

CHANGES IN ROMANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NATO AND EU MEMBERSHIP

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Abstract:** *This article aims to analyze the main changes and factors which have an impact on Romania's foreign policy agenda, considering the fact that our country is a member state of the European Union and also a NATO member. The goal is therefore to identify the possible changes in the decision-making process as far as Romanian foreign policy is concerned, in the context of its accession to the European Union and the major topics that may involve an adaptation to the European Foreign and Security Policy. Romania's accession to the European Union involves that domestic foreign policy structures function in the spirit and according to the European norms, which means that certain changes and transformations need to be assumed in order to be able to fulfil the proposed objectives. This also implies a revision and ongoing adaptation of the main topics on the Romanian foreign policy agenda, such as, for instance, the issue of how viable the deployment of Romanian troops in Iraq is and its implications in the long term on our country's relations with the other EU members as well as with the other allies in NATO, or the conflict in Transnistria. With regard to this matter, it is interesting to point out that this situation has sparked off greater interest among the European audience only over the last few years, as Romania joined the European Union, rendering Brussels more sensitive to this issue which, however, is still far from being properly tackled. This has prompted Romanian decision-makers to consider in a more pragmatic and dynamic manner relations with its Eastern neighbours, through already existing instruments such as the Black Sea strategy and the ones still under elaboration, like the European Danube Strategy.*

Keywords: *foreign policy, Romania, Eastern Partnership, European Neighbourhood Policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Black Sea Synergy.*

The EU integration process implies a very complex and multi-faceted array of implications for Romania in its relation with the European and transatlantic partners, and, last but not least, with neighbours to the East and the Middle East. This involves therefore

the necessity to constantly review and rethink Romania's strategic foreign policy objectives and policies, so as to be able to better deal with the emerging tensions and challenges in the security field, and with its obligations as EU and NATO member. By joining the European Union,

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Romania became the Union's Eastern border, which requires us to be prepared to face all types of risks, imbalances and conflicts stemming from the East, the most pressing issue in this respect being Transnistria and, in correlation with that, a pragmatic management of relations with Russia.

From this perspective, it is relevant to analyze the evolution of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, in order to grasp and understand better the responsibilities and challenges facing Romania, which is also a NATO member, and therefore assume the entire set of obligations, including those in the field of foreign and security policy.

At the level of the European Union structures, the development of common strategies and crisis management procedures are a reflection of efforts to improve coordination with NATO member states. The practical cooperation between NATO and the EU in the Balkans, where the necessity for continuous regional security remains a constant preoccupation for both actors, has been reflected in the successful take-over by the EU force of the mission previously led by NATO troops in the area. At the level of EU institutions, the main structure responsible for overall co-ordination is the European Council, which gives strategic direction to EU security policy on the basis of proposals from both the Council and Commission. Given the current multi-faceted security challenges and risks at the international level, the role and importance of connecting EU-

internal and external aspects of security is becoming more and more obvious.

The gradual absorption of former WEU tasks by the EU triggered a series of consequences for the NATO- EU relationship, reflected in developments within both organizations. The Helsinki meeting of the Council of the European Union in December 1999 established a "Headline Goal" for EU member states in terms of their military capabilities for crisis management operations. The objective of the *2010 Headline Goal* is to enable the EU by 2010 to deploy rapidly forces capable of applying "a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty on the European Union"¹, namely humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping missions, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making. Moreover, they may also engage in joint disarmament operations, and provide assistance to third countries in combating terrorism and security sector reform².

Authors tackling the issue of Europe's enlargement towards the East in the aftermath of the fall of communism have analyzed the sources of instability that manifested after the collapse of the Soviet block, generating a trend for states in Eastern and Central Europe to seek the fulfilment of their security and prosperity objectives within the structures of the North Atlantic Alliance and respectively those of the European Union. Other authors pointed to Europe's new security order as manifested in the form

¹ 2010 Headline Goal, 17 May 2004, p. 1, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf>, last accessed on 7 August 2009.

² 2010 Headline Goal, 17 May 2004, p. 1, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf>, last accessed on 7 August 2009.

of a “pluralistic security community”³, the concept being introduced by Karl Deutsch in 1957, and a period when the European Communities were in their initial phase of making. This concept was characterized by the compatibility of core values derived from common institutions and mutual responsiveness, based on mutual identity, sympathy and loyalty considerations, both of these developing around ‘cores of strength”, manifested in fact in the form of European Communities⁴.

