

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ROMANIAN OPTIONS TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE IN REGIONAL BILATERAL/TRILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE BLACK SEA AREA

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Regional cooperation to improve security and stability materializes in the existence of many bi or trilateral intergovernmental relations in the initiation and development of regional initiatives and organizations. All these actions provide an opportunity to identify and develop viable assessment procedures of the strategic environment, risks and threats to security and stability in the area, and to the identification of appropriate tools of crisis management. At the same time, a viable regional cooperation boosts the states of the South-East Europe area to have significant contribution to resolving tension, crisis or potential conflict that manifests in the area.

Key words: *security, political option, regional cooperation, security of the Black Sea, South-Eastern Europe*

1. INTRODUCTION

Located in an area of strategic importance for both NATO and the EU, the Romanian state has assumed consciously and responsibly a major role in the processes of identifying, establishing and implementing these organizations' policies of stability, cooperation and security, both for South Eastern Europe and as a spearhead for the Middle East and the Caspian region. In the recent past, Romania was between two hotspots of conflict. The international community's blunders in anticipating the potential crises and the lack of any suitable strategies to prevent escalation, of settlement and fighting

violence and crimes against peace and security caused the situation in the former Yugoslavia and the Republic of Moldova to become explosive, and its resolution to be one on the long run. Romania has directed and intensified its efforts to assert itself as a significant contributor to regional cooperation, progress and stability of democracy and in guiding South-Eastern Europe towards Euro-Atlantic integration, while raising the country's importance in the security equation area.

Following such a global modern approach, the Romanian state has legitimate concerns about the legal position, living conditions and non-discriminatory treatment of the

Romanian communities outside Romania, in full compliance with international law, and with bilateral agreements.

In essence, regional issues have regional solutions. It is time for South-East European states to assume responsibility and take action to bandage and treat their wounds, with the help of the international community through its sustained efforts.

2. ROMANIA IN REGIONAL TWO OR THREE PARTY ARRANGEMENTS

Two or three party regional arrangements are, in fact, intergovernmental diplomatic tools dedicated to resolving any potential conflicts arising between neighbors. They are based on similar principles that emphasize transparency, openness, prevention, confidence, mutual aid, etc. In this way, the countries of South-East Europe seek to ensure a minimum of stability and security in the region. From the outset the West has encouraged and supported this kind of interstate relations based on the idea that the very security of the continent depends on the stability in the region.

However, long time, these formulas were not considered to have a high value for the politico-military elements, as their number was small and did not offer advantages to specific organizations, but the reconsideration occurred in the mid-'90s, when the OSCE summit in Istanbul adopted the *Charter for European Security*, which allocates a well-defined place to the state regions. Basically, in recent years, these simple forms of cooperation

have seen a significant increase under EU pressure, as a prerequisite for membership, as it was considered the foundation of increasing regional stability.

In its foreign policy, Romania is open to maximum cooperation with all countries; in this respect, the main lines of action are:

- expansion of diplomatic, political, economic, trade and cultural relations with all EU countries;
- development of cooperation with each Member Community, on areas of common interest;
- dynamic politico-economic relations at all levels and expanding the range of bilateral projects;
- boosting political and economic relations with all the G-8 (1) and G-24 (2) members;
- development and consolidation of all types of relations with Republic of Moldova;
- development of good neighborly relations with the South-East European non EU states;
- comprehensive development of all relations with neighbors Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Ukraine;
- close regional cooperation with all NATO members in South East Europe;
- the intensification of relations with the Russian Federation, together with the diversification of regional cooperation in political, economic and security areas.

Bilateral relations with countries in South-East Europe are proof that Romania has realized the need for cooperation with neighbors, of developing normal relations with them in order to strengthen stability in the region and for mutual benefit.

In the South-Eastern Europe, Romania has advanced several proposals of Three Party Cooperation since 1995, in an effort to strengthen regional cooperation and create platforms for stability and security due to socio-economic prosperity of the area. These proposals have found their counterpart and have materialized in the form of trilateral cooperation as presented below [1].

