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The Lakes of Europe

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I. Introduction

Usually, Europe is defined and designed along the geography it constitutes and the history it accrued. The political organization of Europe is related to both of it and at the same time not free of contradictions with regard to any reasonable meaning of a "European identity". There are more institutions than one, given the existence of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, and - last but not least - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which institutionalizes the United States of America as a European power. Europe is grappling with its borders towards the East and the South East. Can Russia belong to the core institutions of Europe? Is Turkey a European country? In any case, the discussion is following the primacy of territorial thinking. Europe, that is Europe's territory and the ambition to link it both with Europe's past and the future Europe hopes for.

But Europe, that is also Europe's lakes, the seas and waters which are an integral nevertheless peripheral part of Europe's shape. The Mediterranean and the Black Seas, even the Caspian and certainly the Baltic and the North Sea do impact on Europe's self-perception and are related to many of the challenges ahead of Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century. They are no less important than the Atlantic Ocean has unquestionably been for the shaping and the destiny of Europe in the course of the last five hundred years, culminating in the important role the north American democracies have played for Europe during the twentieth century.

Intuitively, contemporary Europeans tend to perceive the waters which surround and enclose European territories as borders, as limits and dividing lines. The opposite coast lines constitute "the other", far away and often strange lands. At least they are likely to divide and to constitute black - and wet - holes without meaning and reason. This, however, may very well change in the course of the next years. A Europe which is defining its identity and is shaping its political organizations can no longer overlook the fact that its surrounding waters are an integral part of the shaping and making of the "new Europe". The lakes of Europe are part of Europe since they constitute bridges rather than barriers. For better or worse, the opposite coast lines are part and parcel of Europe's future. This seems to be evident in the case of the Atlantic Ocean although transatlantic relations are going through a period of deep redefinition since the binding glue of the common enmities of the Cold War is no more. The Baltic Sea is rediscovering that it is the magnetic force which brings its adjacent nations closer together than ever before since centuries. The Black Sea has only begun to discover the meaning and potential of the very same fact. The North Sea is still defining the global view of countries such as Iceland and Norway, while the Caspian Sea is being reinvented as a function of its sea-bed and the surrounding oil and gas fields.

II. Mediterranean: Between cradle of civilizations and bridge for new partnership

A unique case is - and has ever been - the Mediterranean. For almost three thousand years, the world's largest inland sea has been a theatre of world history. The coasts of this arm of the Atlantic Ocean, to which it is connected by the Straits of Gibraltar, divided naturally by the Italian peninsula and Sicily into a Western and an Eastern half, have been the stage for exceptional cultural and political developments. Naturally linked to the Black Sea by the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosporus, and since the nineteenth century by the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, the Mediterranean islands have harbored sailors from all directions for thousands of years and its surrounding cities have always looked towards the water as much as to-

wards any of their hinterland. The Mediterranean has been a school for sailors and cartographs, a battlefield for adventurers and conquerors, a market place and both the anchor and the promoter of religious creeds and missionary activities, peaceful and violent alike.

The term “Mare mediterraneum“ reflects the claim of late Roman rule over all its shores and insinuates the character of a geographically defined community of values and habits. The discovery of the Atlantic African coasts and the New World across the unknown Ocean was the beginning of a redefinition of the Mediterranean. It was no longer the unchallengeable center of gravity of the entire earth. At the same time, it opened the eyes for new links with other parts of the globe. More than ever before, the Crimean War (1853-1856) linked the Mediterranean with the Black Sea, thus opening the Mediterranean towards the enormous land masses of Asia. The opening of the Suez Canal (1869) produced an outlet towards the Indian Ocean and reinvigorated the trading potential of the Mediterranean which it had lost since the discovery of the New World in the Americas. The Mediterranean has a size of 2,5 million square kilometers, the maximum length is about 2.300 miles between Gibraltar and the Syrian coast, the maximum width about 1000 miles between Libya and the Adriatic coasts of Slovenia and Italy; its deepest point is 5.267 meter. Millions of tourists are flooding its beaches every year and if it would only be for this reason: among Europeans from Malta to Hammerfest, today it seems agreed upon that the Mediterranean is theirs.

This claim can however no longer be sustained. In 1950, two thirds of the population of the Mediterranean lived on its northern shores. In 2000, the opposite had become true. The European Union has defined the Mediterranean as the common market of around 800 million people who are living around its basin. This has been the starting point for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership arrangement which begun in 1995 with a summit meeting in Barcelona, where the “Barcelona Declaration“ has been promulgated by all (then) 15 EU member states, 11 countries of the Southern rim of the Mediterranean and the Palestinian Autonomy Authority. Libya, the former pariah, has reluctantly begun to join the Euro-Mediterranean process since then, although it is still grappling with the fact

that at the beginning it was not welcomed as a terrorist state while now the EU is courting Libya, which is vacillating between its European interests and its African mission. Nevertheless, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership thus accommodates the EU and all governments of the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. This does, however, not imply yet that all are following a common perception and vision of the Mediterranean.[1] Although the idea to form a common free trade zone by the year 2010 has found support of all partners of the Barcelona process, it remains questionable whether this alone can already substantiate the modernized version of a joint "mare nostrum", a lake of all the people surrounding it.

The third question is one of balanced interests. What does Europe really want: Free trade or democracy? Cooperation or containment? Dialogue or a monopoly of norms? Who can speak for the Southern partners? Elites of authoritarian regimes or civil societies? Politics or business? Pluralistic cultures or religious leaders? And what is the broader purpose of Mediterranean Dialogue: another means to jointly fight terrorism or a cover for building fences between the two shores in the light of terrorism spreading from certain Islamic circles?

There are manifold reasons for this skepticism. The first one is geographical in nature. The Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue – or in short hand the "Barcelona Process" - includes all EU member countries, but only the direct coastal countries of the Southern rim, thus leaving open whether such a composition is not by the very nature of its design Euro-centric while neglecting to link it with the strategic peripheries of the southern side of the Mediterranean, the Arab peninsula, Iraq and Iran, but also Mauritania and Western Sahara. The term "Euro-Mediterranean" seems inconsistent. It should rather be a "Mediterranean partnership" with links to the peripheral neighbors in the "Greater Mediterranean Area". The second question is of a political nature. Does the "Barcelona Declaration" of 1995, the Magna

1 See *Stephen C. Calleya*, Is the Barcelona Process Working? EU Policy in the Mediterranean, ZEI Discussion Paper C75/2000 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies)

Charta of the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue, truly reflect the combined interests, perceptions and potentials of all partners or is it more of a superficial declaratory character, neither binding nor free from contradictions, which are inherent in the complexity of the very region? Does it take into consideration all the different needs and approaches of all the partners or does it push for economic integration – a European interest -, while neglecting the social concerns of the Southern Mediterranean partners – who have a point by stressing that the economic reforms which they are obliged to implement might cause too much social hardship and thus endanger the political stability Europe is so much looking forward to maintain?

Finally - or firstly - there is the historical argument whether there has ever been a common Mediterranean "feeling", how it was made possible and why did former efforts to maintain it fail? Anybody only superficially perusing historical maps of the Mediterranean can discover the shifting nature of its centers of gravity, its uniting forces and dividing lines, and - most importantly - the changing determinants which constituted the Mediterranean as a single, rather united region. A former French Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville, was blatant: in the 1960s he stated "La Mediterrannée, ça n'existe pas" -The Mediterranean does not exist.

Did it ever exist? Greek and Phoenician colonization spread the model of trading cities around the Mediterranean. The expeditions of Ionians even reached the shores of the Black Sea (Pontos Euxeinos) and the Phonicians looked around the Straits of Gibraltar (Tingis, Lixos, Gades).The Greek Wars against the Persians helped to define European identity against "the other", the barbarians, without incorporating the whole Mediterranean into the purview of this perception. Hellenism, Romanisation, and the beginnings of Christianity refer to the dominant role of the Eastern Mediterranean and its hinterland, while the rise of the Roman Empire was colliding with the ambitions of Carthage in the Western Mediterranean, escalating in two Punian Wars which finally destroyed Carthage.

The world of the Roman Empire during the peak of its power saw the Mediterranean united - and its peripheries spreading beyond Gallia (today's France) into regions which nowadays form part of the European Union or

aspire to join it - the British Isles (Britannia Inferior, Caledonia), the Alps (Raetia, Noricum), Western Germany (Germania Superior), Hungary (Pannonia), Western Romania (Dacia Superior) and Bulgaria (Moesia and Thracia). The economy of the Roman Empire linked its European parts with the Southern shores of the Mediterranean which contributed grain, wood, figs, oil, glas, purple and fish to its resources. Christianity started to get rooted all across the Mediterranean. Even the split between East and West Rome in the late fourth century could not fundamentally undermine the integrity of the Mediterranean, indicating however that the "mare internum" as it was labeled at the time split into two different halves although both were still breathing Christian spirit and Roman ambition; Libya was, by the way, cut into two, Tripolitania belonging to the West Roman Empire and Libya Superior to the East Roman Empire.

