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Security in the Black Sea Region: Main Risks and Threats

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I - Introduction

It is believed that the Black Sea, or the Pontus, as it was known in ancient times, was so named in the Modern Era for the depth of its waters, which contrast with the vibrant blues of the Mediterranean. Upon studying the history of this sea and the inhabitants of its shores, one finds a deeply poetic meaning in its name. As Shakespeare's Othello found in its rough currents a good metaphor for his unbridled passions, so History looked in awe as, century after century, a litany of peoples, cultures, races and religions ended up trying to find themselves through war or peace, through isolation or trade, in the opaque mirror of the Black Sea. Even if the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the two World Wars brought the historical struggle to delineate the region's borders to a halt, the Nation-State straightjacket was never able to reverse the dynamism of a region that had always seen harmony in the intricate diversity of its peoples.

Naturally, security and stability in the Black Sea region remain complex topics. There are three major methodological approaches to the topic: geopolitical analysis, which includes strategic and military components; analysis of safety threats—i.e. non-conventional—which include environmental and sanitary problems; and public security analysis, which focuses on preventing small and large-scale crimes. This paper will not analyze the first two approaches, as there are already numerous works that deal with them, and because both deserve individual attention and detail, which we cannot provide here. By focusing on public security and large-scale crimes, we will elaborate on the risks that transnational organized crime and terrorism pose to the protection of critical infrastructures in the region; a topic that has been studied less and which has potentially devastating consequences for the countries bordering the Black Sea...as well as for all of Europe.

II- Main threats to security

The threats to the security of the Black Sea region are multiple and varied. For one thing, geographical factors, which play a substantial role on assessing transnational public security threats due to its border control component and to potential political spillovers. Romania and Bulgaria, both members of the European Union (EU), border southern Turkey and northern Ukraine. The two great regional powers, Russia and Turkey, who have both had notable economic growth in recent times, are located at the northern and southern extremes of the sea. Between them, with a foot on the Caspian Sea and the other on the Ponto, are three old Soviet republics, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, prone to ethnic and nationalistic tensions, and that serve as transit areas for large energy resources coming from the Middle East. To make things even more interesting, other neighbors in the region are: in the southwest the politically and economically unstable country of Greece, in the south the contentious country of Cyprus and in the southeast Syria, Iraq

and Iran. A clear corollary emerges: the EU should express an unequivocal interest in maintaining security and stability in the region by helping Bulgaria and Romania in this endeavor.

The geopolitical context highlights the importance for countries in the region to establish measures for the effective prevention and coordination of public security. Transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups—both of which are extremely active in the region and increasingly powerful—should then be of our greatest concern, as they dismantle political, economic and social institutions that seek to preserve stability and guarantee security for the economic development of the countries in the region.

In analyzing risks associated to security matters in the Black Sea region, we should begin by referring to South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria², as territories where organized crime and terrorism are representing a serious threat to the State, as well as a direct attack on liberty and fundamental rights of citizens. This rampant delinquency threatens surrounding countries as well, due to porous borders. A prime example is a case still currently active against a network of smugglers that operated at the border between Ukraine and Moldova³. This criminal organization attempted to sell uranium—most likely from an atomic installation from the Soviet era with security deficiencies—to buyers in northern Africa allegedly connected to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb⁴. Hence, the collusion of criminal and terrorist groups in the region could be one of the greatest challenges to international peace and stability⁵.

Moreover, there is a growing trend amongst local terrorist groups—e.g. the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and radical Islamic groups from northern Caucasus—to establish bases outside the region, specifically in Europe, by using organized crime methods and techniques and infiltrating into migrant Kurd and northern Caucasus' communities in order to pass unnoticed. As Europol has indicated, of most concern are the links that are forming between terrorist and delinquents to traffic arms, drugs and people, as well as

² The government of Moldova and the representatives of Transnistria, with the support of the Russian government, began a peace process in September 2011.

³ For a regional focus on the subject: Shelest, Hanna, "Threats to the National and European Security in the Black Sea Region: Comparison of the Black Sea Synergy and Reality"; CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission; June 2009; p.2. Available at: http://www.balkansblacksea.org/pub/news/31_108_presentation_hanna_shelest.pdf. For information on emerging threats in the region: Corbo, Denis, et al. "The Black Sea Need Not Be a Black Spot", New York Times, 3/9/2010; <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/04/opinion/04iht-edcourtney.html>.

