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on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea
(2010/2087(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea (2010/2087(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's Communication entitled 'Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative' (COM(2007)0160),
- having regard to the Council Conclusions on the Black Sea Synergy Initiative of 14 May 2007,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2008 on a Black Sea Regional Policy Approach¹,
- having regard to the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area, adopted in Kiev on 14 February 2008,
- having regard to the Commission's 'Report on the first year of implementation of the Black Sea Synergy', adopted on 19 June 2008 (COM(2008)0391),
- having regard to the Joint Statement launching the Black Sea Synergy Environment Partnership (Brussels, 16 March 2010),
- having regard to the Commission's Communication on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2006)0726),
- having regard to the Association Partnership with Turkey,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements concluded with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and to the ongoing negotiations on new Association Agreements, as well as to the respective European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans,
- having regard to the ENP Progress Reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine adopted by the Commission on 12 May 2010,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement concluded with the Russian Federation, and to the ongoing negotiations on a new EU-Russia Agreement,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 3 December 2008 entitled 'Eastern Partnership' (COM(2008)0823),
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of 7 May 2009,

¹ OJ C 41 E, 19.2.2009, p. 64.

- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy¹,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the South Caucasus countries, as well as on the Integrated Maritime Policy,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0000/2010),
- A. whereas the Black Sea region lies at the junction of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, characterised by close ties and great potential, but also diversities and rivalries; whereas the region comprises EU Member States Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, the candidate country Turkey and ENP partners Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the Russian Federation as strategic partner,
 - B. whereas the Black Sea region is of strategic importance for the EU; whereas the Black Sea is partially internal to the EU, which results in shared challenges and opportunities for the EU and the countries of the region, as well as in a common need to ensure there is an area of peace, stability and sustainable prosperity around the Black Sea,
 - C. whereas the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) has had the merit of recognising the Black Sea region as strategic for the EU, together with the need for strengthened EU involvement in the area; whereas BSS results have so far been rather limited and no clear and comprehensive picture exists on the current implementation results of the BSS, exposing the EU to criticism that it lacks a strategic vision of the region and that it is applying a fragmented approach to implementation,
 - D. whereas there has been no elaboration of an Action Plan envisaging concrete objectives and benchmarks, and reporting, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up mechanisms, as asked for in Parliament's very first resolution on the Black Sea,
 - E. whereas only one progress report has been issued, in 2008, which was not followed up with any regular reporting mechanism; whereas not many projects have been carried out and only a Partnership on Environment has been launched to date,
 - F. whereas no ministerial conference has been held since 2008, adding to the lack of visibility, strategic vision and political guidance for the BSS,
 - G. whereas the efforts so far, while commendable, have been severely hampered by poor administrative organisation, lack of institutional and political commitment, and lack of human resources and dedicated financial resources,

¹ OJ C 282 E, 6.11.2008, p. 443.

- H. whereas many developments have taken place in the Black Sea Region since 2008, and while regional cooperation seems to be advancing in some technical fields such as environment, education, research and technology, as well as in normative approximation, a number of challenges such as protracted conflicts, militarization and the deterioration of democratic rule persist and have even gained in intensity,
- I. whereas other EU initiatives involving the countries of the Black Sea should not be seen as competition to the BSS, but rather as complementary,
- J. whereas the Commission has been asked to develop an EU Strategy for the Danube Region,
1. Considers that, given the strategic importance of the Black Sea region for the EU and the limited results of the BSS, a strategy should be launched to bring coherence and visibility to EU action in the region;
 2. Calls on the Commission to elaborate a strategy for the Black Sea region, thus defining an integrated EU approach to the region, with a detailed action plan, clear objectives, flagship initiatives and benchmarks; believes that the strategy should ensure coordination of activities and division of labour;
 3. Reiterates its call on the Commission to carry out regular review of the implementation of the strategy by establishing concrete monitoring, evaluation, follow-up and reporting mechanisms;
 4. Welcomes the launch of the Joint Operational Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin under ENPI and the high number of applications received; believes, however, that the slow rate of its functioning reflects the deficiencies of the current funding mechanisms;
 5. Is convinced, therefore, that the success of the strategy depends on the provision of appropriate and identifiable funding; calls for the creation of a specific budget line for the Black Sea Strategy, as well as for devising efficient disbursements methods;
 6. Stresses that adequate human resources must be devoted to the objectives of the new strategy, particularly by paying visible attention to it in the organisational structure and staffing of the EEAS;
 7. Considers that in order to provide visibility, strategic guidance and high-level coordination, ministerial meetings between the EU and the wider Black Sea region countries should be organised on a regular basis and include all actors in the region; believes that the Strategy for the Black Sea should be developed at all levels of regional cooperation; notes, therefore, the parliamentary cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea countries, welcomes the creation of the Black Sea Civil Society Forum and encourages strengthened cooperation among local authorities, civil society and business;
 8. Regards inclusiveness and regional ownership as important principles of the EU approach towards the region and sees Turkey and Russia as crucial partners in Black Sea regional cooperation, which should be appropriately engaged; believes that the dual role of

