NATO and EU in the context of Energy security and Global commons
(The situation in Ukraine - a case study for the Black sea region)

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Abstract **This article aims at focusing on the complex character of security threats and challengesand the need of NATO and especially EU strategic documents' modernization in the field of security and defense. The main accents are given to the Energy security and Global commonswhich have strategic importance with economic and military impact. Those issues reveal the global interdependence between countries from the access to viable resources as well as the level of Europe's dependence on Russia energy supply, keeping in mind that 22/28 EU Member states are also NATO members. The situation in Ukraine is presented as a case study for the countries from the wider Black sea region, relying also on the experience with Georgia and generating conclusions about the Euro-Atlantic integration in the Region, the frozen conflicts, which could be perceived as a buffer zone between Russia and Europe and the strategic approach needed from EU and NATOin the context of the Black sea geopolitical dynamic.**

Index Terms: **CSDP, NATO, Ukraine, wider Black sea, energy security, global commons, strategy, frozen conflicts, globalization, security threats and challenges.**
JEL: **F15, F35.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The energy security and global commons arerelated to the complex character of security threats, comprising: climate change, competition for access to resources and the necessity to adequate response to the challenges of globalization. For this reason in time of strategic rethinking and globalized world NATO and EU should pay attention to those topics.

In 21st century due to the high competition for access of EU, NATO and other international players to key resources, mainly oil, natural gas and global commons, as well as to the free water, air and ground transportation, the security and defense issues acquire strategic importance and accumulate higher expectations about their solution.

The crisis in Ukraine, provoked by the Russian military intervention and the annexation of Crimea, marks the beginning of a new confrontation and a pressure over Black sea countries in the context of a battle for geostrategic advantages and control of energy resources' providers, oil

and natural gas transportation corridors as well as over the ground, maritime and air transport.

The increasing need of energy supply diversification and of lower energy dependence from Russia, make the wider Black sea region an important strategic energy corridor, a cross point of Roads, coming from North to the South and from East to the West. The main oil and natural gas projects describe in a clear manner the geopolitical dynamics of the interests in the Region. For this reason the energy diversification represents an attempt for the strategic balanceachievement.

II. NATO AND EU - ENERGY SECURITY AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

From EU point of view
The Energy resources were into the heart of European integration. Today they represent a test for the EU geopolitical positioning, taking into consideration the low levels of resource availability and the need of energy supply diversification.In 1950, [i]Robert Schuman declared that he wants to create 'solidarity' between countries in strategic industries for the production of coal and steel, making war in Europe 'makewarnot only unthinkable butmaterially impossible'.

If we should shortly describe the current situation, we will have the following picture: today there is a European Security Strategy, created 12 years ago and updated in 2008, followed by three enlargements of the Community with 8 new Member States, five years after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, which created a new legal framework and overall restructuring of thecommon foreign and the common security and defense policy.

The new global threats, challenges and insecurity in a more dependent world as well as the concrete realities in immediate geographical proximity to EU borders shall be taken into consideration, in the context of the needed modernization of European security strategy. If Europe wants to play a key role in shaping the future global order, the creation of a comprehensive EU strategic document in the field of security and defense has an incremental role. It should include specific themes as the energy security and global commons, which have economic and military dimension and impact.

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[ii]The high degree of interdependence among Member States, due to the policy of integration, of economic and social cohesion, of interconnected infrastructure in transport, energy, information technology and other areas suggests managing the processes before taking appropriate decisions, which is associated with higher degree of confidence, a close contact and exchange of information and agreement on strategic priorities in different sectors. In this regard, a potential initiation of European defense semester to be coordinated by the European Defense Agency, similar to the one associated with the new EU economic governance, would be an important moment in the definition and fulfillment of the EU level of ambition.