⁴ More information available at GSN- Global Security Network, September 28, 2011 http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20110927_4140.php. As a relevant precedent and to understand that it is not related to a timely threat, we can cite the operation that took place in August 2010 in which Moldovan police seized 1.8 kilos of highly radioactive Uranium-238 and detained a trafficking group that sought to sell it at 9 million euros. It is also interesting to point out how terrorist groups like the FARC have attempted to traffic uranium, offering it, according to the media, to the Venezuelan government so it could then be sent to the Middle East, specifically to the Iranian government (for information about this: Delgado, Antonio María, "Las FARC buscaban vender uranio a Chávez", El Nuevo Herald, 11-15-11; <http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2011/11/15/1065680/las-farc-buscaban-vender-uranio.html>).

⁵ Delinquent and terrorist groups from the Balkans must also be included as all of these criminal groups connect with each other on an ad hoc basis. For a detailed study on the subject, refer to: Deliso, Christopher, "The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West"; Ed. Praeger, 2007.

the practice of money laundering and the financing of terrorist cells and their operations. Thus, we should no longer see these threats as affecting remote areas; they are and will continue affecting EU countries as well⁶.

Porosity of borders and the collusion between criminal organizations and terrorist groups make the countries in the Black Sea region ideal transit points for drug-trafficking—East (Afghanistan) to West (Europe) routes, and even West (Latin America) to East (Europe) routes⁷. Mexican cartels' brokers have been found doing business in the Balkans; Moldova has become a supply center; and in Bulgaria drug shipments arrive coming from Latin America via western Africa and Turkey⁸. Evidently, the passage of narcotics paves the way to increased crime, corruption, money laundering, and drug consumption.

Considering these challenges and the budgetary restraints of most of these countries to confront them, it is crucial to at least strengthen security in critical areas, border sections, and infrastructures in the region. Additionally, if we take into consideration that resources used for defense and security matters by Western powers are dwindling due to the current global economic crisis⁹, nothing seems more pressing than to soundly prioritize and rationalize spending in this field, as international financial cooperation will decrease in the upcoming years. This is not the ideal scenario when one understands that international cooperation is essential in designing a truly efficient prevention system for all. However, countries will have no option but to adapt their security strategies to these new realities.

Given the aforementioned, we should emphasize, from a strategic perspective, on the importance of protecting critical infrastructures in the Black Sea Region. Critical infrastructure is defined as all “those physical and information technology facilities, networks, services and assets which, if disrupted or destroyed, would have a serious impact on the health, safety, security or economic well-being of citizens or

⁶ Europol: Terrorism Threat Assessment, April 2011; pp.6 y 12. Available at:

https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/te-sat2011_0.pdf

⁷ Europol: Transnational Organized Crime Assessment, April 2011. Available at:

https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/octa_2011.pdf

⁸ Abril, Guillermo y Borasteros, Daniel, “En guerra contra el narcotráfico (I)”, Diario El País, 7/8/2011. Available at:

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/reportajes/Canta/farropa/elpepusocdmg/20110807elpdmgprep_4/Tes

⁹ The examples of these drastic reductions between Western military powers are many and varied, but especially significant are the cases of the United States (for example see: Alexander, David, “Budget cuts take U.S. military ‘to the edge’: Panetta”, Reuters, 13/10/2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/13/us-usa-defense-budget-idUSTRE79C50Q20111013>; and Tiron, Roxana, and Capaccio, Tony, “U.S. Military Chiefs Warn Budget Cuts Will Cancel Weapons”, Bloomberg, 5/11/2011, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-11-05/u-s-military-chiefs-warn-budget-cuts-will-cancel-weapons.html>), United Kingdom (for examples see: “Defence Review: Cameron unveils Armed Forces cuts [8% over four years]”, BBC, 19/10/2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11570593>), and Germany (for examples see: Clark, Nicola, “Germany Said To Cancel Billions in Military Plane Orders”, New York Times, 20/10/2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/21/business/global/germany-said-to-cancel-billions-in-military-plane-orders.html>). Although Spain is not a military power per se, we can all observe that we do not escape from this “low-cost” defense, as noted Rafael Bardají (La Gaceta, 7/11/2011, “¿Defensa low-cost?” http://www.gees.org/articulos/defensa_low_cost_8997).

