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**The European Transport Policy
at the Black Sea area**

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The European Transport Policy at the Black Sea area

By Argyro Spyridaki¹

Introduction

Transport has had a prominent position in human history because it is tightly connected with the existence of human life and activity. The need for communication and the trade development, especially in the globalized economy, have boosted the transport industry to become one of the most dynamic sectors and play a key role for the distribution of the freight flows globally. In addition to this, the traveling from one end of the earth to another has been significantly facilitated by the existence of the trains, airplanes, ships, cars and the combination of the above modes of transport. In the past, transport also contributed to the shape of the human geography as the transportation networks played an important role in the military conflicts as well as the heyday and decline of major cities.

In consequence, the transportation system is one of the most important parameters for the economic, social and political development of the European Union. For this reason, the need for a common European Transport Policy to be established was first described in the founding Treaty of Rome in 1957 in order to ensure the undivided movement of goods, people and services in the European region.

As the Black Sea Area is emerging on the international scene and gaining a more and more central role, the need for a systematic geopolitical study of this region becomes increasingly urgent. The great importance of this specific area is reinforced by the energy resources and its advantageous position as a strategic hub concerning the transport of oil and gas to the West (Europe) and to the East (Asia). What is more, we should not overlook the fact that it has almost always been the crossroad of trade routes between east and west, north and south.

The scope of our research is to demonstrate on the one hand the importance of the Black Sea Area, as concerns Europe, and on the other hand the Transport European policy priorities in the area since the establishment of the European Union. Via our research, we will highlight Europe's strong interest for the Europeanization of the states that consists of the Black Sea Area, as they virtually constitute the bridge to the increasingly strong growth of the Asian market. Today, the Black Sea Area is regarded as an economically developing triangle which is strategically positioned in the global trade system.

However the European interest for the Black Sea Area is not restricted to the future prospects of freight transport. It mainly focuses on the transportation of energy from East to West. Especially since the end of the Cold War and afterwards, the Black Sea Area has come to the center of the international attention, thus changing the geopolitics of the region. For Europe, the safe transport of oil from the Black Sea

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Area to the European continent is a political priority because the European Union is the largest energy importer globally, the needs of which, according to relevant provisions, will increase from 50% today to 70% by 2030.

The Black Sea area

In Ancient Greece, Black Sea was known as “Axeinos Sea” which meant the inhospitable sea (Japaridze). Later it was renamed Black Sea which means the welcoming sea. This name probably derives from the Turks who named this sea “Karadeniz” because of the heavy and often violent storms that took place in the area (Antonian). Another theory supports that the name of the Black Sea comes from the unusual black color² of the sea.

The Black Sea is the inland sea which is located between the southeastern Europe and Asia Minor (Figure 1). It communicates with the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus, the Marmara and the Hellespont, and with the Sea of Azov through the Isthmus of Kerch.



Figure 1: The Black Sea Area, Source: *Endtime Prophecy Net*

However the Black Sea Area is not easy to be strictly determined and delineated. "From the Balkans to the Caucasus and the steppes of Russia and Ukraine to inner Anatolia" (Hamilton & Magnott, 2008, p. 1), is currently the easternmost part of Europe and is characterized by a cluster of strongly heterogeneous elements and cultural particularities which historically had not be an hindrance to the

² The visibility in the water of the Black Sea is on average at about 5 meters, compared with the 35 meters in the Mediterranean Sea.

development and the economic prosperity of the area [(Manoli, 2010), (Loucas, 2011)].

In geopolitical terms, this region was formed at the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania into the European Union played an important role as it resulted in the fact that the European continent eventually touches the water of the Black Sea and the Black Sea Area has become a strategic partner of Europe in terms of energy resources, immigration policy, security policy, trade and transport policy etc. (Hamilton & Magnott, 2008).

In our study, we will regard as the Black Sea Area the states that are geographically members of the BSEC Organization³. A different perspective would include the Balkan States, the Aegean Area, the Eastern Mediterranean Area and the Caucasian and Central Asian States in the Black Sea Area (Antonian). According to Mustafa Aydin, there are clear geostrategic reasons to connect the Black Sea Area with the Caucasus and the countries of Eastern Europe. Despite this, we will see these areas as distinct ones from the Black Sea Area because they have different political and economic perspectives and backgrounds (Aydin, 2004).

The member states of the BSEC Organization are twelve: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Turkey, which was the orchestrator of this effort. The BSEC Organization covers nowadays an area of 20 million square kilometers in which about 350 million people live. The trade capacity of the Area is over 300 billion dollars annually (Akin).

The fact that the Black Sea Area has always been the crossroad between West and East, North and South, confers on it a great geostrategic advantage and explains why all powerful groups of every era - such the Roman or Byzantine Empire - claimed it. Although during the 17th Century, the Black Sea was the "Lake of the Ottomans", after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 and the victory of Russia, Catherine the Great managed to gain access to the Black Sea for the Russian merchant ships. The

³The BSEC (Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation) was founded in 1992 by the government of eleven countries of the wider Black Sea Area. It is the first intergovernmental organization which was formed with the goal to strengthen and develop the economic cooperation of the participating states. In 2004 Serbia became a member of the BSEC Organization (first enlargement). The BSEC Organization is part of the European regional policy for the specific area and is standing out from other similar initiatives because it is permanent and has an institutional framework for intergovernmental, parliamentary, corporate and of course financial cooperation [(Akin), (Ozer), (Celac&Manoli, 2006)]. The BSEC Organization is the most representative form of regional cooperation in this area. Its creation according to Celac and Manoli was something absolutely necessary for the stabilization and security of the region and the financial transition of the states of the Black Sea Area. Additionally, the creation of the Organization was the official commitment of its member states for an enlargement to the West and at the same time -with the recognition of the BSEC Organization by the European Neighborhood Policy – the official EU promise for a regional cooperation with the states of the Black Sea Area (Celac&Manoli, 2006).