The end of the Western Roman Empire saw a temporary revitalization of the Mediterranean idea under the Byzantine Empire which was spreading under Justinianus all the way to Numidia (today's Tunisia and Algeria) and Malaga (Southern Spain) with an outlet in Septum (in today's Morocco). It was the Arab migration and the spread of Islam during the seventh century which put an end to the all too romantic idea of the unity of the Mediterranean. The southern rim became Muslim, Arabs conquered Andalusia and even stood in Poitiers, not all too far away from Paris. The unity of the Mediterranean was lost in religious division and strife, escalating during the Crusades (11^{th} -13^{th} century), which had a lasting impact on the sensibilities and perceptions on both sides until this day. The fall of Byzantium in 1453 and the rise of the Ottoman Empire until it reached its biggest size in the 17^{th} century was seen in Christian Europe as the ultimate threat to its very existence. It left a mark on Christian-Muslim relations until today. Most dramatically, this has been demonstrated during the Yugoslavian Wars of Succession in the 1990s.

The Ottoman Empire and the vassals it collected along the southern rim of the Mediterranean never generated the same homogeneity of rule over the Mediterranean as it has been the case during the heydays of the Roman Empire. In spite of the comprehensive spread of Islam to the westernmost regions of the Mediterranean - and deep into sub-Saharan Africa - religious

and political unity did never fully overlap in the world of Islam, and Europe was able to put an end to Ottoman expansion in Vienna in the 18th century. Given the important role of Turks in the Ottoman Empire and the fact that both the Balkan part and the Anatolian part of the Ottoman Empire were located on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, from this time onward there was no doubt any more about differences between the Western and the Eastern part of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean idea became a myth or went into oblivion.

The Europe of the Vienna congress, colonialism and two world wars, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of new nation states on both sides of the Mediterranean, finally the development of the European Union - with a parallel development of Communist states in South Eastern Europe - and the various efforts to create Arab unity in the light of the presence of the Jewish state of Israel - none of these structures or processes was able to reinvent the Mediterranean as a unity. Today the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is lacking participation of the South Eastern European littoral countries of the Eastern Mediterranean. A Mediterranean idea, if there was ever one, never coincided with comprehensive political concepts and structures.

In the light of such cyclical experiences and constant patterns of diversity, it remains indeed doubtful whether the idea of a common market and a free trade zone can reignite the myth of a Mediterranean spirit in the 21st century. Life, after all, is more than a market, more than goods and services, investments and trading rules. Has there ever been a truly Mediterranean idea based on partnership between the different peoples, religions and traditions on both sides, in all directions of the Mediterranean? Travel books account for it in the name of tourism and education which remains however a pleasure predominantly confined to the Northern inhabitants of the Mediterranean. The magisterial study of French historian Fernand Braudel “La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II“ (1949) is a masterpiece indeed, never copied for any other period in time, but even in all its substance and distinguished differentiation it focuses somewhat on

the Mediterranean through European eyes.[2] Braudel is not to blame for this, since anybody, no matter how cosmopolitan, remains somewhat myopic if it comes to the analysis of one's own neighbors, let alone adversaries.

In this light, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in Barcelona in 1995 is certainly an ambitious idea. It has basically been driven by the interests of the European Union and can be seen as continuous with European Mediterranean policy since the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957. The first phase, lasting from 1957 until 1972, was based on bilateral trade agreements with partial association elements or preferred trade products. The second phase, from 1972 until 1990, was defined by the political and geopolitical parameters of the Mediterranean. The Middle East conflict challenged the EEC to develop a stronger political posture in the region while the Euro-Arab Dialogue was an offspring of the overall North-South policy of the time. It was the end of the Cold War which allowed the European Union to reassess its policies vis-à-vis the Mediterranean. This led to the Barcelona Conference in November 1995 and the promulgation of the Barcelona Declaration.[3]

Analogue to the approach of the "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe", the Barcelona Declaration identified three fields of cooperation among the Mediterranean partners: Political stability and security, economic cooperation, and cooperation in cultural, humanitarian and social matters. The process which begun in Barcelona was intended to give a new dimension to the Mediterranean future, "based on comprehensive cooperation and solidarity, in keeping with the privileged nature of the links forged by neighborhood and history"[4] The political declaration was followed by a substantial working programme which the Euro-Mediterranean partners promised to implement in the years to come.

2 *Fernand Braudel*, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II, 2 Volumes, Paris: Armand Colin 1949

3 See *Carlo Masala*, Die Euro-Mediterrane Partnerschaft. Geschichte - Struktur - Prozeß, ZEI Discussion Paper C 68/2000 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies)

4 T*he European Commission* (Ed.), The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference 27./28.11.1995, at: http: europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/med_mideast/euro_med_partnership/bd.htm.

Certain positive effects of the Barcelona process cannot be denied. Continuous diplomatic, political and economic dialogues have been established. New fields of cooperation have been discovered in social and cultural matters. Nevertheless, skepticism has been voiced whether the multilateral and trans-regional approach of the Barcelona process can truly serve its purpose. In the light of the many historically rooted diversities in the region - with various Eastern and Western sub-regions - it seems appropriate to reconsider sub-regional orientations to make the whole set of ideas defined in the Barcelona Declaration work. Given that the ongoing Middle East conflict permanently impacts on the Barcelona vision and tends to hold hostage other aspects of the Mediterranean cooperation scheme, "a special and enhanced framework of partnership with the Maghreb" has been suggested, to name but one specific initiative.[5] The EU has begun to recognize the potential of such a Western Mediterranean core by opening up the Barcelona process to Mauritania, the westernmost country with a strong Arab influence.

Mediterranean policies remain somewhat obliged to try to square the circle. This is due to two contradictory and mutually reinforcing facts: On the one hand, for geostrategic and geoeconomic reasons the Mediterranean is a unity. As a strategic zone in the back of the Atlantic and in the weak South of Europe, the Mediterranean has to be stable in order to serve the interests both of the United States and the European Union. As a geoeconomic entity, the Mediterranean as one comprehensive market is of interest both for trade and investment purposes as much as its relevance as a source of energy resources and other goods of interests remains confined to the specific local sources; not all Mediterranean countries contribute the same resources or offer the same market potential.

Politically, the Mediterranean is as diverse as it is culturally pluralistic. A monolithic equation "democracies in the North, authoritarian regimes in the South" is too simplistic, while the dividing line between Islam and Christianity is much too complex to be that of a simple North-South-issue:

5 *Roberto Aliboni*, New Directions in European-North African Relations, in: The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 4/Spring 2001, p. 63

Around 18 million citizens in the European Union are Muslim and originate from the Southern rim, Turkey including, while there are Christian communities all over the Southern rim, in the Levante in particular, and Jews outside of Israel in the Muslim world, particularly in Turkey and Morocco. This cultural and ethnic diversity rather supports the idea of a comprehensive Mediterranean policy, while at the same time the complexity of this diversity makes it extremely difficult to consistently be implemented.

From a European point of view, the most important problem is not one of squaring the circle in terms of bringing multilevel policy approaches into a more or less consistent line. Europe's experiences with the "three basket approach" of the "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" has demonstrated the ability of the West to play with various balls while continuously pursuing the same policy goals. The problem is not one of instruments but one of strategy. The European Union has never clearly made up its mind what the Barcelona Process truly stands for. Different actors have different thoughts and the dividing lines are not necessarily based on geographic proximity or national interests.