Bulgaria, Romania and Greece as both littoral States and EU Member States is essential to the success of EU policy in the Black Sea area;

9. Stresses the complementarities of the BSS and the Eastern Partnership, and calls on the Commission to make positive use of the differing approaches of the two initiatives; calls on the VP/HR to ensure that the EEAS effectively coordinates the various initiatives and instruments deployed by the EU in the wider Black Sea region;
10. Stresses that two main objectives should be pursued in the EU Strategy for the Black Sea Region: establishing peace and stability in the Black Sea area and providing for EU energy security; considers that good governance, energy, transport, environment, and economic and social development should constitute priority actions;

Security and good governance

11. Recalls that the Black Sea region is faced with considerable transnational challenges that cannot be ignored, such as protracted conflicts, bilateral disputes, closed borders and strategic rivalries leading to militarisation and proliferation of arms, weak institutions and governance and the deterioration of democratic rule, cross-border crime and trafficking, border and movement management, and deteriorated maritime security and safety;
12. Believes that the EU can and should play a bigger role in shaping the Black Sea security environment; calls for an enhanced EU involvement in the regional strategic dialogue, and cooperation with its strategic partners on security issues, as well as in conflict prevention and resolution; calls for cross-border crime and trafficking to be tackled in the Black Sea Strategy, as well as for a further strengthening of cooperation on border and movement management;
13. Calls on the EU to take initiatives to establish a regional legal framework and mechanisms to deal with the proliferation of arms in the Black Sea region, and to use the Integrated Maritime Policy to coordinate the activities of search, rescue and accident prevention at sea;
14. Believes that a security strategy for the Black Sea region should also incorporate the objectives of improving governance, democratic rule and state capabilities; calls on the Commission to mainstream initiatives on institution-building and democratic governance;

Energy, transport and environment

15. Considers energy, transport and environment cooperation to be key to the harmonious and sustainable development of the region; welcomes the launch of the Environment Partnership, while eagerly expecting the launch of the two other partnerships on transport and energy; calls for their swift and efficient implementation; is of the opinion that the development of a common legal framework at regional level would be of great benefit in terms of more effective cooperation and synergies on these issues; believes that the establishment of, and support for, professional and institutional networks could enhance the capacity for cooperative and efficient decision-making;
16. Supports the continued development of initiatives under the TRACECA and INOGATE

programmes; calls on the EU to strengthen further its support for infrastructure projects in the region, directly and through the coordination of other contributors and investors;

17. Recalls the EU's aim of diversifying routes and sources of supply; reiterates the importance of the Nabucco project and of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) transportation to Europe, in the form of the AGRI project and the development of LNG terminals in Black Sea ports; recalls the need for a common normative framework for promoting a transparent, competitive and rules-based gas market;

Economic, social and human development

18. Believes that the economic, social and human development of the region as a whole should be promoted; regards further liberalization of trade and intensification of intra-regional trade as essential to the economic development of the region; supports the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy aimed at the socio-economic development of maritime regions, but regrets that its Black Sea dimension is poorly developed; welcomes the results registered in cooperation on education, research and technology; further encourages the goal of promoting social development, people-to-people contacts and the development of a strong civil society;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Vice President/High Representative for the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and all the Black Sea countries.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I. Introduction

The strategic importance of the Black Sea region for the EU was recognized in 2007. In the context of Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the Black Sea became a partially internal sea of the EU. As developments in this region, strategically situated at the junction of Europe, Middle East and Central Asia, started having a direct impact on EU internal affairs, the EU acknowledged the need to reflect upon its stronger involvement in the area.

