

Thursday 17 January 2008

## A Black Sea Regional Policy Approach

P6\_TA(2008)0017

### European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2008 on a Black Sea Regional Policy Approach (2007/2101(INI))

(2009/C 41 E/07)

*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 Commission's Communication entitled 'Regional cooperation in the Black Sea area: State of play, perspectives for EU action encouraging its further development' (COM(1997)0597),
- having regard to the Commission's Communication on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2006)0726),
- having regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans adopted with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) signed with those States and expiring in 2008 or 2009,
- having regard to the PCA establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part, which entered into force on 1 December 1997 and expired in 2007,
- having regard to Council Decision 2006/35/EC of 23 January 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey<sup>(1)</sup> ('the Accession Partnership'),
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the South Caucasus,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2007 on the shipping disasters in the Kerch Strait in the Black Sea and the subsequent oil pollution<sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2008 on a more effective EU policy for South Caucasus: from promises to actions<sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 September 2007 entitled 'Towards a common European foreign policy on energy'<sup>(5)</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 45 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, the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0510/2007),

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 22, 26.1.2006, p. 34.

<sup>(2)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2007)0538.

<sup>(3)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2007)0625.

<sup>(4)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2008)0016.

<sup>(5)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2007)0413.

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- A. whereas the Black Sea region lies at the junction of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, characterised by close historical and cultural ties and great potential, but also immense diversities; 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, with whom the EU has agreed on a strategic partnership based on Four Common Spaces,
- B. whereas, with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU, the Black Sea has become, to some extent, the EU's internal sea and has therefore acquired a new dimension of strategic importance for the EU, leading to the multiplication of shared challenges and objectives, as well as to renewed opportunities for strengthened cooperation between the EU and the countries in the region, with a view to creating a genuine space of security, stability, democracy and prosperity,
- C. whereas the options for cooperation in the development and management of synergies in the Black Sea region are to be defined against the background of a great number of existing policies, formats and approaches towards the region,
- D. whereas the Commission proposed an initial strategy towards the Black Sea region in its abovementioned 1997 communication on regional cooperation in the Black Sea area,
- E. whereas the specific aspects of the EU's policy towards the South Caucasus area are covered in the abovementioned resolution of 17 January 2008 on that subject,
1. Welcomes the Commission's Communication entitled 'Black Sea Synergy — A New Regional Cooperation Initiative' and the aim of enhancing cooperation with and within the Black Sea region by supplementing the existing bilateral policies with a new regional approach; notes, in particular, that the energy security issues and the accession negotiations with Turkey, as well as the forthcoming expiry of the PCAs and the negotiations on their future, place regional cooperation in the Black Sea area among the top priorities of the Union's foreign policy agenda; considers that the future development of the Black Sea would benefit greatly from an independent Black Sea strategy in the long term;
  2. Underlines that the Black Sea region needs a more coherent, sustainable and strategic response, leading to the creation of a Black Sea policy, alongside the Northern Dimension Policy and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
  3. Considers that, in order to adopt a coherent, effective and result-oriented regional policy approach, the Communication has to be followed by further consistent steps on the part of the EU to encourage a genuine regional dimension tailored to this area; is also concerned by the fact that the results of the Black Sea regional strategy pursued since 1997 have not been properly evaluated; calls on the Commission to prepare a thorough assessment of previous and ongoing activities and to present the results to Parliament;
  4. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to provide for an initial evaluation of the Black Sea Synergy in 2008, and calls upon it to put forward concrete proposals for fostering regional cooperation and genuine partnership in the Black Sea area, based on the results of its evaluation and taking into account the recommendations contained in this and other relevant resolutions adopted by Parliament; encourages the Commission to use the experiences gained in the Northern Dimension when drafting any future review or extension of its Black Sea strategy;
  5. Stresses that the Black Sea regional policy approach must be used neither to provide an alternative to EU membership nor to define the frontiers of the EU; considers, however, that the objectives specified herein should represent an integral and coherent part of the broader EU foreign policy towards the neighbouring countries and countries participating in the Black Sea regional strategy;

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6. Believes that regional cooperation in the Black Sea region should involve the EU, ENP countries, candidate country Turkey and Russia as equal partners; believes that only by gradually creating a feeling among the Black Sea countries of shared responsibility for the region's common challenges, including security issues, will it be possible to fulfil the full potential of Europe's involvement in the region; calls on the Council and the Commission to actively involve all Black Sea countries in the policy approach;