In these conditions, “the conflict between democracy and efficiency is an unavoidable dilemma of the present times. Similar difficulties arise with any international institutions that have law-making or law-enforcing powers.”⁵ The current state of the ratification process provides an opportunity to reconsider and tackle the relationship between democracy and efficiency, especially in light of the latest geopolitical transformations, which give Europe a long awaited chance to make its voice heard as a global actor. Whether EU institutions will manage to sort this problem out also has deep implications for the continuation of the democratisation process in fragile states such as those in the Balkans, considering the fact that EU membership has represented a strong incentive for political elites in these countries to introduce reforms and aim at achieving the European standards in various areas. Essentially, the most important elements

regard the respect of human rights and ethnic minorities as prerequisites for avoiding further tensions and conflicts in the area.

Gerald Knaus, policy director of the European Stability Initiative, a policy think-tank based in Berlin, goes even further with commenting on the implications of a potential European crisis for the Balkans region, by stating that if European institutions were to reject Western Balkan states the possibility of joining the EU in the future, this would basically mean the disintegration of the EU policy in this area, since “the legitimacy of our intervention in the region is completely underwritten by taking steps toward the European membership”⁶.

According to this line of judgment, the integration process of Central and Eastern states into both the EU and NATO is largely seen as a manifestation of the principle that international or continental interdependence “increases with geographical proximity, member states on the Eastern border of the EU being more sensitive to developments in Central and Eastern than the more remote member states”⁷. At the same time, the enlargement of the EU has brought more focus on dealing with unstable regions at its borders that had been repeatedly neglected before, such as it is the case with Transnistria, which gained new dimensions when Romania joined the European Union in 2007, bringing thus

³ Beverly CRAWFORD (ed.), *The Future of European security*, University of California & Berkeley, 1992, p. 291.

⁴ Beverly CRAWFORD (ed.), *The Future of European security*, University of California & Berkeley, 1992, p. 291-292.

⁵ Martin WOLF, “A More Efficient Europe is Less Democratic”, *Financial Times*, 14 June 2005, p. 10

⁶ Nicholas WOOD, “Crisis Chills Prospects for Nations outside EU”, in *International Herald Tribune*, 17 June 2005, p. 7.

⁷ Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe- Rules and Rhetoric*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 178.

the conflict in the area more and more to the attention of European institutions acting in the Common Foreign and Security Policy field.

Understanding the political and security context in which the Common European Foreign and Security Policy emerged is critical to the analysis of Romania's perspective and contribution to this sector, taking into account the fact that it already was a NATO member when it joined the European Union. The issue at stake is therefore to establish whether Romania's EU membership is compatible with its previous commitments towards NATO. Despite numerous and more or less nuanced disagreements at the level of the transatlantic institutions, EU and NATO decision-makers tend to see the solution to all these issues as coming down to a burden-sharing problem, where Europeans find themselves forced into taking more decisive steps as far as the future of the foreign and security policy is concerned.

Another significant dimension Romania should pay attention to regards the evolution of its relations with Turkey, an important actor in the Black Sea region with connections to the Caucasus area also, as a state with European aspirations. Turkey is a revealing example of peaceful coexistence of Islam and democratic rule, being at present the focus- subject of attempts to include a largely Muslim

country in its institutions, which might contribute to promoting democracy and human development in the region⁸.

In this regard, Turkey may be a very constructive partner in the Black Sea region, and particularly valuable from the perspective of its renewed commitment as long as the incentives aimed to keep Turkey connected to the European Union are maintained. In relation to the issue of enlargement, it is argued that EU's conditionality has been essential in triggering democratic reforms in Turkey⁹.

Turkey's relationship with the EU is at a critical point now, taking into consideration two major factors: the change in the US administration, which ensures a focus on multilateral mechanisms in relations with the Europeans and an international context which is more favourable to finding a solution to the Cyprus issue¹⁰. At the same time, the coming in power of the Obama administration means that Romania can assume a more pragmatic attitude in relations with its Atlantic partners, which allows it at the same time to have a more balanced relation with Russia in all the sectors.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the circumstances and directions in which EU- NATO relations are likely to evolve as far as Romania's major foreign and security priorities are concerned, as well as the manner in which these

⁸ Ronald ASMUS, Larry DIAMOND, Mark LEONARD, Michael Mc FAUL, "A Transatlantic Strategy to Promote Democratic Development in the Broader Middle East", in *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:2, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005, p. 17.