For some, a Mediterranean policy serves to ensure Europe's security on its Southern flank. With the end of the Cold War, the Mediterranean South - along with the crisis bow stretching from Turkey across Iraq and Iran into Central Asia, - has been identified as the next security challenge to Europe. Terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, migration, uncooperative regimes, radical political Islam and historical neuroses might form the potential of new and lasting threats to Europe and its desire for peace, stability and prosperity. Is Hannibal truly "ante portas"?[6]

Others define the Mediterranean as a developmental problem. Both legal and clandestine migration are certainly a consequence of social and eco-

6 See *Andreas Jacobs/Carlo Masala*, Hannibal ante portas? Analysen zur Sicherheit an der Südflanke Europas, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2000; see also *Roberto Aliboni/Abdel Monem Said Aly/Alvaro de Vasconcelos*, Joint Report on the EuroMesSCO Working Group on Political and Security Cooperation, (Lisbon) 1997

nomic problems in the Southern Mediterranean, a shortage of employment and limited perspectives for an improved standard of living. The underdeveloped infrastructure in the Southern Mediterranean countries impedes speedy regional development. Environmental disasters could effect the northern Mediterranean countries as much as they do impose their dirty consequences on Europe's poor southern neighbors. Obstacles to integrate them into the world economy as competitive partners - only oil rich countries such as Algeria or Libya can offer enough of the desired resources in order to build up a bargaining power - and a limited participation in the fruits of "globalization" (i.e. in access to information technologies) define some of the hindrances to the region's booming and as such becoming more attractive for European investment and trade. But can a development oriented relationship between the EU and the set of Southern Mediterranean countries ever be more than an asymmetric dependency rather than a symmetric partnership?[7]

Again others see the Mediterranean as the ancient cradle of civilizations and a modern test case for a humanitarian dialogue among cultures. From the point of view of theology and religious sciences, literature and history, as many points of contact and cooperation can be identified as there are differences and opposing, even adversary aspects of Euro-Arab or Christian-Islamic relations. Is the Mediterranean not determined to serve its role as promoter of cooperation and tolerance among the religions of the book - Christianity, Judaism, and Islam - and the cultures and civilizations which developed on both sides of its shores ?[8] On this account there is an enormous, yet untapped potential for cooperation in a spirit of fair partnership. In the past, European humanities including Christianity, Latin and Greek

7 See *Jürgen Wiemann*, Die Mittelmeerpolitik, in: Franz Nuscheler/Otto Schmuck(Ed.), Die Süd-Politik der EG. Europas entwicklungspolitische Verantwortung in der veränderten Weltordnung, Bonn: Europa Union 1992; *Felix Maier* (Ed.), Managing asymmetric interdependencies within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, ZEI Discussion Paper C 101/2002 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies)

8 See *Carlo Masala(*Ed.), Der Mittelmeerraum - Brücke oder Grenze?, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2002 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol. 48)

classics were clearly separated from Oriental Studies, including Arab, Ottoman (Turkish) and Persian classics. It would indeed be a fascinating endeavor to combine both approaches and to transform them into the joint parameters of "Mediterranean Humanities". Jordan's Prince El Hassan bin Talal, President of the Club of Rome, was the first personality of public standing to suggest such a plan[9]

Finally the geostrategists, which are looking at the Mediterranean with a bird eyes view, having in mind the geopolitical shifts which started to unfold since the end of the Cold War. In the light of necessary energy supplies to the Western world - which might well be advised to be diversified between Persian Gulf resources and new potentials in the Caspian Sea region - stability and cooperative patterns of behavior are the most important element required from the Mediterranean. Such a view, rather more developed in the US than in the EU, although effecting the future of the EU as much as that of the US, sees the Mediterranean as a zone of intensive strategic concern and interest to the West.[10] There is always a short-cut from the overall geopolitical perception to a specific view on the role of the Middle East conflict on the Mediterranean partnership.

The related problems are evident. The South Mediterranean countries want to see a higher political profile of the EU in the Middle East peace process, Israel is rather interested in the economic potential of Europe and scared that Europe could politically become too lenient to the Arab arguments, the US is inclined to think along similar lines while not leaving out any possibility of good economic relations with Arab countries, Libya included, aside, while the EU tries to be fair and objective in its political assessment, low-profiled in its political posture and not always realizing that by doing

9 Private correspondence with the author, July 21, 2001

10 See *F. Stephen Larrabee/Carla Thorson*, Mediterranean Security: New Issues and Challenges, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 1996; *F.Stephen Larrabee/Jerrold Green/Ian O.Lesser/Michele Zanini*, NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Policy Issues and Dilemmas, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 1997; *Annette Jünemann*, Europas Mittelmeerpolitik im regionalen und globalen Wandel: Interessen und Zielkonflikte, in: *Wulfdieter Zippel* (Ed.), Die Mittelmeerpolitik der EU, Baden-Baden: Nomos 1999, pp. 29 ff.

so, it does not necessarily serve its economic ambitions in the region while restraining its political posture unnecessarily.

The European Union is inclined to start its Middle East strategy with an analysis of the need to organize soft security in this troubled region (confidence building measures, economic and social cooperation etc.) which is neither wrong in itself nor unappreciated by all the actors involved. Such an approach does, however, not eliminate the fact that the top priority has to be the creation of a sustainable break-through in the field of hard security, including a solution to the most troublesome question of the future of Jerusalem, the most holy city for Christians, Jews and Muslims alike. The EU has accrued trust and confidence among all actors in the seemingly endless Middle East conflict. It has to capitalize on this by broadening its own commitment to peace and stability by looking beyond the huge agenda of soft-security. A lasting peace in the Middle East seems imaginable only if the EU would also participate in securing its elements. This must finally lead to EU participation in some sort of peace keeping operations in the Middle East.

Depending on the point of departure, the road map of analysis and assessment can be extremely different. The point of arrival certainly is. The European Union is therefore constantly challenged to maintain its multilevel and highly diversified approach for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, while it can neither be sure of the consistency of interests of its Southern partners nor of the interests within the European Union. Not the least relevant of them is the question of the role of the United States in the Mediterranean. Strategic commonalties, such as those important for resolving problems of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting against terrorism, stable energy supplies and other natural resources, might clash with specific interests such as the European inclination towards an inclusive policy towards Libya, the balanced position of the European Union in the Middle East conflict and a differentiated approach to the role of Islam in politics and modern society.

A comprehensive security partnership between the EU, its Mediterranean partners and the US is also dependent upon the resolution of contradictions

and shortcomings in the European approach to the region. No transregional approach can overcome the primordial importance of the Middle East conflict which is impacting on all dimensions of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and holds it potentially hostage. No transregional approach should undermine or neglect the special role France is playing in the Western Mediterranean as a consequence of its long standing proximity to Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. And no transregional approach can overlook conflicts of interests between the EU's Mediterranean strategy and the ambition of integrating the Balkan region into the European structures . The latter has become a top priority of EU policy making since the end of the Kosovo War. Although South Eastern Europe does belong to the Mediterranean, the challenge of integrating the Balkans is more of an EU homework ("Europeanizing the Balkan") and thus until now not properly linked to an overall design for the Mediterranean. One could even argue that the EU has to "Europeanize Europe" by transforming and integrating South Eastern Europe first before it can truly look out for a Mediterranean partnership. Conflicts of aims thus remain inevitable. In terms of political and material resources, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is definitely and regrettably limiting a more pro-active policy of the EU in the Maghreb region, which requires stabilization on all accounts.

The effect of the financial support of the Middle East Peace process through the European Union remains dependent upon progress on the very issue of peace making which does - at least so far - not involve the European Union as a key player. Given that the United States is the only actor involved in the whole Mediterranean, any comprehensive partnership in the Mediterranean will have to be based on strategic consistency and complementarity in Euro-American approaches to the region. The US have become and will remain a Mediterranean power. They will ever more remain present in the region at the beginning of the 21st century since they presented themselves for the first time in 1804 by bombarding Libya (for the first time) in retaliation against attacks of Tripolitanian pirates. The Mediterranean, in turn, still is a bay of the Atlantic Ocean as the implications of the courageous explorations of the 15th century have already indicated for the first time in modern history.

Europe's perception of the Mediterranean and its activities in the Mediterranean cannot be freed from these constant factors. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership remains based on an integral, comprehensive approach which is intended to support peace, stability and prosperity as much as good governance, democracy and cultural dialogue. Such a complex approach opens ways for compromises, ad-hoc package-deals, diversified policy instruments and a certain division of labor among the EU partners under the broad umbrella of a comprehensive general plan. On the other hand, it is endangered to become hostage of blockade policies by one or the other partner of the process, who tries to pursue specific interests at the expense of the whole process. In the end, there will be no alternative to the Euro-Mediterranean equivalent of a "géometrie variable": A rather diversified and differentiated policy for regions and issues, depending on variable interests, instruments and goals of the European Union and its southern partners. And surely this will be a policy which reckons with the American role and interest in the Mediterranean. How far such a complex and complicated strategy can be handled by the evolving Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union is another question. It requires a strong hand and a clear, comprehensive vision, while allowing the highest necessary amount of diversity and adaptation to circumstances and developments without loosing sight of the overall idea of Mediterranean partnership. In other words: So far, the European Union has not resolved the agenda of its relationship with the neighboring South, but has rather defined a tall and ambitious frame for it. The academic reflection on the Mediterranean has all reason to echo this in the years ahead. This alone would be a useful and welcome contribution to the creation of a vital role for the Mediterranean Lake in the shaping of the new Europe.