This resulted in the launch of a new EU policy approach towards the region, called the Black Sea Synergy. The Synergy was proposed by the European Commission in April 2007. It constitutes the current policy approach of the EU towards the Black Sea region and it was officially launched at high level and jointly by the EU and the Black Sea actors at the Kiev Ministerial Conference of the countries of the EU and the wider Black Sea area in February 2008.

According to the European Commission's definition, the Black Sea region encompasses ten countries: 3 EU Member-States (Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania), one candidate country (Turkey), 5 Eastern-European neighbors (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine) and Russia as a strategic partner.

The aim of the Black Sea Synergy is to develop regional cooperation between the EU and the region, as well as within the region. It is conceived as a flexible and complementary tool to the already existing EU bilateral relations with the countries of the region. It aims at fostering cooperation and synergies between the countries of the region with the goal of transforming the Black Sea region in a space of stability, security, democracy and prosperity. It suggests 13 fields of cooperation that would presuppose greater EU involvement in the region. The principles of inclusiveness and of regional ownership are at the core of the initiative.

The European Parliament expressed its position and support for the creation and the launch of the Black Sea Synergy in its Report of January 2008. In parallel, it called for the elaboration of a detailed Action Plan with concrete objectives and benchmarks, as well as of a monitoring and follow-up mechanism.

The last document issued by the EU on the Black Sea Synergy dates back to June 2008 and deals with the assessment of the first year of implementation of the Black Sea Synergy. After presenting the results in various fields, the EC proposes further development of the Black Sea Synergy through establishing measurable objectives, sectoral partnership to facilitate joint projects; creation of a Black Sea Civil Society Forum, strengthening of the academic and students networks, creation of an Institute for European Studies in the Black Sea region.

II. Rationale for the Report on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea

There are three main reasons, arguing for a new European Parliament report on the Black Sea region.

First of all, there is a need for an updated assessment of EU action in the Black Sea region, three years after devising the Black Sea Synergy. An analysis of the current situation indicates first of all to the lack of a clear, comprehensive and updated picture on the implementation results of the Black Sea Synergy. This is partly due to a lack of a regular reporting mechanism and of any reporting activity after 2008. It results in criticism of a fragmented approach being applied to EU's presence in the Black Sea region with only limited action being taken in specific fields of regional cooperation. Despite the recommendation of the European Parliament resolution of 2008, no Action Plan and no monitoring, evaluation and follow-up mechanisms have yet been established for the Black Sea Synergy.

The fragmentation phenomenon is also reflected in the financial field. The Black Sea Synergy is currently financed from various EU financial instruments (ENPI, IPA, ERDF) with little visibility of the available sources and management difficulties related to the need to coordinate various financial frameworks. It results in a lack of awareness on the means to access EU funds for regional cooperation in the Black Sea space. This spring even witnessed a decision by the EC to reallocate 1,5 million Euros from a pilot project on environment and development of the Black Sea region (out of a total of 2 million Euros or 75%) in EU 2010 Budget to another EU pilot project on the banana sector in ACP countries.

A second reason results from analysis of the concrete achievements that can be identified within the Black Sea Synergy, and which seem to be limited. One may recognize that the main merits of the Black Sea Synergy consisted in the upgrading of the Black Sea region as strategically important for the EU and in recognizing the need for greater involvement of the EU in this space. In the period 2007-2008, it also ensured the high-level attention to the issue at EU level, as well as political impetus for the launch and realization of this EU initiative in the Black Sea region.

A sectoral examination of the results leads to the conclusion that progress has been achieved in normative approximation and in rather technical fields such as environment, research or education. The most palpable result is probably the launch of the Environment Partnership in March 2010.

However, much less was achieved in the field of implementation, while sectors as stability, democracy and good governance seem to have witnessed less progress in a context of deterioration of the democratic rule in several Black Sea states and of the Russia-Georgia war in 2008. One may even conclude that challenges in these fields do not only persist, but have gained in intensity. Nevertheless, a Black Sea Civil Society Forum was created and seems to take place every year, while the EU demonstrated its ability to play an efficient role in conflict management during its mediation of the Russia-Georgia war.

Overall, this picture of fragmentation, absence of monitoring and limited results leads to the conclusion that the Black Sea Synergy has currently lost in visibility. This aspect is also intensified by the absence of any Ministerial Meeting after 2008, dedicated to this EU policy.