Romania - Moldova - Ukraine, relations aimed mainly at: consultation, information and periodical documentations on issues of common interest, environment protection, border traffic, identifying and accessing international funding sources for joint projects, fight against crime and organized terrorism, illegal trafficking of drugs, people and weapons, illegal migration and border crossing, as well as cultural and humanitarian support to the Romanian communities in Moldova and Ukraine in line with European standards. Thus, major projects such as the Lower Danube Euro region, Upper Prut Euro region, creating the free economic zone Galati - Giurgiulesti - Reni; cooperation to fight organized crime, but also new border crossing points arose.

Romania - Bulgaria - Turkey. In addition to the political element, this trilateral concerns close cooperation in areas such as organized crime, the exchange of information to combat smuggling and trafficking of people, drugs and weapons, increasing the volume of trade, tourism development and economic cooperation.

Romania - Bulgaria - Greece, which, together with the above, consolidated the support of Greece and Turkey - NATO member states

– for Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the Alliance. At the same time, this trilateral focused on the issues of: geopolitical developments at regional level, stability of the South-East Europe zone, overall economic development, combating illegal migration, drug trafficking and organized crime, cross-border crime, cooperation in cases of civil emergency and natural disasters, transport and energy infrastructure development.

Romania - Bulgaria - Serbia follows the framework of the Association of Danube 21, whose agenda includes solving common problems that occur on the banks of the Danube, in areas located in remote places far from large urban areas, impoverished areas without economic and transport infrastructure and directly dependent on agriculture, with an unemployment rate well above 50%.

Romania - Hungary - Serbia's cooperation objectives are shared border management and control through joint action and transfer of know-how and democratic experience, cooperation in the areas of energy and infrastructure and cooperation to prevent and manage disasters.

Romania - Italy - Serbia supports the Serbian European aspirations and the economic cooperation between the 3 countries.

Romania - Ukraine - Poland aims to combat organized crime, arms and drugs trafficking and illegal migration, political and economic development of tripartite dialogue, implementation of joint projects of road infrastructure.

Bi or trilateral relations have an important contribution to the establishment and security of South-East Europe zone, which will complete the NATO and EU efforts to find viable solutions for eliminating sources of conflict in the region. In addition, the military, the results of these efforts have translated into the establishment of multinational forces such as the *Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe* (MPFSEE) *Central European Nations Cooperation in support of Peace* (CENCOOP) *Military cooperation in central and Southeastern Europe* (GENCOOP) *Naval cooperation group at the Black Sea* (BLAKSEAFOR) *Tisa multinational engineers Battalion*, *The Romanian-Hungarian Peacekeeping Battalion*; *The Joint Romanian-Moldavian Battalion*. The national units within these multinational military structures have a variable efficiency, as they represent a new phenomenon, but they have well defined purposes and pragmatic projects.

These multinational structures bear a strong international political message. Multinational components cooperate very well in a sensitive area - the military - despite all the interstate animosities in history. Militaries have shown that it can be done. The future belongs to this genre of military cooperation with emphasis on prevention.

All such collaborative schemes, in which Romania is developing concrete actions and has full responsibility, add constructively to the major concepts and actions of the world security organizations. However a stable Southeastern

Europe can only be the result of joint efforts of all states, regardless of their membership to NATO or the EU. Supporting the economic development and democratization efforts of the states in this area, these forms of cooperation are a decisive contribution to the regional stabilization and many regional cooperation schemes, bilateral or trilateral, to which Romania participates, are all viable solutions to enhance the security in the South-East European region.

3. ROMANIA'S PARTICIPATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLACK SEA AREA SECURITY

The National Security Strategy, together with the National Defense Strategy is evidence to Romania's will to be an active and important contributor to strengthen the security in the South-Eastern Europe, and also internationally as a country with a geopolitical and geo-strategic contribution within NATO and EU. As such, the Romanian state has a definitive interest to have stable, predictable, democratic and prosperous neighbors, who are also serious contributors to peace and understanding, to the consolidation of good neighborliness and to strengthening regional stability and security. Establishing a stable security and prosperity in the Black Sea area is a primary goal and at the same time, a course of action for Romanian security strategy, especially since the "*frozen conflicts in the Greater Black Sea Area and the relatively small distance from the theaters of military confrontation in Central*

Asia, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq underline even more the issues of security, peace and cooperation”[2].