The success of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership remains to be seen. But one consequence is already evident. The Mediterranean is no longer and solely a sea merely concerning the direct inhabitants of its shores. No matter how different the emotional and rational proximity of European Union citizens in Malaga or Tartu, Thessaloniki or Edinburgh might well be: Belonging to the very same European Union, they are irreversibly involved in the same policy approaches and will be living under the same consequences

of it. There is no longer such a thing as a particular Southern European interest in the Mediterranean. The concrete effects of the Mediterranean will certainly continue to have a strong relevance for the citizens of Spain, Italy or Greece. But by the nature of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, also Denmark, Ireland and Sweden have become Mediterranean countries. This is not free from inconsistencies and also therefore not always understood, let alone appreciated among all Southern Mediterranean partners. But it has become a fact they have to live with. A case in point are the implications of Malta's accession to the European Union. They will have implications for the emigration regime of Malta, which will have to accept the acquis communautaire of the "Schengen Accord". Libya, for instance, can no longer maintain its special relationship and privileges with Malta; visas will become inevitable for Libyans visiting Malta. This gives Malta a hard time to explain and Libya some confusion to understand since at the same time it receives signals from Brussels to gradually and substantially opening up to the EU. But so it is, underlining that the EU as a whole has embarked on the project of partnership in the Mediterranean.

In that sense, the Mediterranean has developed into a European lake, no matter what the intensity of its presence and impact for all EU citizens - no matter what the agenda for dialogue and partnership among the northern and the southern rim countries - might be. But the Mediterranean is also part of the bigger Atlantic Ocean, its scope and strategic implication. In that sense, there can hardly be an autonomous "Mediterraneanism" without recognizing the broader circumstances and dependencies which remain vital for the Mediterranean in the 21st century.

One of the broader dimensions clearly relates to Africa. This continent has clearly been neglected by Europe over the last decades – and mismanaged by many of its own regimes. New efforts to bring Africa back to the attention of Europe have to be organized around strategies of hopes. Libya, the most difficult of all partners in the Barcelona process, was clearly right by stating the need for a greater interest of Europe – and the whole world - in Africa. A substantial partnership between the European Union and the developing African Union, founded with strong Libyan encouragement in 2001, is not an easy task. The Mediterranean partnership could certainly

play an instrumental role in such a noble effort. It would need to broaden the horizon of all partners of the Barcelona process beyond the very goals and instruments of the Mediterranean partnership as such. By looking beyond itself towards a new beginning with Africa, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership could serve its true and timely historic purpose. This would not only qualify the Mediterranean partnership, but would rather put it into a perspective of a broader meaning. The Euro-Mediterranean process would not be left fertile and useless in such a context but could rather become a necessary but transient vehicle to serve more than itself. No matter how long such a development might take: A new beginning by a successful adaptation and consistent development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership would truly position Europe as a world partner, which is looking beyond its geographic peripheries and the historical intricacies stemming from this into the sphere of global visions and responsibilities. In fact, it could one day be the ultimate justification of the Mediterranean partnership.

III. Black Sea and Caspian Sea: Lakes at the South Eastern Periphery

Europe's neighborhoods to the East link the Mediterranean with the Black Sea and beyond the Black Sea with the Caspian Sea. The gap is big between those who perceive the Black Sea as a region of historical encounters of civilizations and thus as a field of culture and those who define the Black and Caspian Sea as elements of a strategic redefinition of geopolitical and geo-economic tendencies in the early 21st century. Both dimensions - culture and geopolitics - are indeed defining the frame of Europe's encounter with its neighborhoods east of the Mediterranean. It remains a challenge whether and how all possible dimensions of Europe's Black Sea and Caspian Sea neighborhoods will be transformed into a viable and sustainable political concept and architecture.

It has to recognize that the water of the lakes at the South Eastern fringes of Europe do not divide regions and people that share its shores without being truly linked to each other. It also has to take note of the traditional and continuous potential of conflicts and the diversity of interests and orientations

in one the of most fascinating regions of the world. The mountain range of the Caucasus is both linking and dividing the Black Sea region from the Caspian Sea. It remains to this day one of the most diverse and complicated regions at the borders of Europe. To constructively turn antagonisms into commonalties and divisions into bridges requires patience and far-sighted visions.

The necessary long duration to properly "install" the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea as "European lakes" will have to begin with an overall new assessment and perception of the Black Sea. The first to have demonstrated the potential of cooperation and to project the will to bring the shores of this great lake together were the ancient Greeks. They started to settle parts of the fertile coast of this sea, whose dark-blue, almost black water stands in sharp and less inviting contrast to the light and charming blue of the Mediterranean. With the exception of the Gulf of Odessa and the Sea of Azov it is a huge oval basin, more than 2600 meters deep at its center. The ground of the Black Sea, whose salt density is less than the Mediterranean water, is covered by dark mud. After the Greeks had been lured into the Black Sea by the paths of its dolphins and their search for new trading posts, they called it "Pontus Euxeinos". The lonians set up colonies like Odessos, Tyras, Theodosia, Tanais - at the northern edge of the Azov Sea - Diskurias, Trapezunt and Sinope, the Dorians established traces of their own in Mesembria, Kallatis and Herakleia.

Alexander the Great, the subsequent Hellenic powers, the Roman Empire and its Byzantine heir with its client states began to cut the understanding of an integral Black Sea by focussing on its Southern shores. Trade and power as well as the spread of Christianity was concentrated on the Southern littoral of the Black Sea and stretched from there rather to the East than to the opposite side of the waters. Merchant activities of Venetians, Genoese and traders from Pisa, who even tried to establish a settlement - Porto Pisano - in the Azov Sea, found their echo in the developments among Bulgars, Petschenegens, Cherkessians and Crimean Goths on the North side of the Black Sea. The Golden Hordes and others signed the guest book of the region. While the 13th to 15th centuries saw a fascinating encounter of civilizations in the area, a political or even cultural concept of Black Sea

unity was missing. The Genoese founded Eupatoria (Balaklava) and with their initiative Kaffa (Feodosyia) became a flourishing center for trade and commerce. The links of trade and commerce - also with Venice and Pisa - brought the most modern naval technology and banking practices from Italy into the region. But it was only with the Ottoman conquest of Anatolia that the Black Sea region was beginning to achieve cultural unity - in the name of Islam and following what had been started by Muslim Tartars on the northern shores of the Black Sea.

The Islamic Ottoman Empire was also grabbing for the Northern shores of the Black Sea, where the semi-independent Crimean Khanate and independent, unruly Cherkessians left their own mark in history. With the approaching Russian invaders, a new chapter began in the late 18th century when Catharine the Great annexed the Crimean peninsula in 1783. Ottoman and Czarist Russian rivalry in the Black Sea during the 19th century culminated in the Crimean War, which began in 1853. The United Kingdom, France and the Ottoman Empire formed a united front against Russia. Its Black Fleet ships were sunk in Sevastopol, and the European allies landed in the Crimea, finally conquering Sevastopol after a fierce siege. The Crimean War ended on March 18, 1856 with the Treaty of Paris. Russia lost its right to a Black Sea fleet and was deprived of Southern Bessarabia, while Ottoman Turkey became a member of the European state system. Turkish and Soviet confrontation during the decades of the Cold War in the 20th century was in a way but a variation of a historic theme. A constant during the 19th and 20th century was the involvement of outside "superpowers" in the region, the British and French first, later followed by the Americans.

With the end of the Cold War, a new chapter was opened in the understanding and perception of the Black Sea. Driven by Turkey, a Black Sea Economic Cooperation scheme became the new vision for the region. On June 25, 1992, the heads of state or government of eleven states met in Istanbul to sign the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Pact. Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and the Ukraine wanted to let the world know that the Greater Black Sea area with around 350 million people and vast natural resources such as gas,

oil, coal, wood and ore deposits would be a new center of gravity in the emerging new world order. In the years to follow, a substantial intergovernmental structure was established, including a Permanent Secretariat in Istanbul, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank in Thessaloniki and a coordination center for the exchange of statistical data and economic information in Ankara. A Parliamentary Assembly was founded in 1993 and a Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Force in 2001. Already in 1999, the United Nations had granted the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization observer status in the United Nations where it is entitled to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

The rediscovery of unifying factors was put into perspective by the prevailing asymmetries with regard to potential and approaches, goals and speed of the acting countries. The unifying principles of this latest effort to harmonize interests and perceptions around the Black Sea were evident: security and prosperity. Less consensual was the degree of rule of law and democracy which is necessary to properly and fully establish and maintain a market economy. But also on other accounts, differences in the Black Sea region remained: the relations of the participating countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization with the EU, Europe and with the Near East remained diverse; so were the overlaps between geopolitical and regional interests and potentials of the actors around the Black Sea.

The dominant role of Turkey in Black Sea Economic Cooperation has been the source of various controversial debates from the very beginning of its work. [11] It is, however, true that the interests of Turkey in pushing Black Sea Economic Cooperation have been lauded by all other participant countries since its potential effects will certainly also be in their own interest. Critical observers seem to assume that the Black Sea Economic Cooperation has, at least so far, fell short of hopes and expectations while the Organization itself is pointing to its potential and ever increasing visibility:

- after the Gulf, the second largest source of oil and natural gas;

11 Even the Internet presentation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization is handled through the homepage of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under: www.bsec.gov.tr

- a foreign trade capacity of over 300 billion US Dollars annually;
- an abundant labor force as well as creative and well-trained human resources;
- a broad manufacturing base although in need of modernization;
- a strategic location for maritime transport, ship-building and repairing.