the effective functioning of governments”¹⁰. Due to its potential impact, there is no doubt that an attack against critical infrastructure will transcend national boundaries, carrying devastating consequences not only to the targeted country, but to the region and the international community as a whole. Let’s imagine, for example, a terrorist attack against the Panama Canal; this would, without a doubt, generate a loss in lives and material goods, but would also prevent the transit of thousands of cargo ships, thus disrupting global supply chains. It would cause a domino effect of incalculable proportions: global shipping companies with sharp economic losses, insurance companies responsible for covering those losses, incomplete or delayed supply of all kinds of products and energy resources, commercial companies incurring in dramatic losses, consumers not accessing certain foodstuffs, etc. Hence, an attack on a critical infrastructure such as a sea Canal will cause an immense damage to the global supply chain—let us not forget that seaborne trade accounts for about 90% of global trade¹¹.

Generally speaking, the concept of critical infrastructure includes: energy installations and networks; communications and information technology; finance (banking, securities and investment); health care; food; water (dams, storage, treatment and networks); transport (airports, ports, intermodal facilities, railway and mass transit networks and traffic control systems); production, storage and transport of dangerous goods (e.g. chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials); and what is called, somehow confusingly, “government” (e.g. critical services, facilities, information networks, assets and key national sites and monuments)¹².

Within these risk areas, in the Black Sea region we should pay special attention to three critical infrastructures: (i) transportation—particularly maritime; (ii) energy—plants and installations used for research, transportation or storage of energy and dangerous materials; and (iii) recreational and tourist areas.

- (i) Due to its effect on **transportation**, maritime ports on the banks of the Black Sea need to urgently reinforce their security measures by having updated port security plans, with detailed provisions on cargo control—both arriving to the port and in transit—and on crisis management, among others.

¹⁰ Definition used by the Commission for Communication at the European Council and Parliament on October 20, 2010-Protection of critical infrastructures in the fight against terrorism [COM (2004) 702].

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/133259_en.htm

¹¹ International Shipping Industry, “Key Facts”, <http://www.marisec.org/shippingfacts/keyfacts/>

¹² Ibid. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/133259_en.htm

The ports of Constantza (Romania) and of Novorossiysk (Russia) are amongst the top 90 most important ports in the world in terms of volume of cargo¹³. Additionally, many of these ports are attracting more and more tourists as passenger cruise ships become increasingly popular, which in turn makes them highly attractive targets for any terrorist seeking international publicity¹⁴. This new blooming of Black Sea ports has its best examples on the Turkish coast—Istanbul, Sinop, Samsun and Trabzon ports—, but also in Romania (Constantza), Bulgaria (Varna), Georgia (Batumi), Russia (Sochi) and Ukraine (Yalta, Sevastopol and Odessa). Therefore, passenger control measures, coordination between public authorities and privately contracted security companies for cruise ships, as well as the exchange of information—e.g. passenger manifestos—between the different countries docking these ships, should be considered in any national or regional security system.

Additionally, special attention should be given to canals in the region: the Danube-Black Sea canal, which has experienced a decrease in ship transit, consequently increasing the risk of an unsecured canal due to lack of resources; the Volga-Don canal which connects the Caspian Sea to the Sea of Azov and where numerous petroleum ships store crude petroleum from the Caspian Sea (between 6 and 10% of the world's reserves); the Main-Danube canal that connects the Northern and Caspian seas; and the upcoming Eurasian Canal, which will connect the Caspian and Black Seas. The Eurasian Canal will be four times bigger than the Suez Canal and eight times that of the Panama Canal; this colossal project began in 2007 as a strategic investment made by China to extend its influence in the region¹⁵, and overcome Russia's traditional susceptibilities.

- (ii) Secondly, the **energy sector** is also vital to the stability of the region. During the past 150 years, oil and gas extracted from the Caspian and Black Seas¹⁶ have been unavoidable factors in any political, strategic and military equation in the region. Even as far back as in the Byzantine Empire, combustible materials that came from the coasts of the Black Sea

¹³ American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), 2011 study on 2009 data, available at: <http://aapa.files.cms-plus.com/PDFs/WORLD%20PORT%20RANKINGS%202009.pdf>

¹⁴ The most famous terrorist attack against a passenger cruise was the two day kidnapping of the MS Achille Lauro in 1985. The Palestinian Liberation Front took control of the cruise ship while it departed from the port in Alexandria, Egypt, on its way to Said Port and rerouted it to Syria calling for the liberation of 50 Palestinian prisoners being held in Israel—which never occurred in the end. The kidnappers escaped to Tunisia.