7. Considers that the new regional approach should be targeted at a number of priority areas for which the Commission should provide a detailed action plan envisaging concrete objectives, benchmarks and follow-up and constituting a basis for enhancing the EU's involvement in the region as well as intra-regional cooperation; underlines that the EU must concentrate on a limited set of priority objectives and avoid dispersion and duplication of efforts;

### ***Key priority fields of cooperation***

#### *Security challenges*

8. Underlines that the unresolved conflicts persisting in the Black Sea region constitute a major challenge to the stability and sustainable development of the region, as well as an important obstacle in the process of fostering regional cooperation; calls therefore for more active and comprehensive EU involvement in the ongoing efforts to resolve the conflicts, in accordance with international law and the principles of territorial integrity, and for a deeper engagement on the part of the EU in conflict management and peace-keeping operations; considers that the EU has a key role to play in contributing to the culture of understanding, dialogue and confidence-building in the region;

9. Takes note of the substantial military presence of Russia in the region, in the form of the Black Sea fleet, which is stationed in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol; points out that the 1997 agreement between Russia and Ukraine concerning the stationing of the Black Sea fleet expires in 2017; notes that this as yet unresolved matter has already created some friction between the Russian and Ukrainian governments; encourages the EU to engage in this strategically important issue and to work more closely with the governments of Russia and Ukraine;

10. Emphasises that the EU needs to define a stable set of priorities in the area of freedom, security and justice within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy, aimed at establishing harmonisation and compatibility in entire policy areas;

11. Having regard to the high visa charges applied for some neighbouring countries, following the enlargement of the Schengen Area as of 21 December 2007, urges the Council and the Commission to review the visa fees and to lower them to an acceptable level for ordinary citizens of countries participating in the ENP or in a Strategic Partnership with the EU;

12. Recalls the need to address the challenges posed by transnational crime, trafficking and illegal migration, whilst fully respecting the non-refoulement principle; underlines that measures in this field must be coupled with appropriate measures to enhance mobility in order to stimulate people-to-people contacts and thereby spread European values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights; urges the Council and the Commission, therefore, to conclude visa-facilitation and readmission agreements with those Black Sea countries that do not yet enjoy them, as well as to promote mobility by all other possible means, including the signing of mobility partnerships with ENP countries; stresses, in particular, the need for efficient visa facilitation for local cross-border traffic and for specific population groups such as students, businessmen and civil society actors;

13. Stresses the importance of further developing cross-border and border management cooperation, with a view to attaining the objectives with regard to both security and fluidity of movement; considers that the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) provides important experience in tackling security challenges through multilateral cooperation, and believes that it should be further strengthened and applied as an example of border cooperation;

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14. Stresses the need for in-depth analysis of the specific security situations and challenges in the various states in the Black Sea region; supports the proposal that Europol be given a mandate and resources to produce analytic work relating to the region, in particular in the field of migration;

*Promotion of political stability and effective democracy*

15. Considers that a new Black Sea policy approach cannot be limited to economic cooperation but should also aim at creating an area marked by sustainable democracy, good governance and the rule of law, and underlines, in particular, the importance of political and judicial reform and effective implementation of commitments; stresses that fostering respect for human rights, democracy and fundamental freedoms is one of the main pillars of the EU's external policy, and emphasises the need to mainstream those values respectively both in bilateral relations and in the regional approach, irrespective of the degree of willingness shown by partner governments; calls upon the European Union to address the issues of regional cooperation in these fields within the human rights dialogues and consultations with the Black Sea countries, as well as within multilateral fora; encourages the Commission to make full use of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and of the Black Sea Synergy in order to promote regional cooperation among civil societies;

16. Welcomes the initiative of creating a Black Sea Euroregion aimed at fostering regional cooperation through cooperation among regional and local actors; stresses the importance of bottom-up projects and of cross-border cooperation at local level in the process of building a genuine space of democracy and effective governance in the Black Sea area;

17. Stresses the crucial importance of establishing and developing good neighbourly relations among the countries of the Black Sea region and between those countries and their neighbours, based on mutual respect, territorial integrity, non-interference in each others' internal affairs and the prohibition of the use of force or threats to use force, as fundamental principles for fostering regional cooperation; underlines the significance of close dialogue with civil society and of intercultural dialogue in this field and calls upon the Commission to further promote such dialogue, particularly in the context of the 2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue, with a view to creating a culture of mutual tolerance, respect for diversity, and regional dialogue and cooperation;