⁹ Helene SJURSEN, "Integration Without Democracy? Three conceptions of European Security Policy in transformation", Arena Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, Working Paper no. 7, February 2008, <http://www.arena.uio.no>, accessed on October 13th 2009, p. 18.

¹⁰ Atila ERALP, "Temporality, Cyprus Problem and Turkey-EU Relationship Discussion", EDAM series, 2009/02, <http://www.edam.org.tr/images/PDF/yayinlar/makaleler/discussion%20paper%20series-2.pdf>, last accessed on October 13th 2009, pp. 2 - 10.

developments interact with Romania's foreign agenda and objectives. Over the past decade, both the EU and NATO have faced a radical rearrangement of their neighbourhoods, given the gradual enlargement of these organisations towards the southern, the northern and the eastern frontiers of the continent. The impact is obvious at the level of EU's enlargement policy through the development of a common foreign and security and defence policy, aiming to equip Europeans with more efficient tools to combat the current security challenges. But the confusion between foreign policy and enlargement policy generated certain ambiguities and inconsistencies, not the least because the further East and South-East the border of the EU moves, the more potential aspirants for EU membership emerge.

The changing geopolitical and geo-strategic context of the European Union requires measures which are more difficult to achieve than the mere act of drawing new borders on the European map: "Geopoliticians need not be too concerned with defining exact boundaries within an international system marked by spheres of influence, heartlands and border regions. Institutionalisation however requires hard decisions"¹¹.

Romania's accession to the European Union involves multiple significant changes and transformations of conceptual and institutional nature at the level of Romanian foreign policy mechanisms and decision-making structures, so that our country is capable to pragmatically manage the various

topics or policies elaborated by the European Union. Moreover, starting with the moment when our country became an EU member, these changes already needed to have been internalized and assumed, so that Romania can participate at the elaboration, shaping up and implementation of the policies that is also bound to follow.

Romanian foreign policy decision-makers should also focus more on consolidating political relations with another major international actor such as *China*. As Dingli Shen, Executive Dean at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai points out¹², China is carefully monitoring developments connected to the EU integration and enlargement, and mostly the evolution of its security and defence policy. In my opinion, this obviously shows Beijing's special interest in the way the European foreign policy can shape up international affairs, especially in light of the appreciation China seems to have for the European Security and Defence Policy, which is perfectly understandable considering the fact that China supports a multipolar vision of the international system.

One of the most challenging dimensions which have to be dealt with is the manner in which Romania considers and acts as part of NATO, on one hand, and within the European Union, on the other hand, in its relationship with Russia. Out of a pool of options, the one favouring Romania the most is the one which helps avoid a direct confrontation with Russia and has good chances to win the support of European allies. However, the fact that

¹¹ Andrew COTTEY, Derek AVERRE (ed.), *New Security Challenges in post-communist Europe, Securing Europe's East*, Manchester Univ. Press, 2002, p. 5.

¹² Dingli SHEN, "Why China sees the EU as a Counterweight to America", in *Europe's World*, no. 10/2008, p. 48.

this partnership has worked so far does not guarantee the fact that it will work just as easily in the future, since the West has less instruments in the Black Sea region than in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia's political and economic interest in this part is greater¹³.

Another relevant fact that Romania should take into consideration is that non-EU states bordering on the Black Sea are less developed and less democratic than the Western Balkans, for example, which makes it more difficult for Romanian decision-makers to bring a positive and coherent contribution in the region.

Besides that, Russia's attitude towards the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership more specifically continues to be negative, as shown by Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas during an interview: "I have been witnessing the evolution of the Russian thinking about the Eastern Partnership. I think they had a misguided perception of the Eastern Partnership, and I hope that as we move forward with the Eastern Partnership, our colleagues in Moscow and across Russia will appreciate the value and positive impact..."¹⁴.

Moscow could not hide its resentment concerning this issue when the Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called the Eastern Partnership a "sphere of influence" in

Brussels in March 2009, and Russian analyst Sergei Karaganov considered that the "core of all differences between the West and Russia is the question of whose sphere of influence the Soviet successor states fall into"¹⁵.

In light of these elements, Russia's cooperation may be more difficult to obtain in this region as compared to Central and Eastern Europe, where the European Union has more functional assistance instruments in place. Moscow needs more incentives to feel that it has cooperation in this part of the world is more convenient than confrontation with the West on certain issues. In order to ensure cooperation with Russia, the West needs to set up a system of incentives and limitations, of which Romania must also be a part of. One way would be to offer Russia a set of favourable assistance options with regard to Northern Caucasus, as a means to help stabilize this region¹⁶.