¹⁵ The interest of the Chinese company, Sinohydro, is what relaunched the project in 2009.

¹⁶ This refers to the Ploiesti oil well, south of Romania, which started functioning from the mid XIX century on and peaked further after 1878, as refineries were developed.

were extremely valuable because they were used as ammunition during naval battles: a weapon known by fisherman as “*thalassion pyr*” (sea fire), which, acting as a flamethrower, would win numerous battles for the Byzantines¹⁷. Given the historic wealth of energy in the Black Sea and its potential economic value, it is not surprising to discover that rising powers, such as Turkey, are actively promoting oil exploration¹⁸. Without a doubt, though, the critical infrastructures that pose the greatest concern, and which should therefore have the greatest priority for protection, are the South Stream and Nabucco pipeline projects. The former was unveiled in 2007 by the Russian state owned company Gazprom and the Italian company Eni; its operations should begin by 2015¹⁹. The Nabucco pipeline, in turn, a construction projected to be less costly than that of South Stream, will extract oil from the Caspian Sea—Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan water/land interface—bringing it to Central and Western Europe through Turkey, Romania and Hungary²⁰. The strategic political context of these two competing projects will hardly go unnoticed: the supply of gas to Europe and its sustainability, following its collapse in the winter of 2009 due to disputes between Russia and Ukraine²¹. Both projects encompass thousands of kilometers of pipelines and adjacent facilities; thus, there are thousands of kilometers to protect and control in countries with different levels of security and risks of potential

¹⁷ Partington J.R., “*A History of Greek Fire and Gunpowder*”, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, p.15. También, King, Charles, “*The Black Sea: A History*”; Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 71 y ss.

¹⁸ “*Turkish energy minister does not confirm oil findings in Black Sea*”, The Nuclear Counterfeit, 11/05/2011, <http://www.nuclearcounterfeit.com/?p=9615>

¹⁹ On December 28, 2011 Turkey approved that the pipeline pass through its waters. This one and other related considerations are addressed in: “*Energía. Visto bueno a South Stream*”, GEES, 10 de enero de 2012, http://www.gees.org/articulos/energia_visto_bueno_a_southstream_9113

²⁰ For a relatively recent update on the project: Socor, Vladimir, “*Nabucco project can advance faster than rivals*”, y “*Non-Strategic Rivals Undermine the Strategic Nabucco Project*”, Jamestown Foundation, ambos de 19/09/2011;

http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38348&cHash=9972836545360c04410314fec2ad708a and

http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38347&cHash=e7385f38672690994bd432fdefa8ba76.

²¹ Associated Press, “*Europeans shiver as Russia cuts gas shipments*”, 1/7/2009,

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28515983/ns/world_news-europe/t/europeans-shiver-russia-cuts-gas-shipments/. For information about the energy and underlying strategic problems, especially about the role Russia plays, review: Mangott, Gerhard, and Westphal, Kirsten, “*The Relevance of the Wider Black Sea Region to EU and Russian Energy Issues*”, included on p. 147 and the ss. of the edited work by Hamilton, Daniel y Mangott, Gerhard, “*The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives*”, Center for Transatlantic Relations and Johns Hopkins University, 2008, www.ceps.eu/ceps/download/1500. Also : Sánchez Andrés, Antonio, “*La interdependencia energética ruso-europea*”, Documento de Trabajo del Real Instituto Elcano, 08/06/2007, available at:

[http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1/DT52-](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1/DT52-2007_Sanchez_dependencia_energetica_Rusia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1)

[2007_Sanchez_dependencia_energetica_Rusia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1/DT52-2007_Sanchez_dependencia_energetica_Rusia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=a15673804f0185e3b9d9fd3170baead1). Finally

it is interesting to observe how the events in Russia are evolving. It seems that the Kremlin has made a strategic error by unintentionally liberalizing the oil sector: Mehdi, Ahmed; “*Putin’s Gazprom Problem*”, *Foreign Affairs*; May 6, 2012;

http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137615/ahmed-mehdi/putins-gazprom-problem?cid=nlc-this_week_on_foreignaffairs_co-051012-putins_gazprom_problem_2-051012

terrorist attacks²²—note that Nabucco is to cross through southern Caucasus and Anatolia. Given the current geopolitical factors, and the appeal they have on terrorists as a potential target, the risks associated with the lack of preventive and thorough security strategies cannot be overlooked²³.

