

Hello,

My name is Evangelia Gogou and I am really glad that I participate to this Symposium.

I will start with a brief presentation of myself in order to elaborate more on my field of expertise that is in fact related to Black Sea region.

My Bachelor Degree in Social Policy of Panteion University gave me a first look into the world of European Union and Organizations, State and Society, Social and Economical Geography as well as Criminology and Anthropology to name few.

In order to acquire a better knowledge of the global affairs, I acquired a Msc on International Relations (University of Glasgow) that enabled me to specialize not only in traditional IR theories but also in Contemporary IR. Thus, my field of expertise is International Relations with focus on Contemporary IR¹, Internet and Politics² and Human Rights³.

I continued my studies here in Athens in order to gain a more regional approach and I am currently finishing my other Msc in Southeast European Studies (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

My current degree has provided me with detailed knowledge of the Southern East Europe – what is known as Balkan area-and confirmed to my point of view, the importance of our neighborhood.

Being at the crossroads of the West and East, the wider Black Sea region throughout history has been the focus of global affairs.

The importance of the region is being portrayed by numerous examples especially today:

Energy Security is one dimension and as we have discussed it is of paramount importance to secure energy efficiency through a win to win solution. Having submitted a dissertation over U.S.A. – China and their energy competition and cooperation, I have acquired more knowledge over energy issues and I have come to understand that energy is undeniably an issue in international affairs with economic and political dimensions. Black Sea region – as transit countries of natural gas from Central Asia or even Middle East – can play a fundamental role in EU's new 3rd package strategy thus remains in the centre of the attention.

¹ "Does Neorealism offer a compelling Account of International Politics?"

What, if anything, does feminism bring to the study of international politics?

² TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE INTERNET REPRESENTS A NEW FRONT IN THE 'WAR ON TERROR'?

HOW DO NGOs USE INTERNET AND TO WHAT EXTEND?

³ Define and analyse the role of the journalist in two different societies./ Media Freedom and Kazakhstan/

Immigration problems, that we have touched upon are also important given that they shape the policy makers agenda the last decade. The nationalist rhetoric in Black Sea region – legacy of their common past- is still shaping politics, and that is why in my current thesis I am focusing on the role of minorities in democratization process in transition countries –as many Black Sea countries are considered to be. Taking the case of Turkey and FYROM, I will examine the role of two main minorities – Kurds and Albanians respectively – in order to critically understand whether minorities foster democratization in a country or they pose a threat to the country’s sovereignty. The issue of immigration and thus minorities, especially in the Black Sea region context is becoming a matter linked with security, stability and human rights.

- Enlargement fatigue - an issue of current dilemma inside EU- is another important issue linked with the region. My research when conducting an essay on Turkey⁴ and the conditionality impact over its democratization process revealed to me the existing different perceptions over enlargement. EU’s role in the region is debatable and its ambivalent stance in terms of policy making is directly influencing people’s perceptions concerning the process. The ‘Balkanization’ of the region is impeding any achieved progress and enlargement in large has become a matter of debate.

Economic cooperation is also a significant dimension of Black Sea region’s common future. Despite the political obstacles due to the turbulent past, economic cooperation is increasing between countries in the region, fact that underlines the interdependence and the prospects of further future cooperation. The current crisis has proven how fragile national economies are due to their links with global markets thus better coordination between neighbouring countries – that tends to have strong economic ties (for example, Greece-FYROM, Greece-Bulgaria) – could help economic progress.

To Sum up, the region is important in global politics for numerous reasons and fostering regional cooperation is the basic step to be done in order to secure stability and development.

My participation to the Global Politics Fall School in Athens 2011 enhanced my knowledge over issued related to EU and its foreign policy, Turkish Politics, Regional Energy Politics, Middle East, Migration and Developments in Financial and Capital Markets.

⁴ Political Conditionality: The case of democratic stability and rule of Law in Turkey

My working experience also has contributed a lot to my field of expertise. I am working for the last five years in the International Police Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Citizen Protection thus my duty enables me to become more acquainted with European policies and euro-atlantic institutions. Regional cooperation and current regional challenges play an important role for my department.