According to the "Economic Agenda" which was adopted by the BSEC Organization in 2001, the activities of the Organization include the following areas: trade and investment, energy, transport and communications, environment, tourism, entrepreneurship, combating organized crime and other threats, institutional renewal and governance improvement (Celac&Manoli, 2006).

first half of the 19th century, Russia had the control of the area and the Black Sea was a “Russian Lake”.

By the end of that century, the Black Sea Area, apart from its great strategic position, it was also commercially important since it was the sea passage to China (Hamilton & Magnott, 2008). Russia retained its primacy to the area till the World War I. Between the World War I and the World War II there was condominium in the area between the Soviet regime and coastal States – which were born from the degradation of the empires that flourished in the region. This state of condominium led to the Treaty of Lausanne⁴ in 1923 and the Treaty of Montreux⁵ in 1936.

During World War II, the Black Sea Area was controlled by Germany and at the end of this the USSR won and retained the control of the area till the end of the Cold War. Despite the apparent calm that eventually characterized the second half of the 20th century, the Black Sea Area never stopped to be the claiming subject of the two superpowers (USA and USSR) (Antonian).

At the end of the Cold War, the Black Sea Area was reintroduced to the center of international attention, changing at the same time the geopolitical vision of the region. The rationale of the bilateral conflict was abandoned for the sake of a global geopolitical cooperation. According to Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, the f. Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of the BSEC Organization, “is now generally accepted that the end of the Cold War reserved for the Black Sea Area a more central role on the international scene” (Chrysanthopoulos, p. 70).

Some factors that contributed to this are the following:

1. The potential prospects for economic development of the area.
2. The perspective of new resources of energy in an area which does not belong to the Middle East, especially after the terrorist attack of 11/09 and the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq.
3. The Black Sea Area is an energy hub for the transport of both, gas and oil.
4. This area constitutes the Eastern border of Europe and at the same time the entrance to the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East.
5. The Black Sea Area is also called the “Security Corridor of the Black Sea” because it is the major corridor for trafficking arms, drugs and humans (Chrysanthopoulos).

⁴The Treaty of Lausanne was a peace treaty which set the boundaries of the modern Turkey. It was signed in Lausanne of Switzerland, on the 24th July 1923 from Greece, Turkey and other countries that fought in World War II and participated in the Treaty of Sevres, including the USSR.

⁵The Treaty of Montreux is a treaty which concerns the status of the Straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The agreement, which was signed in 1936, gives the control of the Straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to Turkey and regulates the military activity in the region. The terms of the contract have been a source of controversy for years, mainly for the transit of the Soviet Union’s warships from the Straits to the Mediterranean Sea. It was signed on the 20th July 1936 in the Swiss town of Montreux. It entered into force on the 9th November 1936 and also entered the League of Nations on 11th December 1936.

The School of Critical Geopolitics

Our research will focus on the geopolitical reading of the Black Sea Area, the development of the Trans-European Transport Network and the European priorities concerning the energy transfer, in other words the safe transport of oil and gas from the Black Sea Area to the European continent.

In our analysis we will try not to take into account either the classic geopolitical approach or the involvement of the geostrategic vision into this. Taking into consideration the fact that in the post-Cold War era the centre of the power globally is redefined based on more than one factor and that gravity shifts from the classic geopolitical forms of power to the global flows of trade, money and energy, we will adapt our analytical approach to this.

For this reason we will use the Critical Geopolitical School⁶, the theories of which flourished in the 1990's, that freed the theoretical background of the geopolitical science from the foreign policy making of the states which used to influence it, to a broader theory of geopolitics [(Agnew, 1998), (Tuathail, Dalby, & Routledge, 2003)]. In this study we will try, by using the sensitivity of the critical geopolitical theory to the geographical element to illustrate and describe the geopolitical situation of the Black Sea Area. We will keep a neutral evaluative position in order to interpret the mechanisms which help to acquire and exercise power and influence in the international environment, associated with the Black Sea Area. Our goal is to recognize the states of the Black Sea Area as the main geopolitical players of the region, whose actions are not decided by the deterministic strategy of the foreign policy of a single state but they are in the middle of an interaction, a competition of power which is a result of their own foreign policies, the global geopolitical structure, the Non-Governmental Organizations' strategy, the decisions of the supranational Organizations like NATO, the World Trade Organization etc.

The Development of Transport Policy in Europe

The transport sector is one of the most important ones for the economic, social and political development of the European Union. For this reason, the need for a Common Transport Policy was very early described in the founding Treaty of Rome in 1957 in order to ensure the unobstructed movement of people, goods and services in the geographic region of the initial Economic Union of Europe. So, the need of an established Common Transport Policy to harmonize the national transport policies of the member states, in order for the competition to be increased and at the same time for the costs to be reduced, was very early described targeting the development of the intra-Community trade with the main purpose to increase European Union's competitiveness.

⁶ The School of Critical Geopolitics proceeded to the discrediting of the school of Classic Geopolitics considering that its criticism was subjective as it failed to take account of the power relations that affect the geographic area as a whole. Nevertheless the School of Critical Geopolitics, inspired by Derrida, deconstructs the geographical knowledge by taking into consideration all the geographical assumptions, perceptions and the cognitive structures that influence the political decision making in international politics.

