Let 's be more  
interested about Black Sea

"We must be the change we wish to see in the  
Region"