One particular fact which is worth drawing upon while analyzing relations with Russia, from the perspective of Romania's EU membership status, is the fact that the European Security Strategy did not include Transnistria among those situations identified as potential regional conflicts, and acknowledged as having a direct and indirect impact on European interests at the time of its elaboration¹⁷. This

¹³ Ronald ASMUS, Konstantin DIMITROV, Joerg FORBRIG (eds.), *O nouă strategie euro-atlantică pentru regiunea Mării Negre*, București, Editura IRSI "Nicolae Titulescu", 2004, p. 59.

¹⁴ Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas for the interview "Summit Sidelines: Lithuania's Foreign Minister on EU Eastern Partnership", http://www.rferl.org/content/Lithuanias_Foreign_Minister_On_The_EU_Eastern_Partnership/1623605.html, last accessed on October 18th 2009.

¹⁵ http://www.rferl.org/content/Eastern_Partnership_The_EUs_Accidental_Sphere_Of_Influence/1622923.html, last accessed on October 18th 2009.

¹⁶ Ronald ASMUS, Konstantin DIMITROV, Joerg FORBRIG (eds.), *O nouă strategie euro-atlantică pentru regiunea Mării Negre*, București, editura IRSI "Nicolae Titulescu", 2004, p. 59.

¹⁷ Javier SOLANA, "European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in A Better World", *The EU Institute for Security Studies*, Brussels, 2003, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, p. 9, last accessed on October 7th 2009.

represents a significantly worrying aspect, given the fact that efforts undertaken by the European Union in this direction have not gone beyond including Moldova in the Eastern Partnership, which, however, does not guarantee EU membership for Kishinev.

The document sets itself the following strategic objectives, with a view to tackling these problems, by the following means: addressing the threats as it has already done by pursuing policies against proliferation; the ongoing transformation of the concept of self-defence, which at present involves that the line of defence lies abroad; building security in Europe's proximity, as enlargement should not produce new dividing lines in Europe and "it is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed"¹⁸. This principle seeks thus to extend the security values of the European Union also to the neighbouring regions, building a consolidated security framework in Europe's proximity, capable of managing conflicts, organized crime and other state weaknesses.

The European Security Strategy reiterates the task of "promoting a ring of well-governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean..."¹⁹, designating the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a strategic priority for Europe. This explains the European Union's overwhelming interest in the Palestinian problem for a significant number of years, as opposed to the little concern shown towards the new Eastern neighbours, until Romania

became the European Union's Eastern border.

The EU's new Neighbourhood Policy aims also at achieving through primarily diplomatic and economic incentives several objectives of democratization in the Middle East region that the United States has failed so far to attain²⁰, by finding more appropriate communication instruments with the Arab partners. The particular attention paid by the European Union to the settling of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should also involve a greater preoccupation for this issue at the level of the Romanian foreign policy, so that our country is able to contribute to the peace process and better cope with similar challenges in our immediate neighbourhood.

This requires therefore a review of the approach adopted so far by the Romanian diplomacy in this respect, which, as suggested in the document, should perhaps consider a broader engagement with the Arab world, taking into account the fact that the European Union's interests demand a continued cooperation with the Mediterranean partners.

In this particular region of the world, the European Neighbourhood Policy appears to have more functional instruments at hand than NATO, for instance, whose Mediterranean Dialogue framework has not witnessed major improvements, benefiting also from more legitimacy in terms of cultural and trade relations. At present, the European Union provides significant economic assistance to the

¹⁸ Javier SOLANA, "European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in A Better World", The EU Institute for Security Studies, Brussels, December 2003, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, p. 8, accessed on 19 March 2009, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰ *Ibidem.*

Middle East region, apart from opening up its domestic markets and offering political assistance in the framework of the Barcelona Process, launched in the mid-1990 in the Mediterranean basin, as well as through the more recently adopted Neighbourhood Policy. This policy aimed to deepen ties with countries on Europe's periphery; moreover, the Action Plans concluded by the European Union with Middle Eastern states in the framework of its New Neighbourhood Initiative might develop into a model for a stronger regime, should the countries concerned meet the conditions formulated in these documents. The positive aspect about these Action Plans is the fact that they are elaborated in a very detailed manner, containing more than 200 concrete steps for reform, and that they have been negotiated with input from these states, including their civil society groups²¹.