However, the implementation of a Common Transport Policy in practice was faced with many difficulties due to the different priorities that the original six members - states of the European Union had put in the field of transport. The different objectives of the member - states reflected the differences of their national transport policies based on their national and economical needs⁷. These differences complicated the decision making process for a Common European Transport Policy. The major objective of the Treaty of Rome – the gradual replacement of their national transport policies in the name of free competition, which was based on the socio – economic principles of the European Union – won the enmity of the national governments who felt that the vision of a Single Market threatened their dominance in their domestic markets.

By the early 70's the Transport Policy in Europe was still a matter of the national governments of the member - states (Potter & Martin, 2000) and it was obvious that the only way to overcome these difficulties in order to develop a Common Transport Policy would be the adoption of interventional and incumbent measures for all the member - states concerning their transportation policy (EC, 1995).

In 1971, the European Union presented a revised approach for a Common European Transport Policy which was focused on the creation of a common transport network. By 1985, the Common Transport Policy was only the declared intention – but not a real commitment – of the member – states to facilitate the international transfers between them.

The important turning point for the evolution of a Common Transport Policy in Europe was in 1985 the publication of the White Paper for the completion of the Internal Market which characterized the restrictions on the transport services as a major barrier to the free trade inside Europe (COM (85) 310 final, 1985). In the same year the European Court of Justice ruled that these restrictions are inconsistent with the Treaty of Rome and that the European Commission should proceed to the formulation of a Common Transport Policy as soon as it is possible for the coordination and the harmonization of the regulations. Thus, the European Commission started an intensive process of Directives, aiming at the removal of the barriers in the areas of economic activities which were connected with transport infrastructure.

After a lot of reactions and problems, finally in 1993 the foundations for a Common Transport Policy were laid with the first White Paper published by the European Commission on the future development of a Common Transport Policy for Europe. The creation of a Single Market in 1992 played a leading role for this progress. The White Paper of 1992 highlighted the need for the liberalization of the transport market in order for an efficient transport system - which will be developed according to the principles of sustainability - to be ensured. The national transport networks, in accordance with the White Paper, would be based on the European Union's grants because the whole Europe would benefit from the construction of a common transport network (COM(2001) 370 final, 2001).

⁷ The result was some transport types to be preferred over others. For Example, France, Germany and Italy have preferred the development of their railway networks while Norway supported the development of the road network.

Concluding, in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 – for the establishment of the European Union – the importance of the Trans-European Networks for the cohesion of the EU is finally formally recognized and the legal basis for their development is set. In this way the European Union via the Treaty of Maastricht denotes its active interest for the sector of transport where the Trans-European Network belongs.

Trans-European Network

The creation of the Trans-European Network embarked with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993. In Chapter XII and Article 129B of the Treaty it is stated that the European Community will strengthen the construction and the development of the Trans-European Network in order to help the residents of the European continent and the local European Communities to reap the maximum benefits from the creation of a geographical area without borders. According to the Treaty of Maastricht, the economic viability and robustness of the European Union will depend in the future to a great extent on the development of this Network. For these reason, the creation of the Network's infrastructure was and is still of a great priority for the European Union because it affects not only the better functioning of the internal market and the commercial movements of the goods but also the transportation of people and energy in the wider geographical region of Europe. So, the Trans-European Network includes the following areas of activity:

1. Transport⁸ with the Trans-European Transport Network
2. Energy (electricity and gas), with the Trans-European Energy Network
3. Telecommunications, with the Trans-European Telecommunications Network" [Trans-European Networks (TEN)].

Pan-European Transport Network

Transport infrastructure contributes to the increase of the economic competition because it facilitates the movement of the products, people and services. This is the reason why the European Union has developed the most European policies than any other sector. The result of all these policies and of the long-term effort for a common European Transport Policy is the creation of the Pan-European Transport Network.

The Pan-European Transport Network is superset of the following sub-networks:

1. The Trans-European Transport Network which lies in the geographical territory of the European Union before the enlargement of 2004.
2. The Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment which is an evaluation system for the extension of the ten Pan-European Corridors in the accession countries.

⁸ It includes the roads, the combined transport, the waterways, the ports and the high speed European rail network. In addition to them, the sector of transport also includes the intelligent transportation management systems and Galileo, which is the European Navigation System.

3. The ten Pan-European Corridors which pass through the European accession countries, the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the Black Sea Region.
4. The four Pan-European Transport Areas which cover some coastal and marine areas.
5. The Euro-Asian connection which is known as Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia TRACECA [(Jugoviæ, 2006), (EC DG Energy & Transport, 2002)].

Trans-European Transport Network

According to the European Commission, the transport infrastructures play a significant role for the proper and smooth function of the European internal market by facilitating the mobility of the people, goods and services, contributing in this way to the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Community and of the member-states that compose it. The European Union decided the establishment of the Trans-European Transport Network in order to merge the land, the sea and the air networks with all over Europe (EC, Infrastructure - TEN-T - Connecting Europe, 2014).

This ambitious effort locate the man and the environment in the center while it is an important step for the development of a coherent transport network which will be able to serve the European Union's needs. According to Mr. Koumoutsakos, who is a member of the Transport Committee and Tourism Committee of the European Parliament: "The Trans-European Transport Network is one of the most ambitious projects of the European Union as it is the backbone of the Single Market. It is substantial for the mobility of the citizens of Europe – including the ones with disabilities – and for the economic, social and spatial cohesion of the Union as well. These networks, which are still pretty new, are instrumental for the seamless cross-board transportation of goods and passengers in a fast, efficient and financially sustainable way. Europe's main objective is to overcome the shattered transport network of the past and to build a coherent and functional network for the future" (Koumoutsakos & Kallas, 2012). So the main objective of the Trans-European Transport Network is to incorporate all European regions equally, strengthening in this way the spatial, economic and social cohesion in order to meet the needs of the Single Market.