*Cooperation in the field of energy, transport and the environment*

18. Notes the strategic importance of the Black Sea region as a production and transmission area for diversification and security of energy supply for the EU; calls on the Council and the Commission to urgently consider increasing their practical support for infrastructure projects of strategic importance; reiterates its support for the creation of new infrastructure and viable transport corridors diversifying both suppliers and routes, such as the trans-Caspian/trans-Black Sea energy corridor and the Nabucco, Constanța-Trieste and AMBO pipelines, as well as other planned gas and oil transit projects crossing the Black Sea and the Inogate (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe) and Traceca (Transport Corridor Europe — Caucasus — Asia) projects connecting the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions; calls for social and environmental impact assessments to analyse the impact of the construction of such new transit infrastructures;

19. Believes that the Black Sea Synergy should constitute an adequate framework for promoting market reforms in the region aimed at creating competitive, predictable and transparent energy markets;

20. Considers that regional coherence would greatly benefit from initiatives to enhance physical links between all Black Sea littoral states; believes that cooperation in the fields of transport and the environment should not be limited to energy issues but should provide a comprehensive approach taking into account the needs of the region; notes the plans to set up the Black Sea ring highway; stresses the importance of the Black Sea and of the Danube as strategic transportation routes in the region;

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21. Emphasises the importance of the Danube as one of the main transport axes and economic arteries connecting the EU and the Black Sea region; considers, therefore, that the sustainable development of the Danube and its economic potential to link the countries surrounding the Black Sea should be among the EU's priorities in the region; asks the Commission to come forward with a study exploring possible concrete initiatives in this respect, including environmental concerns; insists that, if full advantage is to be taken of the EU's access to the Black Sea, it will be vital to develop the harbour infrastructures at the EU's Black Sea ports (Bourgas, Constanța, Mangalia and Varna) as well as those located at the Danube estuary, with a view to ensuring intermodal transport;

22. Is deeply concerned about the environmental situation in the Black Sea region, in particular that of the Black Sea, affected by uncontrolled pollution and aggravated by numerous ecological accidents, as well as that of the Danube and its delta; underlines the need for enhanced implementation of multilateral environmental agreements in the region and for the inclusion of an environmental evaluation in all regional projects, and calls for increased cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea countries in order to tackle the whole range of environmental challenges in the region;

23. Is particularly concerned about uncontrolled oil pollution and its impact on wildlife; stresses the need for cooperation going beyond the support provided by the Commission via its Monitoring and Information Centre, particularly in the field of prevention of oil spills, with a special focus on the reinforcement of maritime transport safety for tankers;

24. Draws attention to the Danube delta, which hosts unique habitats for species of flora and fauna; stresses the strong need for an environmental impact assessment of infrastructures such as the Bistraya channel between Romania and Ukraine;

25. Calls on the Commission to apply the approach of the Dablas Task Force (for the Danube and the Black Sea) in order to resolve the environmental problems, focusing not only on the Danube but also on the Dniester and Dnieper river basins;

#### *Trade and economic cooperation*

26. Points out the uneven, albeit strong, economic growth in the entire region, but draws attention to the fact that growth is more sustained in the oil and gas exporting countries; points to the fragility of the private sector in many countries bordering the Black Sea; stresses the importance of building a space of economic opportunities and prosperity in the Black Sea region for its population and trading partners; underlines the need to improve the investment climate, for both local and international companies, in particular by stepping up the fight against corruption and fraud, and to promote market economy reforms aimed at increasing competitiveness and economic attractiveness, creating diversified economies, and providing for sustainable growth, as well as social justice and coherence; encourages harmonisation and further liberalisation measures and supports the creation of a free trade area in accordance with WTO principles; believes that the EU, as a major economic partner of the Black Sea countries, has a leading role to play in promoting the abovementioned goals and in encouraging the region to take the necessary steps;

27. Takes into account the significant role of coastal and maritime tourism as a major catalyst for the development of the Black Sea region in terms of trade and economic growth; stresses the need to further develop tourism infrastructure and to encourage diversification of tourism products, thus protecting traditional means of livelihood, making better use of natural resources (e.g. geothermal resources, which offer important business opportunities) and providing for improvement of the quality of life in the region; stresses that facilitation of visa regimes in the neighbourhood will encourage mobility and foster trade and economic activity; believes that the Black Sea Synergy should constitute an adequate framework for promoting the development of tourism in the Black Sea region;