Not only are gas and petroleum relevant sources of energy inside and outside the region. Nuclear energy is a core component as well. Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Ukraine all have nuclear power plants around the Black Sea. Among them is Zaporizhia, the third largest plant in the world, which is located in Ukraine. Turkey will soon be joining this group as it is in the process of constructing three power plants. Two of them, Igneada and Sinop, will be on the banks of the Ponto. Despite the international support given to Ukraine for the protection and maintenance of its plants—especially after the catastrophe at Chernobyl and the dangerous neglect of nuclear facilities when the USSR was dismantled—and of Turkey’s willingness to build new generation reactors with appropriate security measures, these nuclear power plants continue to be an appealing target for terrorist attacks, whether committed by the PKK or unleashed as a product of other regional tensions.

Finally, it is important to highlight the need to protect research centers, which mistakenly are not always thought of as potential terrorist targets. Therefore, the ELI (*Extreme Light Infrastructure*) program of the European Union must also be included as a critical infrastructure to be protected in the Black Sea region²⁴. ELI comprises three large research centers in Hungary (Szeged), the Czech Republic and Romania. These centers focus their research on laser energy and nuclear physics, amongst others. It would be irresponsible to spare resources for their proper protection²⁵.

²² Information about “pipeline security” is abundant, but it is interesting to highlight the conversation held at the *Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum 2010* of Atlantic Council of the United States, the expert panel on “*Critical Infrastructure Protection: Security, Borders and Energy*”, available at: <http://www.acus.org/event/black-sea-energy-and-economic-forum-2010/critical-infrastructure-protection/transcript>. During this panel, the experts highlighted the importance of private-public cooperation to protect these infrastructures.

²³ Mexico and the state owned company PEMEX (*Petróleos Mexicanos*) have unfortunate experience in this subject. In 2007, attacks on the PEMEX installations by the terrorist group Popular Revolutionary Army caused material damage and personal injuries. For an example, see: Noguez, Alejandra, “*PEMEX: atentados contra gasoductos*”, BBC Mundo, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_6987000/6987854.stm

²⁴ For more information on the program: <http://www.extreme-light-infrastructure.eu/>

²⁵ It is also important to include other large energy facilities like the hydroelectric dam of the Dniepr River.

- (iii) How is critical infrastructure protection related to the tourism sector in the Black Sea? The wooded lands surrounding the Sea, as well as its coasts and beaches, have had a resurgence²⁶ that might be compared to the Golden age at the end of the XIX century, where the luxurious health resorts—pictured in the stories and actual lives of Dostoyevsky, James, Mann, Zweig or Chekhov—became the place to go for wealthy Europeans.

The current increase in tourism, reflected by the increasing popularity of cruise ships, presents new risks to public security. Among them, the organization of major sporting events. Within the Black Sea Region, the 2014 Winter Olympics will be held in Sochi, Russia; the same country that will host the 2018 FIFA Football World Cup. These and similar events should be carefully planned in terms of security, especially in relation to crisis management. The facilities at risk (stadiums, hotels, conference centers, monuments, etc.) will bring a multitude of individuals from around the world and again provide an ideal scenario for terrorist groups to strike, as the tragedy at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich proved. Within such context, a terrorist attack will also disrupt local economies—the tourism, manufacturing, and artisan industries being the ones that could be more affected, as the attacks in Bali in 2002 and 2005 showed. Let us hope, as was written by a British tourist at the end of the XIX century, that the greatest of evils reported after these major events take place is simply the visit of “*an ignoble army of scribbling visitors [to Crimea, which has a soft stone that] has been delightful to their pocket knives... [It] is carved and cut by nobodies, anxious to inform the world that they were ‘raised’ in New York or Philadelphia.*”²⁷

III- Actions taken by the international community

As has been previously emphasized, there is no true effective answer against terrorism and organized crime in any region, especially that of the Black Sea, without sound national coordination amongst different security agencies and sound cooperation amongst these agencies and their regional or international counterparts. I will focus on the latter, because of the repercussions of neglecting it and

²⁶ One of the greatest modern challenges to the tourism industry in the region is the contamination of the waters of the black Sea. Fortunately though, it seems that the political authorities of the region are nowadays aware of the problem. There are many rivers whose waters flow into the Black Sea, among them the Danube’s, which crosses many countries and thus carrying away numerous sediments.