This involves that the European Union should be able to take action before states surrounding it deteriorate, as well as anytime signs of proliferation are noticed or humanitarian emergencies arise. This is the major reason why the EU promotes and expresses itself in favour of 'preventive engagement', which involves also for Romania the necessity to rethink and reshape in a more efficient manner its security conception, according to the emerging security threats at the regional and international level. European troops need to transform into more flexible

and mobile units, in order to be able to address the new threats, in which the systematic use of pooled and shared assets and resources reduces duplication of the existing structures. At the same time, the document admits the necessity to enhance civilian capabilities in the aftermath of military operations, so as to manage more efficiently post-crisis situations.

The Wider Europe - Neighbourhood Policy underlines the important role held by this policy in further developing the EU-Russia partnership, but, at the same time, notes that reasons related to Russia's size and resources' potential confer a very high importance to EU's relations with the Russian Federation conducted even outside of this framework.

According to the authors of a study on the chances for the European Union to induce more democratic openness in the Middle East area as part of its new Neighbourhood Policy, "neighbourhoods do matter, however, and one can hardly imagine a less auspicious neighbourhood for building democracy today than the Middle East"²³. This idea reveals the difficulties encountered by EU diplomacy in the conduct of its foreign relations with states in this region, due to, on one hand, to the lack of a sufficient number of effective multilateral structures that can contribute to softening bilateral or regional tensions, not to mention the necessity to ensure regional cooperation in the security sector.

²¹ Ronald, ASMUS, Larry DIAMOND, Mark LEONARD, Michael Mc FAUL, "A Transatlantic Strategy to Promote Democratic Development in the Broader Middle East", in *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:2, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005, p. 8.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 21

²³ Ronald, ASMUS, Larry DIAMOND, Mark LEONARD, Michael Mc FAUL, "A Transatlantic Strategy to Promote Democratic Development in the Broader Middle East", in *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:2, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005, p. 13.

The change of administration in Washington at the beginning of 2009 has been largely seen as a significant opportunity to improve transatlantic relations, by ensuring more mutual understanding and a renewed sense of shared interests and visions of international security. Proof of this was the visit of the newly elected US president Barack Obama in Egypt, where he held a speech symbolically entitled "A New Beginning"²⁴. This episode is deemed to represent only the beginning of a significant trend in the new US administration's stance on international relations, which is likely to seek more common ground with partner countries, including Muslim countries, rather than act unilaterally, as we have seen quite often with the Bush administration.

More importantly, Obama's speech targeted at identifying other common discussion topics with the Muslim world than cooperation to combat terrorism and pointed out to the positive aspects of progress and diversity that Islamic citizens can bring to their immediate communities in Western countries.

Romania needs to be aware that, in order to increase and maximize the potential of the Black Sea Synergy, which was somehow neglected since the creation of the Eastern Partnership, the Synergy must be correlated with the future European Danube Strategy, which will focus on transportation, environment and economic development. The necessity to elaborate such a strategy has come

to the attention of the European Union after Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the Union in 2007, which had as a consequence the fact that Danube became an internal EU waterway. Just as in the case of the Baltic Sea, the Danube strategy is likely to include concrete measures and involve some member states in the actual implementation. Several forms of cooperation on Danube are already in place, such as the Working Community of the Danube regions, the Danube Commission on Transport Issues and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River²⁵.

Major European and Euro-Atlantic players should make a priority out of developing a political formula capable of balancing the interests of NATO, EU and countries bordering on the Black Sea as well as the functional instruments used in the region, such as the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the other forms of bilateral cooperation among states. NATO's expansion to the shores of the Black Sea brought the Atlantic Alliance closer to the Middle East region and enhances its ability to contribute to the peace and security process in the wider Black Sea area, while the EU has created more opportunities to develop a set of 'low level intensity' missions through its European Security Strategy²⁶.

The Wider Europe - Neighbourhood Policy report consolidates the importance of EU-Russia partnership, but, at the same time, notes that reasons related to Russia's

²⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/NewBeginning/>, last accessed on October 7th 2009.

²⁵ Valentina Pop, "Danube Strategy to focus on transport and environment", <http://euobserver.com/882/28387>, last accessed on October 18th 2009.