28. Notes inter-regional initiatives such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway project; believes that this initiative opens the way for better economic and political integration of that part of the world into the European and international economy and that it will contribute to economic and trade development in the region; stresses, however, that the project bypasses the existing and fully operative rail line in Armenia; urges the South Caucasus republics and Turkey to pursue effectively policies of regional economic integration and to refrain from any short-sighted and politically motivated regional energy and transportation projects which violate ENP principles of sound development;

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*Education, training and research*

29. Underlines the importance of enhancing intercultural dialogue and calls upon the Commission to further promote it;

30. Stresses the need to facilitate people-to-people contacts by promoting cooperation in the fields of education, training and research via existing and available EU programmes (Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Seventh Research Framework Programme); invites the EU and the Black Sea countries to step up their cooperation in these fields;

31. Underlines the importance of attracting researchers from the Black Sea countries to the EU, by simplifying procedures related to the granting of work permits, *inter alia* through the blue card system;

***Institutional and financial aspects***

32. Favours a leading role for the EU Member States of the region in promoting enhanced cooperation with and within the region; considers that Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, as EU Member States in the Black Sea region, can and should lead the way in this respect; underlines the special role to be played by these Member States in the transfer of expertise and know-how through the Twinning, TAIEX and Sigma programmes; believes that full use should be made of the EU's experience in promoting regional cooperation in other adjacent external spaces, in particular within the Northern Dimension, in order to exchange practices and lessons learnt;

33. Underlines the importance of Russia's and Turkey's positions in the Black Sea region for the purposes of promoting regional cooperation; considers it important for the success of the Black Sea regional cooperation to involve these countries in a constructive way, alongside all the other rim States;

34. Recalls that a number of regional cooperation mechanisms are already in place in the Black Sea area; underlines, therefore, the need for the EU and the Black Sea countries to coordinate activities and prevent duplication of effort; considers that strengthening the various regional organisations and initiatives, such as the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue, the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development and other sectoral organisations, according to their specific expertise, and strengthening cooperation with them, possibly in the framework of a new structure, could provide an appropriate framework for creating synergies; believes that the political dimension of the dialogue and cooperation with and within the Black Sea region should also be further developed;

35. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has recently obtained BSEC observer status and takes note of the existing relations between the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC; considers it important to further encourage the parliamentary dimension of the cooperation between the European Parliament and the parliaments of the Black Sea countries;

36. Stresses the need to develop cooperation in the Black Sea Region also at the non-governmental level; in this regard, calls on the Commission to support the setting-up of an NGO platform for the Black Sea with the aim of creating a framework for exchanges between the civil societies of the region, to enhance awareness of the common problems and to contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the EU's policies for the region;

37. Calls for a rational use of Community financial instruments through better coordination of the ENPI, the Structural Funds and the pre-accession funds available to the region; calls on the Commission, acting in cooperation with the beneficiary States, to lay down a general reporting system before the resources are disbursed, with a view to monitoring and assessing the extent to which the use of those resources is sustainable, efficient, and in accordance with general EU policy objectives;

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38. Approves the doubling of the financial resources made available under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the funding of cross-border projects; calls for the principles governing the Structural Funds, in particular partnership, sustainability, efficiency, non-discrimination and decentralisation, to be applied to the use of these financial resources; calls on the Commission to inform Parliament of the implementation of these funds and of progress made, by means of short bi-annual reports;

39. Calls on the Commission to make the decentralised financial instrument Small Project Funds available for people-to-people projects in the area of cross-border cooperation and to make special efforts to encourage the use of that instrument;

40. Stresses the need to reinforce capacity-building among local and regional stakeholders in the Black Sea region as regards programming and project preparation and implementation, in order to ensure efficient management of Community financial instruments;

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41. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the governments and parliaments of all Black Sea countries.

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## Kenya

P6\_TA(2008)0018

### European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2008 on Kenya

(2009/C 41 E/08)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the preliminary statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Kenya of 1 January 2008,
- having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning the African Union mediation efforts in Kenya of 11 January 2008,
- having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, 2007,
- having regard to the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, 2002,
- having regard to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, commemorated at the United Nations on 27 October 2005,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (the Cotonou Agreement) and amended in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005, in particular Articles 8 and 9 thereof,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,