²⁷ Op. cit. King, Charles, “*The Black Sea: A History*”, p.202: “*The United States appears to have sent an ignoble army of scribbling visitors as her contingent to the Crimea, and the soft stone of the country has been delightful to their pocket knives... [It] is carved and cut by nobodies, anxious to inform the world that they were ‘raised’ in New York or Philadelphia.*”

because of its increasing importance. After all, as the Spanish philosopher José Ortega and Gasset noted: *“Every piece of land is not imprisoned anymore in its own geometric space. From a visual standpoint, it really acts in all other places of the planet as well. According to the physical principal that objects are where they act, we have to admit that anywhere in the world is ubiquitous. This proximity of the distance, this presence of the absence, has greatly increased the horizon of every life”*²⁸.

What are the main international cooperation tools—both at the universal and regional levels—related to the fight against organized crime, terrorism, and the protection of critical infrastructure? In referring to the international legal framework against terrorism and organized crime, it is important to acknowledge the peremptory United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions that have been adopted since 1999, particularly Resolution 1373 (2001)²⁹; the relevant international treaties—currently 18³⁰—that since the 1960s have been drafted and ratified by the UN member States; as well as other initiatives that have resulted from interagency and interstate coordination efforts³¹. Furthermore, the “Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”, adopted in Palermo in 2003³², and its subsequent Conferences have been positive steps in the fight against increasingly resourceful, developed and globalized criminal groups. A number of UN agencies, as well as other international, regional, sub-regional organizations and national governments, have worked towards the development of such tools and their practical implementation in each country—including the provision of technical assistance and training to public and—to a lesser extent—private sector officials.

In spite of the usefulness of the mentioned legal framework in fostering international cooperation and harmonization of legislation and standards, the protection of critical infrastructure in the Black Sea region and its impact vis-à-vis high-risk targets—transportation, energy and tourism—and menaces—terrorism and transnational organized crime—can only be fully effective if operational considerations are factored in. In this field, international cooperation can be provided through a variety of means: at the bilateral and/or multilateral levels, between the countries of the region or between some of them and a third party, addressing certain areas of interest or all of them, through international organizations or without

²⁸ Ortega and Gasset, José, “La rebelión de las masas”; Ed. Austral, 2007 (1ª, 1930), p.105. *“Cada trozo de tierra no está ya recluso en su lugar geométrico, sino que para muchos efectos visuales actúa en los demás sitios del planeta. Según el principio físico de que las cosas están allí donde actúan, reconoceremos hoy a cualquier punto del globo la más efectiva ubicuidad. Esta proximidad de lo lejano, esta presencia de lo ausente, ha aumentado en proporción fabulosa el horizonte de cada vida”*

²⁹ S/RES/1373 (2001) September 28, available at: <http://www.un.org/spanish/docs/comites/1373/scres1373e.htm>

³⁰ For a complete list of the treaties and their texts, access available at: <http://www.un.org/terrorism/instruments.shtml>

³¹ Given the unanimous consensus of the UN General Assembly, “A Global Strategy against Terrorism” should be included (2006 and revised in 2008 and 2010). View: ES/60/288 (2006) September 8, available at:

<http://www.un.org/spanish/terrorism/index.shtml>; <http://www.un.org/es/terrorism/ctitf/>

³² United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocols AG/RES/55/25 (2003), also known as the Palermo Convention. Available at:

http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/convention_spa.pdf

them. Nevertheless, given its resources, geographic position, the location of two of its member States in the region and the potential repercussions of ignoring major security risks, the EU should play a key role in supporting the Black Sea Region's security efforts.