In other words: The Black Sea Region wants to be seen as the center of Eurasia with its enormous wealth of cultures and experiences and its unique geographic features which are naturally linked with the Caspian Sea on the one hand and the Mediterranean on the other. It wants to be more than just an infrastructural hub for commerce and trade in the field of natural energy resources, although this has been the almost single aspect which has been able to carry the regional agenda of the Black Sea Cooperation partners into an element of new global politics. Since this is inevitably linked with the potential and role of the Caspian Sea region, the two areas are easily connected by the strategists of geopolitics and geoeconomics as they developed since the end of the Cold War in 1990.

Oil and gas have been the keywords for any consideration about the prospects of the Caspian Sea region not to eternally remain at the peripheries of both Europe and Asia , but to be transformed into one of its centers of gravity. Proven oil reserves estimates vary between 15 and 40 billion barrels, representing 1,5 to 4 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves. Estimates of proven gas reserves range from 6.7 to 9.2 trillion cubic meters, representing 6 to 7 per cent of the world gas reserves. Whatever the true figures of existing resources are: the Caspian Sea region is important for the diversification of Western energy supply, notwithstanding the fact that its share might remain small compared with the 269 billion barrels of proven oil reserves already discovered in Saudi Arabia. The bulk of Caspian Sea region oil lies in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the bulk of gas in Turkmenistan, which has the fourth largest reserves in the world, with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan having almost similar amounts.

Much of what has been said and written about the Caspian Sea Region since the end of the Cold War had to do with hopes and speculations, with

a redefinition of the great geopolitical and geo-economic chessboard in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Zbigniew Brzezinski included the Caspian Sea region into "the global zone of percolating violence"[12], an analysis which has clearly achieved new resonance since the brutal terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Since the end of the Soviet Union, the Caspian Sea is landlocked between Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Russia and Azerbaijan, after all, are member states of the Council of Europe, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan join them as members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. To perceive the Caspian Sea as a "European lake" has nevertheless neither become common knowledge nor did it find overall appreciation. As seen from Europe, the Caspian Sea remains "out there, even behind Turkey".

The race for energy resources in the region has nevertheless found interest in Europe, though less than it has in the United States. The study of possible pipeline projects and their geopolitical implications was a widely spread field of analysis during the 1990s. The range of objectives spread from "circumventing Russia" to "diversifying dependency on the Gulf region", from "empowering Turkey's role in Europe" to "rebuilding the ancient Silk Road to China". In spite of the symbolic signing of the contracts to begin the Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan-Pipeline in the presence of President Clinton in 1999, more recent analyses focus increasingly on the prospects of reactivating routes running through Iran and on the activities of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium which belongs to Russia, Kazakhstan, Oman and to various international oil companies. Its pipeline, beginning in the Tengiz Oil field in Kazakhstan and hitting the Black Sea at Noworossijsk, was able to fill the first oil tanker in August 2001. This route, which ultimately leads through the Bosporus Straits, has led to environmental concerns in densely populated Istanbul, although legal experts have reminded Turkey on the obligation under the Montreux Convention of 1936 to provide free shipping through the Bosporus. In any case, the potential of the Caspian Pipeline

12 *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives, New York: Harper Collins 1997, p. 53

Consortium is the single biggest addition to the world oil market since the explorations of oil in Alaska and the North Sea began during the 1970s.

The more relations between the US and Russia are improving, the more likely is a stronger focus on the Russian pipeline over rather costly projects through the Caucasus. Geopolitical considerations - particularly concerning the future role of Russia, of Turkey, of Iran and possibly even of China - are critically linked with US interests in the new geoeconomics of the Caspian Sea region. Europe so far remains more of an observer than an active player in any of the strategically relevant fields. The scholarly discussion in Europe on the Caspian Sea region remains somewhat detached as if it were an area not so relevant to the future shape of Europe's political and strategic architecture.[13] Of the six violent conflicts which occurred in the former Soviet Union after its break-up, four occurred in the Caucasus (the others took place in Tajikistan and in Transdniestria): Given the ethnic tensions in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkazia, Chechnya and Dagestan, the European focus is understandably more on conflict resolution and on the role which the OSCE does and could play in future conflict prevention in the region of the Caspian Sea.[14] The big, overall geopolitical "Politics of Oil" has not become a priority of Europe's approach to the region at its most south eastern periphery.

This does not mean that the European Union would not monitor the Caspian Sea region. Efforts to develop a common energy policy lead inevitably to considerations about the prospects of the Caspian Sea region. One of the obstacles to properly tapping this potential is the continuos absence of an agreed legal regime for the Caspian Sea, which has complicated export route decisions. Nevertheless, given the high amount of oil and gas de-

13 See: *Friedemann Müller*, Ökonomische und politische Kooperation im Kaspischen Raum, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Nr. B 43-44/1998, pp. 26 ff.; *Roland Götz*, Geopolitische Rivalen oder Partner? Rußland und China in der Region des Kaspischen Meeres, in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik, October 1998, Vol. 10, pp. 1200 ff.

14 See: *Susanne Baier-Allen* (ed), Synergy in Conflict Management. What can be learnt from recent experiences? Baden-Baden: Nomos 1998 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol. 9)

pendency from non-EU sources, "diversification of supplies" has been the constant mantra of EU parlance, matched by a whole array of suggestions for increasing stability and the prospects for prosperity and democratic governance in the region. A proposal of the European Commission for a consistent EU policy towards the Caspian Sea region was rejected by the Council of Ministers in 1995. It had included the suggestion of a stronger political profile of the EU in the whole Caspian Sea region through an intensified political dialogue.

This setback reflected the ongoing differences of interests among EU member states on questions with links to old standing ties, loyalties and connections of one or two of them. Given the dominance of British oil companies in the "Azerbaijan International Oil Consortium" it was no wonder that business interests were transformed into political veto powers. Nevertheless, the European Council agreed in 1998 on expressing a general interest in exploiting the energy resources in the Caspian Sea region, matched with EU support for regional stability and for a diversified pipeline network. The declaration also made it clear that strategic decisions about pipeline routes should be taken by the companies involved on the basis of commercial considerations.[15] Since 1993, the European Union provides funds for the construction of a Eurasian transport corridor, TRACECA (Transport System Europe-Caucasus-Asia, informally known as the Great Silk Road), which shall help the countries of the region to connect with the world market. As much as this is a noble undertaking - followed by the INOGATE program, an EU initiative which appraises oil and gas export routes from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea, and routes for shipping energy to Europe - it is less than a consistent and sustainable common foreign policy of the EU on matters relevant to the Caspian Sea region.

It might well be that this is too much to be asked from the European Union at this point in time. Founded in 1957 as a Community for Economic Cooperation, the EU has gone quite a way to today's search for a coherent and

15 See: 2085th Council Meeting, General Affairs, Declaration on Caspian energy (pipelines), Luxembourg, 27. April 1998

efficient Common Foreign and Security Policy. Until the EU is capable of projecting Europe's interests and to influence the course of world affairs, it will have to continuously intensify its efforts and produce the necessary political will. To perceive the world through the lens of the "lakes of Europe" - which after all, at least in the South and South-East of Europe, is of somewhat a frontal or peripheral nature - might be too much to be asked from the EU at this point in time. This does not mean that the EU would not be well advised to learn to understand and to assess the role and potential of its lakes as bridges to new horizons and interests.

Nevertheless, one has to be realistic. The view within the European Union is not one of a bird's eye. It is not global and strategic in nature, but rather incremental and bound by the current parameters of the EU. Every enlargement of EU membership has added new perspectives, dimensions and challenges to the EU's lists of policies. In this regard, the end of the Cold War has begun to bring the EU closer to the lakes of Europe and to a reflection about the EU's interests involved with them.

This incremental approximation to a consistent policy for its lakes and peripheral neighborhoods can well be seen in regard to the Black Sea. Since 1999, the European Union is conducting membership negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria. One day, the coastal cities of both countries at the Black Sea will become cities within the European Union. Once Constanza and Varna will be as much part of the European Union as Limerick or Porto, the EU will inevitably be forced to deal with the world "out there" and on the other sides of its own borders. Time will come to invent an appropriate equivalent to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the Black Sea region as long as the EU wants to demonstrate its capacity and will to project interests beyond the borders defined by membership.

To grant Turkey the status of a membership candidate - without beginning membership negotiations - has opened a new dimension of the discovery of

the Black Sea region by the EU.[16] The formulation of an EU strategy towards the Ukraine and the development of the EU Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe after the fourth Yugoslavian War of Secession in 1999 have added further dimensions to the evolution of a coherent Black Sea region policy of the EU.[17] In the Caucasus region, the EU is supporting regional cooperation among Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, all of whom have joined the Council of Europe, where they are sitting side by side with Russia, Turkey, the Ukraine and the Balkan countries. From the point of view of the Council of Europe, the Black Sea truly is a European lake.