Due to the lack of financial resources, the Trans-European Network's infrastructure is developing very slowly and the orientation is national and not always European. On December 1993, the European Commission presented the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in Brussels - that was Jacques Delors' inspiration- which emphasized the crucial role of the Trans-European Network for the proper operation of the European internal Market. The most important reports related to the development of the European's Union Transport policy are the following:

The White Paper of 2001: "The European Transport Policy for 2010: time to decide"

On September 2001, the European Commission published the new White Paper titled: “The European Transport Policy for 2010: time to decide” on the revised Common Transport Policy, due to delays on its implementation projects and because of the impending European enlargement as well. The White Paper highlights the need for a balanced development of transportation infrastructures among all the modes of transport in order to manage a sustainable development of the transportation in Europe. Therefore, it promoted the more environmentally friendly transports such as the rail and maritime transport in comparison to the road transport. The proposals which were introduced with the White Paper in 2001 were adopted by the Barcelona European Council on October in the same year. One of the immediate results of the implementation of this policy was the opening of the air, road and partially of the rail Market. The main objective of the White Paper was the development of a sustainable transport system for Europe according to what the European Council in Gothenburg decided in 2001. However, at that moment seemed that the European Transport System could not be sustainable as it largely depended on the oil (COM(2001) 370 final, 2001).

The Green Paper of 2009: “TEN-T: A policy review - Towards a better integrated Trans- European transport network at the service of the common transport policy”

The Green Paper titled: “TEN-T: A policy review - Towards a better integrated Trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy” which was published on February 2009, opened the debate on the revision of the European Policy concerning the Trans-European Transport Network. It defines the future challenges that European Commission has to face which they are related with transport and they emerged from the review of the European environmental policy and from what the Lisbon Strategy projects about Europe’s economic and social development. The main objective for the European Commission - as defined in the Green Paper of 2009 - is the redesign of the transport modes and the best possible use of the interoperable intelligent transport systems and new technologies (COM(2009) 44 final, 2009).

The White Paper of 2011: “Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system”

The White Paper of 2011 ensures on the one hand the competitiveness of the European transportation system and on the other hand investigates the possibility of reducing its dependence on oil, without compromising the effectiveness of the system. The main goal of the White Paper is the development of a transportation system which will properly utilize all its resources in order to contribute to the European economic growth by increasing the European competitiveness and through offering high quality mobility services. This goal could be achieved by using less and cleaner energy as well as by the use of the modern transport infrastructures, which will also reduce the negative impact of the transportation on

the environment (EC, Connecting Europe Facility: Commission adopts plan for €50 billion boost to European networks, 2011).

Ten Pan-European Transport Corridors

The Pan-European Transport Network was the result of three Pan European Transport Conferences which were co-organized by the European Commission in cooperation with some international organizations such as the European Council of Transport Ministers, the Economic Commission of the United Nations and European member-states representatives, the candidate countries and other invited countries. The first conference was held in Prague, on October 1991 (29-31) and the idea of the Transport Corridor was for the first time set.

In the second pan-European Transport Conference, which was held in Crete from 14th to 16th of March in 1994, the countries of the Central, Western and Eastern Europe identified nine transport corridors as national priorities for the development of their transport infrastructure.

During the third pan-European Conference in 1997 (23-25 June) in Helsinki a tenth corridor and the four pan-European transport areas⁹ for sea basins were added.

⁹The four pan-European transport areas are: the Sea of Barents, the Black Sea Area, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic / Ionian Sea.



Figure 2: Ten multimodal Pan-European Transport Corridors

Source: WIKIPEDIA: Pan-European Corridors

The European Commission in cooperation with the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe has designed the pan-European transport areas and the Transport corridors aiming to connect the Trans-European Network with these countries. For every Pan-European Transport Corridor a different Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the involved countries and the European Commission. The Memorandum of Understanding was a voluntary commitment without any legal-binding and only reveals the intention of the parties for the further development and expansion of the Trans-European Transport Network. In addition to this, the Memorandum of Understanding sets the Corridors' Committees which monitored the development of each Transport Corridor.

The Ten multimodal Pan-European Transport Corridors (Figure 2) - which are also known as the Helsinki Corridors - include road, rail, air, sea and river transport. The total length is about 48,000 km approximately, of which 25,000 km is rail network and 23,000 km is the road network. The airports, the seas, the rivers and the terminals are the hubs between all the different modes.

The development of European Transport Policy at the Black Sea area

According to the classic geopolitical consideration, the Black Sea Area is a vital link between East and West. It is the area which separates and bridges at the same time Europe with/from Asia, and Asia with/from Middle East and for this reason it has a special geostrategic position in the world map. In addition to this, the Black Sea Area is an area of great concern in terms of safety due to the energy resources and the trade routes which cross it as well (Manoli, 2010), (Akin)].

During the Cold War, the international interest for this Area was small mainly because it was divided into two competitive ideologically opposing spheres of influence which gave to it no chance of cooperation (Lembke & Voinescu, 2006). Moreover, it existed the impression that the oil resources of the Caucasus had no other reserves (Akin). But after the Berlin's Wall fall, the dynamics of the area changed. Year by year, the geopolitical interpretation of the area was being changed to such an extent that we can nowadays disconnect the Black Sea from the Asian geo-system and we can integrate it to the European one (Loucas, 2011).