The EU has attempted to contribute to the security of the region, whether directly or as result of action on its southeastern border, through different initiatives. In our field of study, several of them should be underlined: “The Black Sea Synergy”³³, which prioritizes cooperation in several areas such as energy, transportation and hazardous materials, primarily through border management and customs cooperation; the “European Program for Critical Infrastructure Protection”³⁴ whose principal objectives are for each EU member State to identify its own critical infrastructure (National Critical Infrastructures) and to implement a Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network; and the creation of “Eurosur”³⁵, the European border surveillance system, one of its three fundamental pillars aimed at preventing transnational organized crime by improving surveillance systems and eventually creating an information exchange network. Other initiatives should be added to this list as they are closely related to the aforementioned: Frontex³⁶, the European border agency; those related to cyber and drug security³⁷; and the general support given by the EU's “Internal Security Strategy”³⁸, which prioritizes actions against organized crime, terrorism, cyber-crimes, border controls and crisis and disaster management.

Other regional initiatives should be added to those of the EU. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) support to the Black Sea Region in providing surveillance tools for its maritime domain; border control programs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); security projects implemented by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Black Sea Forum

³³ Proclamation of the Commission to the European Council and Parliament, April 11, 2007 «Black Sea Synergy» [COM (2007) 160 final not published in the official Journal]. Summary: http://eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/index_en.htm

³⁴ Proclamation of the Commission on December 12, 2006 about a European program for Critical Infrastructure Protection [COM (2006) 786 final – Diario Oficial C 126 from June 7, 2007], following the proposal decided by the Council on October 27, 2008 related to a Network for information critical infrastructure alerts (CIWIN) [COM(2008) 676 final-not yet published in Official Journal]. Summary available at:

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/133260_en.htm

³⁵ Communication of 13 February 2008 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Examining the creation of a European border surveillance system (EUROSUR) [COM (2008) 68 final - Not yet published in the Official Journal]. Summary available

at: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/114579_en.htm

³⁶ Frontex, web page: <http://www.frontex.europa.eu/>

³⁷ Watch: [CIIP Action Plan in its Communication on Critical information Infrastructure Protection – ‘Protecting Europe from large scale cyber-attacks and cyber-disruptions: enhancing preparedness, security and resilience’ - COM\(2009\) 149](#); and in the fight against drug trafficking: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/combating_drugs/index_en.htm

³⁸ To view the strategy: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/archive/internal_security_strategy_in_action_en.pdf; and http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/iss/internal_security_strategy_en.htm

(BSF); as well as other bilateral efforts that should also be added to this list. A list or an “infinity of lists” that sometimes tend to disorient us more than to provide guidance, as Umberto Eco eruditely shows in one of his recent books³⁹.

IV- Conclusions

Are all of these regional efforts substantially improving security in the Black Sea region? The answer is no.

Since 2006, due to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and to the newly identified emerging threats, the EU has been paying closer attention to the Black Sea region. However, there is still much room for improvement, for rationalizing and prioritizing programs and expenditures, for accurately assessing threats and risks and for increasing inter-regional cooperation. The development, implementation and monitoring of truly strategic and soundly structured joint initiatives is called for, without delay.

The EU has approached its relationship and assistance to Black Sea partners under the umbrella of border controls and international security, but through migratory lenses to prevent illegal flows into the Union. Consequently, established cooperation mechanisms and tools really focus on strengthening migratory controls rather than in assessing criminal threats and trends, analyzing risks and areas for improvement, or efficiently managing crisis situations. A XXI century regional security system—and the international cooperation that it requires—needs more than the official label “measures to prevent transnational organized crime and terrorism” found in an EU document in order to be truly reliable.

Moreover, actions that Brussels has taken to protect critical infrastructures across the EU and its neighboring countries have been mostly limited to cyber security. This has contributed to the apparent disinterest—or lack of trust in sharing sensitive information—of its member States, who have either not sent, partially sent or have unreasonably delayed sending the required analysis of their national critical infrastructures. In consequence, no significant cooperation or exchange of best practices on the protection of these infrastructures has been undertaken between EU and Black Sea region countries. This strategic error may have disastrous results if not corrected.