Keeping in mind that 22/28 EU Member states are also NATO members and that they share the same theatre of operations, if we have to describe in numbers the current situation in the field of energy, we will have the following results: in 2014 EU imports 53% of the energy it consumes. The costs for energy supply for EU amount more than 1 billion euro per day or 400 billion per year, which represents more than 1/5 from the whole EU imports. The dependence of Europe is clear as the Union [iii]imports almost 90% of its crude oil, 66% of its natural gas, 42% of its solid fuels such as coal and 40% of its nuclear fuel. The energy security concerns all member states, but the most sensitive and dependent are the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe.[iv]In six EU Member states, Russia is the only external supplier for their entire gas imports and three of them use natural gas for more than a quarter of their total energy needs. In 2013 energy supplies from Russia accounted for 39% of EU natural gas imports or 27% of EU gas consumption; Russia exported 71 % of its gas to Europe.[v]70% of the whole Russian export is related to the natural gas and oil exportation.At the same time the energy demand worldwide is expected to increase by 27% by 2030 with important changes to energy supply and trade flows. The EU is expected to rely on natural gas imports which amount will increase from 66% today to 80% in 2030.

The importance of the energy security issues for the EU is demonstrated with the adoption ofthe European Energy Security Strategy. In 2009 the Third Energy Package was adopted, focusing on the liberalisation of energy markets in the Member States [vi]andunbundling the operation of gas pipelines and electricity networks from the business of providing gas or generating power.

In this way large companies will not be allowed to produce energy and at the same time to own the energy networks. The objectives of the new law package are to guarantee: the consumers' choice, investments and security of supply.

The [vii]Strategy sets out areas where decisions need to be taken or concrete actions implemented in the short, medium and longer term to respond to energy security concerns. It is based on eight key pillars that together promote closer cooperation beneficial for all Member States while respecting national energy choices, and are underpinned by the principle of solidarity: 1. Immediate actions aimed at increasing the EU's capacity to overcome a major disruption during the winter 2014/2015; 2. Strengthening emergency/solidarity mechanisms including coordination of risk assessments and contingency plans; and protecting strategic infrastructure; 3. Moderating energy demand; 4. Building a well-functioning and fully integrated internal market; 5. Increasing energy production in the European Union; 6. Further developing energy technologies; 7. Diversifying external supplies and related infrastructure; 8. Improving coordination of national energy policies and speaking with one voice in external energy policy.

In summary the Strategy, presented in May 2014 by the European Commission, proposes diversification of energy resources and supply, decrease of energy consumption, investments in renewable energy resources and reinforcement of cooperation between the countries.

In the context of energy security and global commons shall be taken into account a key moment in NATO's strategic concept revealing that [viii]*"Some NATO countries will become more dependent on foreign energy suppliers and in some cases, on foreign energy supply and distribution networks for their energy needs. As a larger share of world consumption is transported across the globe, energy supplies are increasingly exposed to disruption.*

From NATO point of view

The energy security issues become more and more significant in the common security debate, attracting the attention of NATO due to certain factors: [ix]Europe's growing dependency on oil and gas; the growing energy needs of rising powers such as China and India; the depletion of fossil fuels expected to set in after the middle of this century; an intensifying debate on climate change; and a renewed interest of many nations in civilian nuclear energy.

Additional factors include armed threats to energy supplies, be they through terrorist attacks or piracy, and the political instability in many energy-producing states – including attempts by some of these states to (ab)use energy supplies as a political weapon.

Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania are NATO member states, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova are members of NATO initiative Partnership for Peace. The membership and relations of those countries to NATO, attract the attention of the North Atlantic Alliance to the instability, threats and challenges in front of the Black sea region and energy security in particular.

NATO and EU have 22 common member states.Frequently theirway of perceiving energy security as a national problem, a problem of their national economies represents one of the big challenges in front of the both organizations. It's difficult for member states to surrender their sovereignty in the field of energy. In spite of the European Commission' callsfor the member states to speak with "one voice" on energy issues, to have a better coordination and Common European geopolitical and economic vision in order to decrease the level of energy

dependence from external suppliers, the countries prefer to conduct bilateral relations and to sign bilateral contracts.