The Black Sea and the Caspian Sea regions are united in being regions torn between their European orientation and their peripheral, Eurasian aspects, their hope for wealth and expectations of future power, but also confronted with their various crises and a huge array of conflicts and problems of some magnitude: High birth rates and high unemployment, ethnic strife and refugee movements, limits to democratic rule of law and high corruption, clan loyalties and Islamic revival, problems of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and seedbeds of terrorism, ambitions of external powers to influence domestic politics and to potentially undermine stability in some of the young countries - the region of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea is part of the long belt of conflicts stretching from Northern Africa to South East Asia. Yet, it is a peripheral European region.

16 *Hüseyin Bagci/Jackson Janes/Ludger Kühnhardt* (Ed.), Parameters of Partnership: The US - Turkey - Europe, Baden-Baden: Nomos 1999 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol. 14)

17 See *Jackson Janes/Oleg Kokoshinsky/Peter Wittschorek* (ed.), Ukraine, Europe, and the United States. Towards a New Euro-Atlantic Security Architecture, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2000 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol.22); Rafael Biermann, The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe - potential, problems and perspectives, ZEI Discussion Paper C 56/ 1999 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies); *Emil Mintchev*, Southeastern Europe at the beginning of the 21st century, ZEI Discussion Paper C 82/2001 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies); *Janusz Bugajski*, Facing the future: The Balkans to the year 2010, ZEI Discussion Paper C86/2001 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies)

This must have implications for Europe's dealing with its lakes of trouble. First of all, the Black Sea, and subsequently the Caspian Sea, have to be discovered as European lakes, as regions of interest for Europe and regions of interlocking interests with Europe. Secondly, Europe has to accept its willingness to develop proactive policies in these regions and for these regions, linking them with the rest of Europe beyond ad hoc crises management and presumptive conflict management. The EU has to define a preemptive and inclusive strategy of partnership with the region. This might continuously lead to differentiated instruments, strategies and tactics. While some countries of the Black Sea like Romania and Bulgaria will become members of the EU, others like Turkey - and potentially the Ukraine and Moldavia - will get even closer and eventually into the EU, while again others such as Russia and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan will remain linked with the European architecture through the Council of Europe and the OSCE. At some point, membership of Kazakhstan - which is a member of the OSCE - in the Council of Europe might appear on the agenda.

All in all, it must be Europe's interest to support cooperation in the region of the Southern lakes of Europe. After the first wave of geopolitical "grand designs" seems to be over, a growing differentiation and increasing sense of cooperation is evident in the Black and Caspian Sea regions. While Turkey was until recently seen in the West as the cornerstone of a politics of oil trying to limit the powers of Russia, Turkey itself has started to cooperate with Russia on this matter. In the light of a growing energy demand in Turkey, the country has signed a contract with the Russian energy company Gazprom, leading to a gas pipeline across the Black Sea, the so-called Blue Stream Project, which started providing Turkey with oil in 2000. More recent geopolitical assessments assume that the perspective of a prosperous regional market around the Black and Caspian Sea could be more in the overall interests of all countries bordering the two lakes of Europe than new policies of exclusion and a repetition of old power games.[18]

18 See *Alexander Rahr*, Energieressourcen im Kaspischen Meer, in: Internationale Politik, 56.Year, January 2001, pp. 37 ff.

By the same token, one should not be as naive as to believe that these eternal aspects of international relations will all of a sudden disappear from the world. This is even less likely in a region with a higher amount of conflicts and a broader experience with power political considerations than hardly any other. The European Union will have to raise its posture and interest in the South Eastern Lakes of Europe and their bordering areas. This requires not only a consistent policy for the region and a likewise sustainable implementation of it in the region. The European Union also needs a coherent policy towards Russia - which unlike Turkey will not be able to become a EU candidate for reasons of size and Russia's self-esteem as a global power. And it needs a coherent contribution to a common and consistent transatlantic agenda for the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, recognizing the different degrees of involvement in the European architecture, but also the different links of both regions with the global agenda for the 21st century.

The American presence in the region, including the profile and posture of NATO, is a crucial dimension which has to be taken into account in order to define a coherent "Western" strategy for the South Eastern Lakes of Europe. How well this can interlock without overlapping or leading to inconsistent duplications in the overall efforts to stabilize and develop the region by integrating it as much as possible and as gradually as necessary into the Euro-Atlantic architecture can be studied with respect to the Northern Dimension of Europe's lakes, namely in the Baltic Sea region.

IV. The Northern dimension: Baltic Sea and North Sea

The Baltic Sea has no ancient history. Its classical age began during the period of the Hanse League in the 14th and more so in the 15th century. The settlements of the German Orders along the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea in the 13th century followed the proliferation of city establishments in North-Central Europe based on German models of city law in the 12th and 13th centuries. But it was not before the high tide of the Hanse League that the Baltic Sea was discovered as a geographical one and an interdependent merchant market. Gdansk and Riga, Reval (today's Tallinn) and Abo (today's Turku), Stockholm and Visby, even Oslo and Bergen on Norway's

North Sea coast and Hull and London in England became leading merchant bases for the Hanse traders.

Visby on Gotland developed somehow into the secret capital of the Hanse. Since the end of the Cold War, which also cut the Baltic Sea into two for various decades, its charm is again being discovered by visitors from all the four shores of the Baltic Sea. The Hanse was a virtual empire, not politically ruling any place but binding together by market forces and merchant versatility what was otherwise kept apart by languages and different political rulers. The County Holstein, the Free Hanse City of Lübeck, the Duchy of Mecklenburg, and the Duchy of Pommerania in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of Sweden, the German Order in Livonia and Prussia, the Duchy of Nowgorod, and huge uninhabited areas along all coasts, particularly in today's Sweden and Finland - thus were the geopolitical contours of the Baltic Sea in the 15th century.

The 16th century saw the Protestant Reformation widely succeeding in the Baltic region. What had been united in the Hanse spirit during the 15th century, became united then in the spirit of Martin Luther's reformation, leaving small Catholic islands in Pommeranian, in today's northern Poland, and in Lithuania, then part of the German Order. In later centuries, the Baltic Sea region lost a sense of oneness and its littoral parts were dragged into the history of national sovereignty, nationalism and power conflicts. The 20th century led to the sharpest ever division of the Baltic Sea: During the decades of the Cold War, the Baltic Sea became the maritime extension of the Berlin Wall and the division of Germany. As Europe was split in two along the fences of the iron curtain, the Baltic Sea suffered a wet iron curtain. Military build-up on both sides of the virtual line, espionage by submarines and the never vanishing hope to use the water as a means to flee from the world of totalitarianism into the camp of Western freedom - these were but some of the prevailing features of the Cold War-divide that shattered the notion of a common Northern lake of Europe.

After the end of the Cold War, a rediscovery of old and lasting ties began. The feeling of neighborhood was matched by the understanding that the

waters of the Baltic Sea did no longer divide but rather bring people, ideas and goods together. Soon after 1990, first efforts started to also politically reactivate the notion of the Baltic Sea as a European lake. Though the emotional intensity and strategic implications did never reach the level of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at the southern lake of Europe, Baltic Sea Cooperation became the Northern Dimension of European Security.

For the Scandinavian countries, the end of the Cold War meant the beginning of a redefinition of their role as European countries. Sweden and Finland joined the European Union in 1995. Along with Poland, the newly independent Baltic countries Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became candidates for EU membership and are about to fully join the European Union around 2004. But while Poland was able to join NATO in 1999, the Baltic States were still looking for this strategic and military anchoring in the Atlantic civilization.[19] For Germany and Denmark, both members of the EU and of NATO, the opening of a new Baltic Sea cooperation was very encouraging from the very outset. One of the additional values added to the idea of a reunified Baltic Sea was the presence and inclusion of Russia, not only with its historical window to the West, St. Petersburg, but also with the more sensible former East Prussian region which figures as Russia's Oblast Kaliningad since the end of World War II.[20]

After preliminary talks between the Foreign Ministers of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, Russia and Germany along with a representative of the European Commission, the „Council of the Baltic Sea States" was created in March 1992 at the initiative of German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and his Danish counter-

19 See *Frank Ronge* (Hg.), Die baltischen Staaten auf dem Weg in die Europäische Union. ZEI Discussion Paper C1/1998, Bonn 1998 (Center for European Integration Studies); Sven Arnswald/Markus Wenig (eds.), German and American Policies towards the Baltic States. The Perspectives of EU and NATO Enlargement, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2000 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol. 20); *Georg Klöcker* (ed)., Ten Years after the Baltic States reentered the International Stage, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2001 (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies, Vol. 36)

20 See *Gennady Fedorow*, Kaliningrad Alternatives today, ZEI Discussion Paper C 80/2000 (Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies)

part Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. The Council was intended not only to support the economic and political cooperation in the region, but also to encourage and initiate cooperation in such fields as environmental protection, tourism and transportation infrastructure. To include the European Union, always represented both by the rotating EU Presidency and the European Commission, meant to strengthen the EU's involvement in the idea of Baltic Sea Cooperation.