At the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st, there are two major changes in the European world: firstly, the increase of the number of the European states because of the split of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia¹⁰, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union and secondly, the shifting borders of the European Union to the East, because of Turkey's candidacy to become a European member - state on the one hand and because of the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in the European family in 2007, on the other hand. All these changes, managed to set a new geopolitical order in the Black Sea Area at the end of the Cold War.

Furthermore, new players were added to the geopolitical chessboard of the wider Black Sea Area. The most important of them, according to Kunt Akin, are recorded below:

- The Black Sea's coastal states – local players.
- USA, EU, China, Iran – external players with possibility of influence.
- BSEC¹¹, GUAM¹², Black Sea Forum – local intergovernmental players.
- OSCE¹³, UN¹⁴, NATO, European Council – global intergovernmental players.
- Non-governmental Organizations, Multinational Corporations (Akin, p. 2).

¹⁰From the split of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, were created five states: (New) Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia - Herzegovina and FYROM (Loucas, 2011). In 2003, the name of Yugoslavia officially abandoned when the state was transformed into a loose commonwealth which was called Serbia and Montenegro. In 2006, the Parliament of Montenegro decided to dispose of the commonwealth. With this action the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was completed.

¹¹Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

¹²Organization for Democracy and Economic Development.

¹³Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

¹⁴United Nations.

The strategic importance that the Black Sea Area holds in the 21st century is due to the need for safe production and distribution of energy. The geopolitical importance of the area lies mainly in the fact that it is the gateway for the transfer of the largest percentage of the energy produced in the world. According to the central scenario of the International Energy Agency, the so-called “New Policies Scenario”, the global demand for energy until 2035 will rise above the 30% mainly due to the excessive increase in demand from Asia - the greatest part of it from China and India - and will surpass 60% of current demand (IEA, 2012). According to the predictions of the EU, just in terms of oil demand for the 27 Member-States, it is estimated to rise by 40% within the next 40 years (Tomberg, 2006, p. 61).

The European Union recognized fairly early the key role of the Black Sea Area. According to the European Union, the democratization of the area coupled with the economic integration of this, is a one-way direction for the Black Sea Area in order to reach the levels of economic development, security, democratic governance and regional cooperation that could make it an important partner of the West.

The first attempts of the European Union to approach the area date back to Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which concluded with all the states of the former Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was based on mutual cooperation between the former Communist states of the Black Sea Area with the European Union in order for them to be strengthened politically and economically, to “build” on common values and to conquer common goals through an increasingly close cooperation (EC, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs): Russia, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, 2010).

However, the partiality of this policy as it included only a small part of the total states, which geographically and historically belong to Black Sea Area¹⁵, forced the European Union to implement other more strategically delineated policies of approach. So the European Neighborhood Policy with the objective of “avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged European Union and its neighbours” was suggested, in 2003, just one year before the completion of the fifth European enlargement¹⁶ - and thus the expansion of the borders and the neighbors of the European Union (EC, Black Sea Synergy, 2010). The European Neighborhood Policy estimates that the greater the incorporation of states in European integration is, the stronger the support of the EU will be, in terms of democratisation and economic development (Wigen, Blakkisrud, & Kolsto, 2011, p. 29).

¹⁵ The Black Sea area includes Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Serbia and Moldova from the West, Ukraine and Russia in the North, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the East and Turkey to the South. Although Albania, Greece, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova and Serbia are not coastal States, their main historical ties and their active role in the Black Sea Area make them important local players.

¹⁶ In May 2004 the integration processes were completed for the following ten new Member States: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighborhood Policy is an ambitious initiative that marks the transition from traditional trade and cooperation relations to a greater integration of the European Union and its neighbors. The main objective of the European Neighborhood Policy is the creation and strengthening of Europe's relations with the neighboring Eastern countries and the countries of southern Mediterranean¹⁷ and southern Caucasus as well, which have no immediate prospects for European Union membership. This is a bilateral policy between Europe and partner countries that offer them the opportunity to participate in various European Union activities, through greater cooperation in the political, economic and cultural sector (EU, 2014). This policy is part of the European security strategy, which defines that European countries have been committed to settle their differences peacefully and cooperate through common institutions for the achievement of the Union's financial interests but also to ensure the internal cohesion and the consequent security within the community. The European Neighborhood Policy took its final form in the Essen European Council in 1994 in which the participants agreed to create and maintain "balanced relations with all their neighbors". Today, sixteen countries participate in the European Neighborhood Policy (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine) with land and sea borders with the European Union¹⁸. The European Neighborhood Policy encourages various forms of cross-border cooperation. Some of the European Neighborhood Policy's benefits are offered by European Cooperation Mechanism and promoted through infrastructure, interconnections and networks, notably in the areas of energy and transport (EU, 2014).

As the European Neighborhood Policy is closely linked to various European Union policies aimed at increasing access of the neighboring countries' populations and better cooperation among them, it is also reasonable to have a high affinity with the transport policy in Europe. Given that the European Union is an important economic and political partner for the neighboring countries, the enhanced cooperation in the field of transport will help these countries to become economically stronger and politically more stable. In a notice published in 2011 by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled: "The EU and its neighboring regions: a renewed approach to transport cooperation", the renewal of the political cooperation between Europe and its neighbouring countries in the transport sector and the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network policy is defined. This revised policy aims to a better interconnection of Trans-European Transport Network with the infrastructure networks of neighbouring countries [EC, COM (2011) 415, 2011]. In addition to this, Siim Kallas, the vice-president of the European

¹⁷ In the Mediterranean region, the European Neighborhood Policy applies to all the countries which are not European Union members and participate in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (Barcelona process) with the exception of Turkey, which continues its accession negotiations with the EU.