Given the complex character of security risks and threats in the globalized world, it's typical for them that none is purely military and/or can be addressed though purely military means.

In this regard it can be noticed that the energy security influences more and more the whole European security. In spite of the fact that frequently energy security is observed from national, economic, infrastructural and European point of view, it is also part of the NATO focus.

The energy security became a subject of NATO observations due to the confrontation between Russia and Belarus in 2005 and between Russia and Ukraine in 2006 and 2009, which respectivelyprovoked thesuspension of oil and gas delivery to Europe. The interest in the field of the North Atlantic Alliance gradually increased and it was a subject to discussion during the NATO Summitsin [x]Riga 2006, in [xi]Bucharest 2008, in [xii]Strasbourg –Kehl 2009, in [xiii]Lisbon 2010, in[xiv]Chicago in 2012 and in [xv]Wales 2014.

If we should summarize the main points, which coincidence in the most of Summit declarations and the NATO's strategic concept, we could conclude that the role of the Alliance in the field of energy security is related to the following challenges and sphere of action:

Challenges which shape the future security environment in the field of NATO interests:
- the increase of energy demands and a larger share of world energy consumption;
- the increase of some NATO member states' dependency from external energy suppliers, in some cases, from foreign energy supply and distribution networks for their energy needs;
- the suspension of energy supply from Russia (oil and gas);
- the need of a guarantee of vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend;
- -the need of stability of energy supply and of interconnection of the energy distribution networks;
- the need of diversification of routes, suppliers and energy resources.

NATO's sphere of action in the context of energy security:
- to consult on the most immediate risks in the field of energy security;
- to share information and intelligence fusion;
- to further develop the NATO information activities;
- to project stability;
- to develop the capacity, to support and protect the critical energy infrastructure, transit zones and lines;
- to support consequence management of certain risks;
- to work towards significantly improving the energy efficiency of the military;

- to integrate the element of energy security in NATO policies and activities;
- to achieve a progress in international and regional cooperation;
- to cooperate with partners and consult with Allies on the basis of strategic assessments and emergency planning;
- to have NATO added value in energy security field, entirely coordinated with the International community' efforts, which is characterized by a range of organizations, specialized in energy security;
- NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence Vilnius.

On the basis of the above mentioned moments related to the energy security in the NATO Summit declarations from Riga /2006/ to Wales /2014/, it could be noticed that the main departure point in the field, containing more concrete information about the added value of the Alliance was initiated during the Bucharest Summit Declaration.

The two key accents of NATO added value in energy security field could be presented as follow:
- Accent on the security of critical infrastructure, especially in transit and energy producing countries as well as on the security of transport corridors and on the analysis of terrorist attacks. In principle this is part of the Members states' obligations, but NATO could be involved with civil experts and military means in the monitoring of the maritime routes and territorial waters upon a request from the Allie. In addition the NATO department for Civil Emergency planning can help in the cases of natural and/or man-made disasters (for example oil spill);
- Accent on [xvi]projecting stability, which means first and foremost, shaping the reform processes in NATO's broader strategic environment. The emphasis is on political dialogue and military cooperation with partner countries in Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and the Gulf region. This group comprises energy producers, transit countries and consumers. Consequently, energy security features in many individual cooperation programs.

The North Atlantic Alliance' activities could be summarized in [xvii]five main groups:

Fig. 1. The North Atlantic Alliance' activities

However NATO still mainly acts as a forum for consultations, in a very delicate and cautious manner due to:

- its organisational character (military alliance);

- the nature of energy issues, which have national, economic, infrastructural and political dimension and are part of the activities of national, private and international organisations;

- the bilateral nature of contractual relations in the field;

- the different perceptions about Russia of Central and Eastern Europe countries and those in Western Europe.