Annual meetings of the foreign ministers supported the overall goals and gave them the necessary sense of direction. In 1994, for example, the Foreign Ministers meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States created the „Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights" and in 1996, a „Task Force on Organized Crime" was initiated. Working Groups on Nuclear Safety and Radiation or on Economic Cooperation, a Business Advisory Council or the creation of a „Euro-Faculty" located in Riga broadened the scope of activities under the umbrella of the Council on Baltic Sea States, supported by a small secretariat in Stockholm and funded by all eleven members of the Council. Below the level of the overall Baltic Sea Cooperation, sub-regional activities - which include around 160 regional and local political authorities - were encouraged not the least in order to accompany the pre-accession process of the new, soon to be EU member states of the region.

Sub-regional cooperation was also among the priorities of the Russian Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States in 2001/2002. To include Russia as an equal partner into the Baltic Sea Cooperation scheme has proven to be one of the great geopolitical achievements realized through the overarching approach. From the beginning, Russia supported the economic component with particular emphasis on energy, transport, border area infrastructure and the removal of trade barriers. The Russian Presidency in the Council also promoted the interaction between the Council of Baltic Sea States and the European Union. And it served the constructive inclusion of the Kaliningrad Oblast into the framework of all Baltic Sea

cooperation activities.[21] Russia's Western partners remain concerned about the high degree of nuclear waste in Russia's Northwest and its implication for the environment and for human health alike.

The Foreign Ministers meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in June 2001 in Hamburg, under German Presidency, had already agreed on the assumption „that the EU enlargement provides prospects for the areas along the future external borders of the EU in the region...This is specifically valid with regard to cross border contacts and economic development in the Russian Oblasts of Kaliningrad, Pskov, Leningrad, Novgorod and the city of St. Petersburg." Following the Hamburg summit, „Euro-Faculty" extended its teaching activities into Kaliningrad [22] For Russia, Baltic Sea Cooperation had become extremely valuable and meaningful in order to help supporting the transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast into a pilot-project of Russia's long-term inter-regional cooperation with the EU. In March 2002, the Foreign Ministers of the Council of the Baltic Sea States met in Kaliningrad for their annual summit, thus underlying the importance of the inclusion of this most neglected area of the Baltic Sea into the overall process as defined by the developments of knowledge and technology-based societies in the new century.

While assuming the role of the annually rotating Presidency in the summer of 2000, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer had described the need to coordinate the activities of the Council of Baltic Sea States with the „Northern Dimension" program of the European Union. EU activities and multilateral cooperation including also the non-EU member states of the

21 See: *Council of the Baltic Sea States* (CBSS), Priorities of the Russian Presidency 2001-2002, in: http://www.baltinfo.org/Docs/ministerial/21/Russian%20priorities.htm

22 See: *Council of the Baltic Sea States*, Tenth Ministerial Session, Hamburg, 7 June 2001, Communiqué, in: http://www.baltinfo.org/Docs/ministerial/20/Hamburg%201.htm

region should „complement one another“. This holds particularly true for the intensified use of the economic potential of cooperation in the region.[23]

The shift from a perspective of fear or even threat to a focus on „opportunity“ and „potential“ is the single most strategic benefit which has evolved in the Baltic Sea region over the 1990s.[24] This does not mean that no problems prevail. But the fact that after the current wave of EU enlargement 90 per cent of the Baltic Sea coastline will belong to the European Union, marks a more than visible shift in the geopolitical make-up of the Baltic Sea, giving more room for community building and enhancing stability and security in the whole region.

In this sense, Baltic Sea cooperation has developed into a role-model for regional cooperation in one of the Lake Regions of Europe. It had never been conceived against Russia and in fact developed into a useful arena of cooperation with Russia. This is also true with regard to the hard security aspects of cooperation and consultation in the Baltic Sea region.[25] Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania strive to become members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, thus achieving the fullest possible integration into the Euro-Atlantic security structures. While Russia tried to claim a veto position on this issue over a long period during the 1990s, the emotions have seemingly cooled down in the context of improved Western relations with Russia.

The idea to keep the Baltic Sea free of alliances did never reflect reality. Germany, Denmark and Norway have always belonged to NATO, Poland has joined the Atlantic Alliance in 1999, Sweden and Finland are continuously reconsidering their foreign and security philosophy since the end of

23 *Joschka Fischer*, Introduction of the Programme of the German CBSS Presidency in 2000-2001, 9th Ministerial Session of the CBSS, Bergen 21-22 June 2000, in: http://www.baltinfo.org/Docs/ministerial/19/Bergen%20-%20German%20speech.htm

24 See: *Hans-Dieter Lucas*, Perspektiven der Ostseekooperation, in: Außenpolitik, Year 46, 1/1995, pp. 23 ff.; *Hans-Jürgen Heimsoeth*, The Role of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in Promoting Regional Co-Operation, in: http://A/Heimsoeth at STHLM Conference_html

25 See: *Wolfgang Ischinger*, Nicht gegen Rußland. Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit im Ostsee-Raum, in: Internationale Politik, 53.Year, No. 2/February 1998, pp. 33 ff.

the Cold War. For the three Baltic republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania securing the newly gained independence can only be achieved through membership both in the European Union and in NATO.[26] Any trade-off on the matter is unacceptable for any of the three republics. The NATO summit of Prague in 2002 will see a decision on the matter of opening membership negotiation with one or all the three Baltic countries.

Since the early 1990s, NATO had already supported security cooperation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on a level below membership aspirations. A loose form of cooperation (BALTSEA) of some NATO partners with the three Baltic countries has generated a Baltic battalion for peacekeeping missions (BALTBAT), a flight security system under Norwegian guidance (BALTNET) and the creation of a Baltic marine corps (BALTRON), for which Germany took the role of the leading nation. Since 1999, a German-Danish-Polish corps, based in Szezin, contributes further to Baltic Sea stability. All Baltic Sea states, Russia included, are part of the „Partnership for Peace" initiative of NATO. The „Baltic Action Plan" of January 1998 defines the fields of security cooperation between the United States and the three Baltic republics, who have a strong lobby in the US. Russia's cooperation with the West has visibly improved under the leadership of President Putin and in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US.

Stability and clarity on the membership in the EU and NATO will also be in the interest of Russia, which remains a world power and therefore not eligible for membership in either the EU or NATO. Russia's overriding interest in reliable and consistent good neighborly relations and partnership focuses increasingly on economic issues. Here lies the true destiny of the Baltic Sea region. This aspect of the „Northern dimension of Europe" requires the optimal use of all potentials of the region, which is tight to each of its parts through economic and geographic interdependence.

26 See: *Gerd Föhrenbach*, Die Westbindung der baltischen Staaten. Zur Integration Estlands, Lettlands und Litauens in die bi- und multilateralen europäischen und transatlantischen Sicherheitsstrukturen während der 1990er Jahre, Baden-Baden 2000(Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung, Vol. 23)

The profound transition from planned economies to market economies has lead to enormous new opportunities to foster economic growth in the region. However, a host of problems remains. The business community requires good governance in order to act in a predictable environment based on a transparent rule of law. Administrative capacities have to be improved in all the transformation societies, the Baltic countries are no exception to this as the European Union has indicated in all its progress reports on EU accession preparation with regard to Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Intellectual property rights are as much of an issue as questions of the adequate structure of the education systems. Crucial for economic development in the whole region is not only the performance of the transformation economies. The low economic growth rates of Germany and the Nordic countries during the past few years has proven to be an obstacle to economic growth in the whole region. Tax issues and problems of regulation remain on the agenda in the whole region, whose goal it must be to generate complementary economic structures and growth patterns. The business community is regularly pleading for rather open borders of the enlarged European Union with Russia in order to maintain the economic dynamics of the Baltic Sea as a whole. This quest might collide with the evolution of a Common Justice and Home Affairs Policy of the EU designed to create a vital space of freedom, rule of law and security under the authority of the European Union.[27]

The potential of the Baltic Sea region stretches from Denmark with 5.3 million people and a per capita GDP of 25.459 US-Dollar to Latvia with 2.4 million people and a per capita income of 5.632 US-Dollar. Russia's bordering regions include 7.2 million people with a per capita GDP of only 5.317 US-Dollar, Germany's bordering regions include 6,3 million people with a per capita GDP of 23.010 US-Dollar. (The EU average per capita

27 See: *Jörg Monar*, EU Justice and Home Affairs and the Eastward Enlargement: The Challenge of Diversity and EU Instruments and Strategies, ZEI Discussion Paper C 91/ 2001, Bonn 1998 (Center for European Integration Studies)

GDP is 21.295 US-Dollar). Most crucial of all economic variables for the steady development of the whole region into one flourishing market is the energy supply.