In essence, the fundamental strategic interest of Romania on the Black Sea is focused on stability and democracy in conjunction with the geo-strategic interests of the EU and NATO. As a corollary, one of our country’s strategic objectives is to initiate and develop a massive Euro Atlantic involvement in the Southeast Europe, and implicitly in the Black Sea region. Romania also develops its responsiveness to counteract risk factors and security threats in this space, by operationalizing and optimizing its role in building stability and security in the Black Sea region, in full consonance with the specific policies of NATO and the EU. Moreover, Romania’s role in the real operationalization of stability and security is determined by the very importance of the Black Sea, which is [3] *“a priority in proximity of Romania, a vital area for us and secure energy routes between the eastern producer and the western consumer of energy , an ecosystem unique in the world, the Danube Delta; an important point on the agenda of global geopolitics, due to its positioning in the space of confluence and the main realities facing the contemporary space connected with the Danube and Central Europe, especially the Rhine-Main-Danube corridor, the meeting of European civilization with the north African and the Middle East through the Mediterranean and, not the least, the connection area between the developed and developing world”.*

Romania’s role is outlined through the implementation of projects that directly relate to security and stability in the Black Sea, politico-economic projects on a wide range of functions: security, stability, environment, energy, combating terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking of all kinds, promoting and consolidating democracy, promoting and supporting free trade, supporting a highly multicultural dialogue and resolving frozen conflicts.

From the perspective of Europe’s energy security, Romania strongly supports two major energy projects in the Black Sea region—development of Nabucco and PEO (Constanta-Trieste) oil-ducts – projects which exploit Caspian energy potential. Their development and use will contribute substantially to the economic development of the countries involved, along with the development of cooperation and the consolidation of stability and prosperity in the region. These aspects, combined with the pragmatic solutions focused on environmental issues and geographical, political, economic and cultural fragmentation that prevent progress in the region, will provide a solid foundation for sustainable development, security, and the rallying of the region to the Euro-Atlantic community values and interests. Located at the point of tangency of three important geopolitical and geo-economic zones—Europe, Central Asia and Middle East – the Black Sea region is a main energy transit bridge and at the same time, an important stage on which the risk factors and outbreaks of conflict

have a strong impact on the security of South-East Europe and therefore NATO. The specialist's forecasts show a strong growth of the energy potential of the Black Sea region in the near future, which gives the region a major position in Europe's energy security.

In this context, Romania contributes to the promotion of the Black Sea region on the agendas of both the EU and NATO, actively participates in EU actions to build viable and reliable partnerships in the region, strongly promotes the European Neighborhood Policy in particular with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, develops energy partnerships with the countries of the Caspian region and Central Asia, promotes dialogue and understanding in order to identify regional targets all Black Sea littoral states, especially Russia and Turkey, major players in the Black Sea, encourages and supports a constructive and effective relationship between the EU and NATO and the Russian Federation, to provide Romania-Russia relations pragmatism, predictability, trust and mutually beneficial benefits. More *“Romania's efforts to promote the Black Sea region as an important geopolitical area is in the interest of NATO and EU members, because it enhances the dynamic processes of democratic transformation in the enlarged Euro-Atlantic security architecture and creates the potential for development of an integrated area policy and regional policies that promote Euro-Atlantic values - democracy, human rights, prosperity, liberty and the fight against terrorism”*[4].

Regarding threats to regional security, the reality describes an accurate picture of new events of this kind, complete with the great potential of the region to host their experimentation. But as I have stated earlier, countering them is primary and almost exclusive the task of the Black Sea States. These states are intrinsically bound to develop policies to neutralize the negative manifestations within their own borders and reject any separatist, extremist, terrorist and criminal phenomenon that may occur on their territory or in their vicinity.