In this regard the question about the possible implementation of Art.5 of North Atlantic Treaty in the context of energy security has no clear answer. The energy securityis part of the Art. 4 consultations process, [xviii]except in the cases of a large scale attack on NATO command and control systems or energy networks when art.5 could be mobilized.

At the moment, in the context of security and defense issues in Europe, [xix]NATO remains the leading organization, implementing "hard policy" in security area (the Allies depend on art.5). Through its potential to combine civil and military capabilities as well as to operate on territories where NATO couldn't do it due to political reasons, EU has the opportunity to play an important role and to fulfil the existing vacuum. NATO is a transatlantic military union while EU is a political union of European member states which have the common goal to turn it into a comprehensive actor, deploying a set of instruments for external action, humanitarian aid and civil and military capabilities in the cases of military crisis management.

Having in mind the above mentioned and that the overall restructuring of the common foreign and the common security and defence policy coincides with NATO's strategic concept, the prerequisites for a sustainable culture of cooperation between NATO and EU became obvious.

Better partnership at global level will ensure better knowledge and awareness of regional conditions, which are crucial to find the most appropriate solutions and responses to the already existing and future security challenges (as it could be the case in the Black Sea).

III. NATO AND EU - THE GLOBAL COMMONS AND THEIR STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The global commonsare not a new topic, but with the new global threats and challenges, it becomes more actual and relevant. In this regard it should be taken into consideration in the context of strategic documents' modernization in the field of security and defense.

In the contemporary global geopolitical environment no single state couldconsider that its security depends only on the predisposition of the neighboring countries. The security of every country is closely related to the security of the others, which underlie the collective security organization - UN and its Security Council. In this sense the national and collective defensecould not be assured

only via border protection of a certain territory, but taking into consideration the capability to project security in global commons.

The so called global commons [xx]refers to resource domains or areas that lie outside of the political reach of any one nation State. In this regard the international law determines 4 global domains: High Seas; the Atmosphere; Antarctica; and, Outer Space. Despite efforts by governments or individuals to establish property rights or other forms of control over most natural resources, the Global Commons have remained an exception.

Those domains are not under the control of any one state, but they are open to use from different countries, international organizations and even from individuals. Their regulation is based on the international treaties and agreements and not being under the sovereignty of any country, they could be considered as a linkage in the international system. As it has been already mentioned,

the access to global commons has economic and military dimension and impact. For this reason they are directly connected to the military capabilities for national and collective interest defense, which guarantee the free movement of goods, people, communications and data – a prerequisite for normal functioning of each country, its economy and citizens' security.

Independently of the end of Cold war and the dominant economic and political tendencies of integration in Europe, the following challenges are still on the agenda: 1/the world is still unstable;2/there are still aconfrontation, rivalry and crisis in different world regions; 3/the balance-of-power concept is stillrelevant for some of the developing countries; 4/the principles of democracy and rule of law are still abstract notions for some countries and others use them to legitimize their non- democratic goals and actions. In this regard given the complex character of security and defense threats, it is needed to have a strategic vision, flexible and pragmatic approach as well as resources availability for guarantying the countries' prosperity and the security of their citizens.

Part of this strategic vision should be the global commons. The states vulnerability isincreasing due to: the global warming; the development of technologies, global economy and high level of interdependence; the larger share of worldconsumption of natural and energy resources and the respective competition in the field; migration, pandemics and non - military character of security challenges.

The domains of High Seas; the Atmosphere; Antarctica; Outer Space and cyber space are interrelated, but each of them disposes with specific characters. For this reason in order to have a full picture they should be observed separately as well as together. Most of the NATO and EU member states have open, global oriented economies, highly dependent respectively on the free access of Global commons.

The indicated sequence from the 4 domains enumeration listreveals the historical consecution of their development and regulatory regimes, which regulate their free use, [xxi]being guided by the principle of the common heritage of

humankind - the open access doctrine or the mare liberum (free sea for everyone) in the case of the High Seas. In the context of Outer Space and cyber space the international law is very limited.