Russia's energy export into Europe covers 41 per cent of Europe's gas and 18 per cent of Europe's oil demands. The plans for improving and increasing the Russian energy supply to Europe as a whole and to the Baltic Sea region in particular are numerous.[28] This includes the upgrading and modernization of the Latvian sea port Ventspils (Windau), which currently clears 15 per cent of Russia's oil exports to the West . This is not the only port to require fundamental restructuring, which at the end of the day is a question of enormous costs for investment and maintenance.

The energy issue links the Baltic Sea with the North Sea. Strategic and environmental issues link it with the Arctic Sea. Only when all three regions are seen together, a clear and comprehensive picture of the „Northern Dimension" of Europe can be drawn. The list of priorities for the European Union in this Lake region of Europe is as following: environment, nuclear safety, energy cooperation, Kaliningrad, infrastructure, business cooperation, Justice and Home Affairs, social development.[29] From Iceland to North West Russia, from the Norwegian, Barents and Kara Seas in the North to the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea, the „Northern Dimension" includes EU and non-EU countries alike. The European Union assumes that the Northern Dimension of its foreign policy design will increase as a consequence of EU enlargement to Poland and the three Baltic republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It will bring the EU a new 1.300 kilometer long border with Russia. Cross-border and inter- or transregional activities require therefore the highest attention. Karelia, Neman, Saule and Baltika have already been named Euroregions.

Concerning the North Sea with its cold, windy and unruly climates, oil and natural gas reserves are the main features which makes this lake of Europe attractive – apart from fishing stocks, of course. Norway is the world's

28 See: *Peer Lange*, Die „Nördliche Dimension". Europäische Energieversorgung und -sicherheit, in: Internationale Politik, 56.Year, No.1/ January 2001, pp. 29 ff.

third largest net oil exporter; this nation of 4.5 million people produces five per cent of the world's oil. The resources of Norway are predicted to last until the mid-21st century. The United Kingdom - the world's fourth largest economy - owns significant North Sea reserves, and even Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands - basically known as large energy consumers - have smaller North Sea oil and gas holdings. North Sea oil and gas were first discovered in the 1960s, the Norwegian field Ekofisk being the first to be exploited. A sophisticated technology, supported by stable political and social conditions along the shores of the North Sea and the proximity to huge energy hungry markets in continental Europe have generated an important feature to the North Sea region and thus a new dimension to the overall characteristics of Europe's Lake Regions.

North Sea oil has become one of the „benchmark" crude oils, which is important for the fixing of oil prices worldwide. Many of the world's major crude oil prices are linked to the price of the North Sea's „Brent" crude oil. Oversupplied world oil markets have regular negative effects for North Sea oil and gas explorations. Research is already under way on the potential impact of declining major North Sea oil fields in the decades to come, although scholarly and politically driven controversies prevail as to whether a decline or, in fact, an increase in global oil production can be expected.[30] Norway has created a Petroleum Fund, that is „a financial safety net for the time when oil revenues decline and a means of reducing the inflationary impact of oil revenues".[31]

Whether it is oil or fish, whether it is tourism or transfer of knowledge, environmental concerns or business opportunities - the North Sea region is striving to develop its unifying common identity as a sub-region of Europe. A North Sea Commission, founded in 1989, includes more than 70 regions around the North Sea with approximately 40 million inhabitants. Instead of

29 See: *European Commission*, The Northern Dimension, in: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/index.htm

30 See: *Roger Blanchard*, The Impact of Declining Major North Sea Oil Fields upon Future North Sea Production, in: http:// www.oilcrisis.com/blanchard/

31 See: *Energy Information Administration*, Country Report: Norway, in: http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/norway2.html, (August 2001)

being labeled a „peripheral region“, the North Sea Commission is promoting the common development of this Lake Region of Europe by fostering a corporate identity.[32]

The „Northern Dimension“ of Europe is intrinsically linked with the North Atlantic region. All the way to Greenland - which is the only region ever to resign from European Union membership although she remains a constitutional part of Denmark[33] - and to the shores of Canada and the US, the North Atlantic region is the bridge which links both sides of the Atlantic civilization while at the same time giving physical evidence to the divide between them.

V. Europe : A peninsula of Asia with strong Atlantic bonds

Civilizational bonds, strategic interests, economic interdependencies, common religious traditions and value patterns, similar political regimes, a history of joint experiences, both in good and in bad days: this is about the minimal list of commonalities between Europe - both its Lake regions and its hinterland - with the two Americas. From Eric the Red, who touched on Newfoundland around 1000, and other Viking adventurers to Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrim Fathers, from early passages in the North Atlantic to modern shipping routes, migration patterns and contemporary ties to those who focused on the southern half of the Atlantic, after all a long story beginning with the discovery of the Canary Islands in 1312, the exploration of Madeira since 1419 and of the Azores around 1432, until the colonization and decolonisation of Latin America : Europe has always been linked to the developments on both the other shores of the Atlantic.

32 See: North Sea Commission Strategy 1999 - 2006, in: http:/www.northsea.org/Aboutus/Strategy%20Paper.html

33 See: *Arved Waltemathe*, Austritt aus der EU. Sind die Mitgliedsstaaten noch souverän?, Bern 2000

As part of Eurasia (Arnold Toynbee[34]) or as a peninsula of Asia (Norman Davies)[35] Europe has both the loosest and at the same time the clearest borders to its west. It seems clear where the Atlantic Ocean begins, and it signifies a divide. The argument is often heard that Europe's borders to the East are difficult to define, while those to the West are given by nature. This perception of nature and geography holds true only if water is primarily seen as a dividing force. As we have seen in the reflection about the role of the Lakes of Europe for the formation of regional and pan-European identity formation, water can separate, but it can also unite. In doing the one or the other, geography and nature are a function of human activities and social perceptions. They can change in the course of time as much as the waters remain stable.

Europe remains intrinsically tied to America. Migration patterns and cultural values, religious complementarity and economic bonds, geoeconomic interests and strategic perceptions of the role of „the West" in the newly emerging world order are binding America and Europe together. America and Europe are the two sides, no matter how diverse in detail and atmosphere, of one Atlantic civilization. This Atlantic civilization is both the anchor and the prolongation of the composed European geography and architecture discussed in this paper.

Reconsidering Europe as influenced, if not even defined by the geographical facts and forces, by the resources and experiences of its „Lake Districts" has proved to be a stimulating endeavor. The Lakes of Europe force upon anyone who is defining Europe as a land mass to broaden the horizon

34 In his magistral work „The Study of History", *Arnold Toynbee* is deploring the useless dichotomy which has been developed in order to distinguish Europe from Asia, while in reality the geographical notion of „Eurasia" and the recognition of mutual inspiration of both the worlds East and West of the Bosphorus seem to be more fruitful. Europas borders to the East have always had much more of a „limen" (threshold) than of a „limes"(border wall): *Arnold Toynbee*, The Study of History. Abridgement of Volumes VII-X, Oxford 1957

35 In his impressive and magistral study „Europe. A History", *Norman Davies* refers to Europe as a „cape of the old continent, a Western appendix of Asia. In spite of the enormous variety of physical features, climate, geology and fauna Europe „is not really a continent at all; it is not a self-contained land mass.": *Norman Davies*, Europe. A History, Oxford 1996, p. 47

and to take note of those „lake-based-factors“ which also have influenced and continue to influence Europe, contribute to its development through the medium of lakes and waters which unite rather than divide. The thesis, in fact, holds true that coastal regions have been - and most likely remain - the most dynamic forces in history. This is true for the Lakes of Europe and it is true for Europe as a whole.

Europe would remain bound to a parochial view of itself if it were to organize and shape only the land mass of Europe. Europe has to look beyond its land and even beyond the other sides of its sea shores in order to grasp the complete picture of its position in the world of the 21st century. While Europe is discovering or rediscovering some of its lakes as, in fact, „European“, it will have to even look beyond the Lakes of Europe in order to properly contextualize Europe’s links with the other shores of the Atlantic and other regions of the world.

Europe can be a partner for the world only if it projects itself beyond the very borders of Europe. Since the European Union is developing increasingly into the embodiment of Europe’s organized political will and the projection of Europe’s economic power - while the cultural diversity of Europe and its concern for identity and values remain more comprehensively embedded in the work of the Council of Europe - it has to develop proper instruments and mechanisms to look beyond Europe. Looking beyond land masses and countries is already a useful step in the necessary process of Europe’s „broadening of the horizon“. The Lakes of Europe offer specific and stimulating features to rethink Europe anew in the world of geoeconomics, geopolitics and intercultural dialogue which will shape the 21st century.

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