This leads your Rapporteur to the third reason that asks for a strategic vision, integrated approach and visibility of future EU action in the Black Sea region. Your Rapporteur is of the opinion that proposing the launch of an EU Strategy for the Black Sea is the best means to address the above-mentioned elements. Such a position also takes into account the current context of shaping EU Strategies for macro-regions, such as the one for Danube and one for

the Baltic Sea.

III. Main recommendations

While building upon the merits of the Black Sea Synergy, the EU Strategy for the Black Sea should put in place a stronger policy framework and boost EU involvement in the Black Sea region.

From the point of view of the policy framework, the Strategy shall ensure an integrated EU approach towards the Black Sea region. It shall also provide for the elaboration of an Action Plan with clear objectives, priority actions, benchmarks and flagship initiatives. In order to achieve efficient implementation, it is necessary to devise mechanisms for regular reporting, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up.

Your Rapporteur believes that attention shall also be focused on ensuring appropriate financial and human resources for the success of the Strategy. The need for dedicated and coagulated funding clearly results from the current analysis of the situation. Therefore, your Rapporteur suggests the creation of a separate EU budget line for the Black Sea Strategy. In the field of human resources, the future EEAS shall ensure sufficient staffing for an efficient development and management of the Strategy.

In order to ensure strategic guidance and high-level coordination, there is also a clear need to hold regular Ministerial Meetings between the EU and the countries of the Black Sea region. Such meetings shall involve all actors in the region and possibly follow the model of the Kiev Ministerial Conference in February 2008. Your Rapporteur is of the opinion that Turkey and Russia are crucial partners within this initiative, while Bulgaria, Romania and Greece shall take a leading role in their double role of EU Member-States and Black Sea littoral countries.

Finally, the dialogue and practical realization of the EU Strategy for the Black Sea shall be developed at all levels of regional cooperation. The parliamentary dimension and the local level of cooperation (among local authorities, civil society and business) are important in this sense.

Your Rapporteur believes that the main objectives of a Black Sea Strategy shall consist in building a space of peace, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region, as well as in ensuring EU energy security. As a consequence, security, good governance, energy, transport, environment, socio-economic and human development shall be considered as priority actions.

In the security field, the Black Sea region still faces numerous transnational challenges that cannot be ignored and need to be tackled at regional level. Protracted conflicts, bilateral disputes and closed borders, trends towards militarization and proliferation of arms, maritime surveillance, illicit trafficking and cross-border crime are among the main ones. They shall be better tackled by a robust, direct involvement of the EU.

A security dimension of the Black Sea shall also definitely include resolute actions for strengthening democratic rule, good governance and State capacity-building.

Regarding the fields of Energy, Transport and Environment, support of infrastructure projects and creation of common rules and frameworks shall constitute a priority. Your Rapporteur welcomes the launch of the Environment Partnership in March 2010 and the projects to establish two other Partnerships on Transport and Energy in the Black Sea region. It stresses however the need for their swift and efficient implementation.

Your Rapporteur attaches particular importance to the cooperation in the field of Energy in the Black Sea region. He is of the opinion that the aim of diversification of routes and sources of supply shall be further mainstreamed in the future Strategy. While stressing the importance of the Nabucco gas pipeline, he believes that Liquefied Gas Transportation is an important option for future development in the energy sector, in particular in the context of the economic crisis and of strained financial resources. Therefore, he underlines in the report the particular significance of the AGRI project and of development of LNG terminals in Black Sea ports. Last, but not least, further strengthening the framework of common norms and transparent rules on energy in the Black Sea region, on the basis of the Energy Community and the Energy Charter, is also essential.

Finally, economic, social and human development within the Black Sea region is an important premise for transforming the Black Sea in a stable and prosperous space. Though badly hit by the economic crisis, the Black Sea region has great economic growth and trade potential. Your Rapporteur believes that the Strategy shall focus on liberalizing trade and boosting intra-regional trade, proper diversification of economies and addressing economic discrepancies among regions. In the social affairs field, while recognizing the results obtained in education and research cooperation in the Black Sea region, your Rapporteur is of the opinion that further efforts shall be pursued, in particular in the fields of lifelong learning and adjustment of education to labour market requirements, as well as in increasing the scope of international exchanges and developing further networks among civil society.

Your Rapporteur also shares the opinion that EU's Integrated Maritime Policy could greatly benefit to an integrated development of the Black Sea region, and therefore insists on the proper development of the Black Sea dimension within the Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU.