

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0323/08
by Petru Filip (PPE-DE)
to the Council

Subject: The Insula Șerpilor and Black Sea regional cooperation

In view of the need for a coherent Black Sea regional policy and for the rapid definition of a holistic maritime policy (as stated in the report 'A Synergy for Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Guidelines for an EU Initiative'), in the framework of the crossborder cooperation programme for the Black Sea in the context of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the intention announced by Ukraine of unilaterally declaring the Insula Șerpilor inhabited territory offers serious cause for concern. The Insula Șerpilor is, as things stand, a bone of contention in the region, and, since 2004, it has been the object of a memoir deposited by Romania at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Under Article 121(3) of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay, 1982), the Insula Șerpilor (with an area of 17 ha) is considered a rock, and unless and until there is another ruling it retains that status. Nonetheless, the Kiev administration has this year set aside funds for completing improvements to the port area and opening a nature museum on the island. In addition, early last year the Ukrainian Parliament (Supreme Rada) gave the name of 'the white village' to a settlement on the island (consisting mostly of soldiers), and approved drilling work at a location 50 km away.

Can the Council state its position of principle on the matter? What concrete measures will be taken in the short and medium term in the light of that position?