¹⁸ Although Russia is also a neighboring country, EU-Russia relations are governed by a separate strategic partnership.

Commission and responsible for transport, said: “Freedom of movement shouldn’t stop at the border. Today, if we are serious about a relationship with our neighbors, we need to provide the infrastructure which is essential for flows of goods and people across borders and cut away the bureaucracy and bottlenecks” (Koumoutsakos & Kallas, 2012).

TINA Network is one of the most typical programs related to the development of transport and consequently of the transport infrastructures and networks in the Eastern neighboring countries and aims to link these countries with the European Union, using the Trans-European Transport Network and further developing the Trans-European Networks.

TINA Network - The extension of the Trans-European Transport Network

TINA¹⁹ was originally a resolution on the guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network, which reveals the intention of the community to develop an integrated transport network by using the principles of sustainable mobility.

In July 1996, it was called the TINA Process as the European Union adopted the procedure with a view to the optimal coordination of the development of transport infrastructures in the acceding countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The countries concerned are: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus.

TINA's creation essentially defined the future of Trans-European Transport Network in the acceding countries since in this way the TEN and the areas concerned were able - through TINA - to be integrated in the wider Transport Network. This is particularly important for both the European Union itself and the new-acceding countries, as it is estimated that the ten Transport Corridors and the Transport Areas will be the basic infrastructures for trade in an enlarged Union in the long run, in the new independent regions and the Mediterranean (European Parliament, 2001).

The transport network that is defined by the TINA process includes the ten multimodal Transport Corridors as the main arteries, which were validated during the 3rd Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki in June 1997. “The TINA network comprises 18.683 km of roads, 20.924 km of railways, 4052 km of inland waterways, 40 airports, 20 sea ports, 58 river ports and 86 terminals, of which 20 are situated in sea ports and river ports and 66 stand alone” (EC DG Energy & Transport, 2002).

The Black Sea region, an important trade corridor

In accordance with the EU revised strategic framework, the region of the Black Sea is a strategically important bridge - since it links Europe to the Caspian Sea, Central

¹⁹TINA: Transportation Infrastructure Needs Assessment.

Asia and the Middle East, but also with Southeast Asia and China - particularly with regard to energy security and energy supply of Europe.

The EU is the world's largest regional energy market (over 500 million consumers), it ranks second place in terms of natural gas and oil consumption, and at the same time the largest energy importer in accordance with the "energy 2020" strategy (EC, Europe 2020 initiative - Energy 2020: A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy). The study "EU Energy Policy: From the ECSC to the Energy Roadmap 2050" recorded that more than half of the European Union's consumption needs must be imported, something that makes it dangerously dependent on both the oil and natural gas, when the European Union has not yet managed to adopt a coherent and binding framework for energy for all member-states (Langsdorf, 2011).

Therefore, the old continent's security of energy supply - which according to relevant estimates will grow from 50% of today to 70% since 2030 - is of paramount importance to the European Union. The fact that the European continent is adjacent to the largest energy reserves (Russia, Caspian Sea, Middle East) makes both its own geopolitical position and also the position of intermediate countries (countries of transit) important, as these countries practically guarantee the safe transport of energy to Europe.

The best and most secure European energy link with the area of the Black Sea is a primary objective, something also evidenced by the various policies (European Neighborhood Policy, Black Sea Synergy, and Policy for Cooperation with the East) that the European leadership has been trying to implement in the region since the end of the Cold War.

The importance of the region concerning the energy is twofold: on the one hand it's an important producer of energy and, on the other hand it requires ensuring the safe transfer of the energy to the continent as it is the main passage for the oil and gas exports to Europe. In the following two maps (Figures 4 and 5) we notice at a glance the number of transport routes of oil and gas respectively from East to West.²⁰

²⁰ Please note that these maps are not so much for the accurate recording and evolution of pipelines construction- as many of them have already been completed- but because we need a general visual display of the "natural" energy transport routes from East to West.