²⁶ Ronald ASMUS, Konstantin DIMITROV, Joerg FORBRIG (eds.), *O nouă strategie euro-atlantică pentru regiunea Mării Negre*, Bucureşti, editura IRSI "Nicolae Titulescu", 2004, p. 59.

size and resources' potential confer a very high importance to EU's relations with the Russian Federation conducted even *outside* this framework. With regard to this issue, the main task that European diplomacy intends undertaking is to find a reasonable solution to the Transdnistrian problem, where Russian troops continue to be present in a significant number. European official documents concerning this topic tend to conceive the solution to this situation in terms of balance relations in the region, with a particular focus on Ukraine's role in the region and implicitly in the elaboration of the solution²⁷. In light of these elements, it is recommendable that Romania should seek enhanced dialogue with the Ukrainian counterparts on this subject.

The Black Sea Strategy aims to correlate region-wide developments with the resolution of the 'frozen conflicts' in Georgia, Moldova and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, drawing on existing resources and on joint financing instruments with other international actors operating in the region²⁸.

It is highly likely that Russia's policy towards the West when dealing with the Black Sea region might be more aggressive than in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, for various reasons. Basically, these reasons concern the greater influence exerted by Russia from an economic and political point of view in relationship with the weaker governments in this region,

than in relationship to the governments in Central and Eastern Europe²⁹.

In relation to this point, it is worth mentioning Europeans' constant fear about their energetic security as one of the potential reasons for engaging in a more vivid dialogue with Moscow, on this topic, as during the EU-Russia summit held- symbolically I would add- in Khabarovsk, Russia on May 21-22nd 2009. The reunion dealt essentially with energy, energy security and trade, leaving aside topics such as the unstable situation in Moldova, which would have undoubtedly caused little positive reaction if not downright opposition with the Russian counterparts.

Conclusions

The most difficult problem faced by Romania as well as by all EU member states interested in bringing forward the European Neighbourhood Policy and more particularly its Eastern dimension is the fact that the Union still lacks the political will and mechanisms needed to implement and sustain a viable solution in the region. The European security policy is still far from being completely coherent and unified in terms of working concepts and instruments used to achieve the set goals. Examples of other situations in which the EU adopted a clearly structured foreign policy strategy but failed to implement it include the

²⁷ Report of the European Parliament on 'Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf, last accessed on October 5th 2009.

²⁸ Fabrizio Tassinari, "Sailing the Black Sea at last", 07.02.2008, <http://euobserver.com/9/25615#>, last accessed on October 5th 2009.

²⁹ Ronald ASMUS, Konstantin DIMITROV, Joerg FORBRIG (eds.), *O nouă strategie euro-atlantică pentru regiunea Mării Negre*, București, editura IRSI "Nicolae Titulescu", 2004, p. 64.

Euro-Mediterranean Policy, while its approach in the Baltic Sea region has brought significant progress in the region.³⁰

Another significant dimension for Romanian foreign policy decision-makers is the necessity to coordinate the Black Sea Strategy with the envisaged Danube Strategy, as a means to bring closer Central and Eastern Europe through common interests, such as trade exchanges and a shared vision of the energy needs in the region.

As far as other major actors in the Black Sea area are concerned, it would be in Romania's best interest to continue the pragmatic dialogue with Russia and Turkey, in order to contribute to maximizing the cooperation instruments offered by the Black Sea strategy.

A clear procedural setback would be the fact that the European Parliament lacks decisive competences in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, serving more as a framework for discussing policy options. From a democratic perspective, the European Parliament's position in this respect is interesting not only because it is a directly elected body, but also because its informal practice may acquire a formal shape in the future, making the foreign

and security policy more accountable to the parliament members³¹.

The current situation at the European level and the lack of consistency in the field of foreign policy have a lot to do with the existence of complex internal difficulties in EU member states themselves, and these obstacles should be taken into consideration in a more serious manner, as they have a negative impact upon the further consolidation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as an efficient policy instrument, and, for our country, on the way Romania conducts and shapes its own foreign policy. This would also contribute to undermining efforts to seek viable solutions for conflicts and tensions developing in Europe's immediate Eastern neighbourhood, such as that in Transnistria, which would involve serious risks for Romania's security and Europe's Eastern border.

However, as far as the European security in the short and medium-term is concerned, a lot has to do with the way in which the European Union will manage to build more consistent relations both with Russia and with other European countries, which used to be part of the Soviet block before 1989, without bringing prejudice to either's interests.

³⁰ Stephan KEUKELEIRE, "Solana's Security Review should introduce "Structural" Foreign Policy", in *Europe's World*, no. 10/2008, pp. 82- 83.

³¹ Anne Elizabeth STIE, "Decision-Making Void of Democratic Qualities? An Evaluation of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy", Arena Working Paper no. 24, December 2008, <http://www.arena.uio.no>, last accessed on October 17th 2009, p. 12.

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