The first recommendation that has to be made to improve public security in the region is to strengthen international cooperation through intergovernmental initiatives; this could be channeled, as

³⁹ Eco, Umberto, “The Infinity of Lists”, Ed. Razzoli, 2009.

previously mentioned, through different ways. However, given the risks that Europe faces if it ignores the threats that come from its eastern and southeastern border, and taking into account the current scarcity of European budgetary resources, joint initiatives between the EU and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization (BSEC) should be promoted. Both entities should create a risk analysis, crisis management and operational coordination Unit that would focus on common threats to public security. This modern, balanced—budget-wise—and flexible unit, would be staffed by experts from both the private and public sectors of different EU-BSEC countries, who would not only gather and analyze information, determine risks, help design emergency plans (prevention, response and recovery) and harmonize them between neighboring countries, but that would also encourage proactive cooperation between the relevant agencies of each country during the investigation and prosecution of pertinent criminal cases. The creation of such a Unit would also aim at reducing unnecessary expenditures and bureaucratic processes, as well as ineffective programs. Therefore, it would involve conducting a results-based assessment of all current initiatives at the regional level, thus reducing its number and making successful ones even more effective. For this to happen, strong political support from all EU-BSEC governments will be needed⁴⁰.

Second, it is important to methodologically approach the analysis of risks, the design of crisis management procedures, and the study of preventive security systems, from a deductive and empirical perspective. But these issues should also be approached in a creative and imaginative way. For example, if the ties between criminal and terrorist organizations become apparent in a country, we must not separate one problem from the other when designing a response to this threat solely because the government of that country denies terrorism exists in its territory. On the other hand, governments should not use these criminal ties as a means of justifying a perpetual state of emergency that restricts or suspends individual liberties and rights. In a nutshell, we should promote a culture of scientific rigor and of utmost respect to the Law as a way to confront the modern day challenges of security. These limitations, following Karl Popper's reasoning, are those that most favor creative reflections and innovative solutions⁴¹ while ensuring respect

⁴⁰ Other elements should be taken into consideration: the most important being trade security, a recurrent topic since classical Greece. Professor King (Op. cit. King, Charles, *The Black Sea: A History*, p. 243) states that the member countries of the BSCE only trade amongst themselves 12% of the total volume of their imports and exports. Meanwhile, Bernard Lewis in his book *The Middle East: a Brief History of the Last 2000 years* (ed. Scribner, 1995) explains the role that the Black Sea has played as a central connection point for trade routes between the east and west, and how the region benefited from these exchanges (economic, social, military, political, etc) cf. pp. 38, 46, 172 y ss., 199, 280 y ss. A more stable panorama across the board will certainly benefit inter-regional trade.

⁴¹ Popper, Karl, "La sociedad abierta y sus enemigos" ("The Open Society and Its Enemies", 1945), ed. Surcos, 2006, p.452: "*Rationalism should stimulate the use of one's imagination because it needs it [to overcome contradictions and theoretical challenges and practices], while irrationalism does the opposite [it admits contradictions and thus does not give space to imagination]*". This claim mirrors that of: Ortega y Gasset, José, "La rebelión de las masas", op.cit. p.217: "*The state begins as an absolute work of the imagination. One's imagination is the liberating power that man has*".

for individual liberties. Unfortunately, as with the economy, there is no doubt that governments usually create extremely pernicious distortions when dealing with public security matters.

Third and lastly, we should consider strengthening and developing associations between the public and private sectors if our goal is to do the greatest good with the few resources available. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline case shows us why public-private partnerships are fundamental to protect critical infrastructures from terrorism and organized crime. BP, the company in charge of this pipeline between Azerbaijan and Georgia, realized that it did not have sufficient resources to effectively protect so many kilometers of pipelines. This led to the establishment of partnerships and agreements between the company, local communities and civil society that highlighted the direct and indirect benefits of working together—not only by creating direct employment opportunities, but by indirectly bringing economic growth and improvements in transportation and communications to the area.

This kind of associations should be a model not only for energy projects, but for those related to tourism, major events or transportation, where the private sector, civil society and local communities play a crucial role in providing sustainable and cost-efficient security. This catallaxy⁴², these types of spontaneous, creative and innovative partnerships not only work, but also work better than unilateral actions taken by the State.

These three recommendations will not solve all of the challenges of such a complex region as the Black Sea. The study of its history and its present, though, provide us with a fundamental point of reference from where we can develop a successful strategy for the security of the region. A strategy that acknowledges regional particularities and limitations, and that is cooperative, harmonic and effective.

⁴² See: Hayek, F.A.: “*The Constitution of Liberty*”, 1960, ed. University of Chicago Press, 1978; and “*Law, Legislation and Liberty*”, 1973, ed. University of Chicago Press, 1978 (3 volumes)