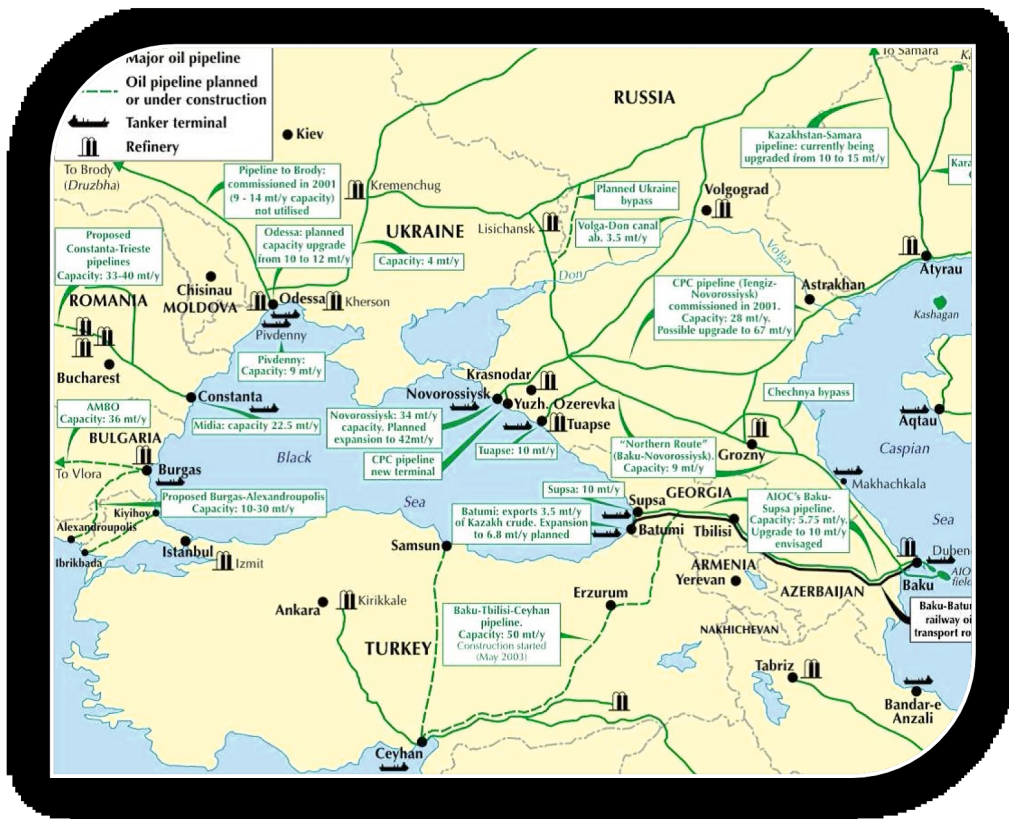


Figure 3: Oil Transport Routes, Source: IEA, 2005 cited in Yakobashvili, p. 89



Figure 4: Natural gas transport routes, Source: IEA, 2005 cited in Yakobashvili, p. 90

The ever-increasing energy needs of the West seem to be looking for the easier passage through and around the Black Sea, while Turkey and Armenia procure natural gas through pipelines that start from Russia (Yakobashvili).

We can easily conclude, even just through this cartographic visualization (Figure 3 & Figure 4) that the area of the Black Sea is the crossroad of energy needs and requirements of Europe, Asia, Russia and the Middle East. At the same time, the Black Sea Area is an opportunity for growth for the coastal states in an ever-growing energy market but also offers the trade routes that are constantly expanding. The European approaches also ensure the security of freight transport from East to West, as China has evolved as one of the most important trading partners of Europe. Therefore, a cooperation policy in the fields of energy, transport and environment is a decisive factor for the harmonious and sustainable development of the region.

The Black Sea Synergy

The sixth enlargement brought Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union and exposed the need for more direct regional cooperation with the countries that make up the Black Sea Area. As a result, in 2007 the policy for Black Sea Cooperation or Synergy is created as the means for closer regional cooperation between the countries of this region and the European Union.

The main objectives of the Black Sea Synergy are the democratic and economic reforms in order to strengthen the stability and overall development of the region. With this policy the European Union has gone a step further by setting indicative areas of cooperation among states, one of which is the transport sector. The Black Sea Synergy will be the tool, with which the European Union will deepen the European Neighborhood Policy' sactions²¹ and contribute to further strengthening of the regional cooperation initiatives among member states [(EC, Black Sea Synergy, 2010), (EC, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Black Sea Synergy- a new regional cooperation initiative, 2007)]. In this way the European Union policy is converted from bilateral and conventional to holistic.

More specifically, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union and the states of the Black Sea Area stated, in a joint declaration, during the first ministerial meeting in the context of the Black Sea cooperation policy in Kiev in February 2008, "the participants agreed that the main objective of the Black Sea Synergy is the development of cooperation among the states of the Black Sea Area, between them and the European Union" (Yannis, 2008, p. 4). Through the Black Sea Synergy, the European Union introduces the concepts of regional and sectoral cooperation among the states of the Black Sea in three key areas: energy, telecommunications and transport, as any improvement in these areas has a direct impact on the entire Black Sea region.

²¹ The European Neighborhood Policy was the result of consultation among the Europeans Union neighbors from East and West in the European Congress of 16 April 2003 and in the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, which took place 16-17 of May in the same year.

In 2008, the year that this policy formally came into effect, the European Union started a dialogue with the states of the region with a view to the transport consolidation of the European area with the Black Sea area through: (a) a common aviation area, (b) the TRACECA programme and (c) the sea routes²² in the Black Sea (EC, Report on the first year implementation of the Black Sea Synergy, 2008).

The efforts to develop transport axes between the European Union and the neighboring countries in the Black Sea Area are summarized in the integration of transport system in Europe and the neighboring regions through the completion of the infrastructures of the Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia (TRACECA).

Since December 2008, the European Union has been trying an even greater integration of states in Black Sea through the Eastern Partnership Policy. This new political approach complements both the European Neighborhood Policy and the Black Sea Synergy Policy. It's about the development of bilateral relations with the states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.

Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus - Asia (TRACECA)

The TRACECA programme launched in May 1993, aspiring to be an interstate programme aiming to the improvement of the international transport in the Black Sea region, the Caucasus and Central Asia creating a continuous rail corridor, linking Western Europe with China through Black Sea, South Caucasus, Caspian and Central Asia.

The basic objective of the programme is the strengthening of the political and economic independence of the republic countries which take part in this through their participation in the European and world markets by making use of the alternative transport routes (TRACECA).

The participating states consider that the TRACECA Corridor is of strategic importance, since it constitutes an alternative route to Europe. It is a route competitive with the other commercial corridors in the North or South and is aimed at reviving the Silk Road as the main modern commercial runway from East to West.

It was decided that the program will be financed by the European Union and initially eight member - states participated in this: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. From 1996 to 1998 Ukraine and Mongolia joined this programme. Today a total of 14 states²³ participate in this. The TRACECA transport corridor, starts from the ports of the Black Sea – where many of the Transport Corridors stop – and continues in the depths of Central Asia through an inseparable rail network. “Within the framework of TRACECA, 39 technical projects and 13 infrastructure projects, financed by the EU, took place. Other financing institutions for the completion of TRACECA are the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank” (Dogan, 2005, p. 65).