These realities prompt Romania to consider and adopt a behavior appropriate to the belief that the Black Sea region is a geopolitical and geo-strategic space open to the world democratic community. As a result, the Romanian government advocates a Euro-Atlantic strategy for the Black Sea, given the Alliance-Union concerted approach to the stability process in South East Europe. For this, the Romanian government is committed to: support democratic transformation in the region, building a theoretical and especially practical framework for conflict prevention and crisis management, stimulating a sustainable regional dialogue in order to discuss and resolve any emerging regional problem; cooperation with all international bodies present in the area, widening the educational cooperation as a long term investment in regional security, reconstruction of the Black Sea economic market in the context of its connection to European free market and increasing complementarities of actions of all actors in the region to identify and

rapidly implement reliable solutions with short-term applicability and results on long term regarding the frozen conflicts in the region. Also, a priority for Romania is to boost the cooperation and improving the institutional processes after the collapse of communism in parallel to thwarting the monopolistic or hegemonic intentions, building strategies and activities for this region. So, the Romanian state acts firmly for the actual activation of international organizations with a direct impact on the region, such as the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership and Black Sea Euro region, and to promote and strengthen the regional dimension within the EU through the Black Sea Synergy initiative. All this come to stimulate the economic development, infrastructure, trade, investment, market mechanisms, essentially the stability of the region

Settlement of frozen conflicts around the Black Sea is an issue for which Romania takes advantage of every opportunity to keep it in sight of all the actors playing on stage of the Black Sea region security. For this, the Romanian state will have, in our opinion, to promote, even with incisiveness, political, diplomatic and economic strategies and mechanisms for a peaceful and lasting resolution of these unpredictable conflicts. It is necessary to identify and define the principles and rules needed to bring to a common ground the interests of citizens, communities and countries of the region, with the security interests of the entire region of South-Eastern Europe and the Euro-Atlantic community and in line with international law, to be able to cover the gap of

differences specific to each conflict. These strategies should outline the obligations of the parties with respect to: avoiding the international recognition of the breakaway regions, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the separatist enclaves, collection and disposal of weapons and munitions under international control, dispersion and dissolution of paramilitary groups, support and foster democratic processes of reintegration of these enclaves in the rightful states belonging. Romania currently considers direct involvement in solving frozen conflicts through actions to promote democracy and support the efforts of accession to Euro-Atlantic structures as Romania's interest is that Euro-Atlantic enlargement does not create a border at the Black Sea level.

Also, a defining role in solving frozen conflicts in the Black Sea cooperation derives from the economic element of international dialogue. Therefore, "*Romania must actively support the construction of a Euro region able to support cooperation with all EU Member States, to encourage the development of energy and transport infrastructure and to support trade, investment and market economy mechanisms*". [5] To this end, Romania displays a pragmatic policy through effective use of the tools provided by bilateral or multilateral format of cooperation in the regional economic strategies with impact on the constancy of democracy, stability and security of the Black Sea region. It targets with priority the energy and transport corridors from Central Asia and the Middle East to the Atlantic, sea and river port facilities in the

region, environmental protection and ecological equilibrium of the Black Sea, capabilities to counter risks and threats to the security of the region and Europe, in general, and prevention and response capabilities to crises and to counter asymmetric risks.

In conclusion, Romania's actions are directed towards capitalizing the opportunity to become an attractive partner for major world power poles, to the extent that it achieves to convince on its actual ability to become a source of solutions to global and European level, instead of a source of problems.

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ENDNOTES

(1) **The Group of Eight (G8)** is an international forum - having as main activity the global economy - the leaders of the richest countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and USA. They account for 60% of global GDP, around 72% of world military spending, and four of the eight, namely France, Russia, UK and USA have over 95% of the world's nuclear weapons. Source: <http://www.g8.co.uk/> accessed in December 2012.

(2) **Group of 24 G24** is an intergovernmental group of twenty-four African Latin American and Asian developing countries, responsible for international monetary matters concerning the interests of its component developing states. Member States are grouped into three regions: *Region I (Africa)*: Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo; *Region II (Latin America and Caribbean region)*: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela; *Region III (Asia)*: India, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Syria. China has *special guest* status at ministerial level. Source: <http://www.g24.org/> accessed in December 2012.