²² Motorways of the Sea

²³ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine

Before the creation of TRACECA the largest part of trade was using sea routes through the Suez Canal in the Indian Ocean and Malaga. The land routes in Pakistan, India, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam were hindered by the natural barriers of Himalaya and Tien Shan, so the bulk of international trade is done through the sea, although Pakistan and India have an extensive rail network. The disadvantage of maritime trade-except that it is prone to harsh weather conditions-is that the higher speeds that the merchant ships can reach is 30 Km/hour (720 Km/day). This is a very slow way of transportation in comparison with the average speed of freight trains who reach 37 Km/hour in some powerful sections of TRACECA (Gorshkov & Begaturia, 2001).

IN CONCLUSION

The European Transport Policy was initially developed in the perspective of economic integration of all the states. The aim of the European Transport Policy by the founding Treaty of Rome in 1957 until the early '90s was the creation of a Common Market for the optimal movement of goods, services and people within its limits. The creation of the Common Market and the consequent political-economic integration of the European Union have contributed, after 1992, a great impetus to the growth of the European Transport Policy, through the release of transport on the one hand and the development of specific networks and infrastructures on the other.

While the political integration of the European Union happens, we have the collapse of the Eastern European regimes and the Soviet Union, with the immediate effect of the European Union's possibility-opportunity to expand its borders to the East. The strategy chosen by Europe for this purpose is that of economic expansion through the union of the former Communist countries with the European market, which will be achieved through the development of their transport infrastructures and the connection of them with the heart of the European Union. So Europe, began to develop the infrastructures and policies for the development of a Trans-European Transport Network (which spreads across the former, before the 2004 enlargement, European Union's geographic territory) of ten Trans-European Corridors (crossing the accession countries, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the Black Sea) but also of the TRACECA Transport Corridor, which is connecting the European with the Asian continent. All the above are the targeted European policy for an enlarged and strategically developed transport system that the Trans-European Transport Network recommends.

In conclusion, our research underlines the unbreakable connection of the European Transport Policy and the importance of the Black Sea region as trade corridor, especially concerning the energy routes. This happens as the Area's energy reserves have contributed to the revision of the region after the period of bipolarization and have placed it geopolitically in particularly important areas worldwide. On the other hand, the energy itself is connected with the sector of transport because of the need of the safe transportation of oil and gas from the producing countries to the major energy importers.

In our study the aspects, under which the first pillar (i.e. European Transport Policy) was developed, are particularly highlighted. Our analysis illustrates the development of the European Transport Policy with the aim of the enlargement of the common market to the East, and more specifically to the Black Sea Area. It also reveals that the main European policies towards the Black Sea, as the European Neighborhood Policy and the Black Sea Synergy, were based mainly on the creation of common freight roads in connecting Europe with Asia and with the Black Sea and the Mediterranean regions. This happens because the European Union, by developing policies and transport networks in the European region and also beyond this, in the Black Sea Area, practically creates the infrastructures that will support the expansion of the European market, something that has resulted in the economic expansion of Europe into new regions. And vice versa, the liberation of the states that consist the Black Sea Area from the Communist regime in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which controlled the region until then, leaves the way open for the economic exploitation of the energy resources of the region from Europe, at a moment that the European continent becomes more and more energy and trade dependent from East.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the European Transport Policy linked Europe inextricably with the Black Sea Area and hence with Central Asia, completing in this way the puzzle: the puzzle of the geopolitical dependence and the trade interdependence of European Union with the broader Asian region. In this way, the assumption that the Trans-European Networks in the Black Sea Area were primarily developed in connection with the geopolitical data of the area immediately after the fall of the Soviet regime and were evolved gradually keeping always the balance among other major players who also aim to earn from the Black Sea Area is confirmed.

In addition, the development of transport infrastructures, a result of the European Transport Policy in the Black Sea Area, contributed significantly to the regional development of the area, the development of trade – through the expansion, improvement, creation, connection, and eventually the emergence of trade routes, in the strengthening of the coastal states' financial position in the world economic system.

Local players end up being indirectly benefited from the development of the European Neighborhood Policy as regards both the cultural aspects and issues of democracy, environment, institutions and support of all these through the mechanisms that the European Neighborhood Policy and the Policy for Cooperation of the Black Sea offered. Consequently, the economic, political and cultural western influence on the states of the Black Sea region appears that in the future will have significant value in the architecture of the new world order as this area will have a major stabilizing role between Europe and the Orient. In the medium term, analysts agree that the region will absorb the vibrations of competing policies that Russians, Europeans and Americans are trying to implement in the area as they will be benefited in economic, political and cultural level. So in the long term, the region is expected to constitute a democratic bridge, where all westernization policies on behalf of the United States and the European Union to stabilize and democratize the Middle East and Central Asia, will be routed (Lembke & Voinescu, 2006). Therefore,

security policy is one of the most important goals that the development of the Trans-European Network and the overall Trans-European Transport Network in the wider Black Sea Area geopolitically serves.

In conclusion the Trans-European Transport Network took place to ensure three main parameters:

- A. Firstly, to ensure the political and economic cohesion of Europe
- B. Secondly to redefine trade routes and commercial ties between Europe and Asia and
- C. Thirdly to ensure the safe transportation of energy supplies that Europe needs and will always need from East to West.

Finally, the long-term prospect of the Transport Network in the Black Sea Area is related not only to the economic and political development of that region but also in terms of ensuring democracy, stability and security in the European region now.

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