In the globalized world NATO and EU face the security challenges in the global economic system. In this context, in order to act globally, NATO notes in its [xxii] strategic concept that: "All countries are increasingly reliant on the vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend. They require greater international efforts to ensure their resilience against attack or disruption".

Emphasizing on the need of [xxiii]strategic rethink in the field of security and defense, followed by new strategic documents of EU and NATO, which to respond to the new realities, it should be noted what the strategic importance of global commons is.

More than ever the defense and economy of EU and NATO member states are highlydependent on the free exchange of information, free movement of people, goods and services in those domains.

In spite of the fact that there is certain justness in the ideas for peace and security about the usage of global commons, it could not be concluded that they are accepted in a same manner from all the players at the international stage, especially from the networks of global and regional terrorists, organized crime groups, involved in smuggling people, drugs, weapons, firearms, munitions as well as the extreme nationalist political organizations.

At the same time there are many nations that didn't explore and define their interests in the field of free access to global commons. The situation becomes worst due to the global warmingwhich reflects the state of the seas and oceans, respectively the fish catch in international waters and the derivation of natural and energy resources, causing environmental problems.

In the strategic document - Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense ", representing a strategic guidance for the future development of American armed forces, notes that: [xxiv]*Global security and prosperity are increasingly dependent on the free flow of goods shipped by air or sea. State and non-state actors pose potential threats to access in the global commons, whether through opposition to existing norms or other anti-access approaches. Both state and non-state actors possess the capability and intent to conduct cyber espionage and, potentially, cyber-attacks on the United States, with possible severe effects on both our military operations and our homeland. Growth in the number of space-faring nations is also leading to an increasingly congested and contested space environment, threatening safety and security. The United States will continue to lead global efforts with capable allies and partners to assure access to and use of the global commons, both by strengthening international norms of responsible behavior and by maintaining relevant and interoperable military capabilities.*

[xxv]For the past several decades, an overwhelming advantage in technology and resources has given the U.S. military an unmatched ability to project power worldwide. This has allowed it to guarantee U.S. access to the global commons, assure the safety of the homeland, and underwrite security commitments around the globe. U.S. grand strategy assumes that such advantages will continue indefinitely. In fact, they are already starting to disappear.

The current situation is different due to the multipolar world and respective deconcentration of power. The US advantages decrease, because countries such as China, Russia, India, Brazil and others started also intervening in the management of the global commons. In this regard US initiated a process in the framework of NATO of roles, missions and tasks assessment in the field.

The role and responsibilities of EU and NATO concerning the free access to global commons, could be well defined if each domain is individually analyzed, differentiating the separate threats, challenges and recommendations. In the context of a need of an updated or a new EU security strategy, taking into account the global commons management and current realities, the following recommendations should be noted:

1/The navy plays incremental role for conducting joint operations with different character as well as for the pure naval operations. Being a political and military Alliance with a naval history and shared values, NATO has to play a key role in the High seas domain.

Part of NATO member states are one of the oldest nations with traditions in shipping. In this regard NATO shall continue contributing to the practical implementation of the adopted in [xxvi]1982UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Despite of its weaknesses, this convention plays a stabilizing role in the international law, assuring of all countries a free access to the seas and oceans;

2/[xxvii]Four of the five nations that are making territorial claims to portions of the Arctic(Canada, the United States, Norway, and Denmark) are NATO members. The fifth, Russia, has had special partnership status within NATO since 2002. This may be a further opportunity for NATO to support legal remedies by serving as a place for these nations to broach their interests and concerns about the future of the Arctic. The more Alliance members can cooperate to solve mutual problems, the more NATO can exercise "leadership by attraction," demonstrating the value of supporting a regime like maritime law, and the benefits of cooperating with like-minded nations to accomplish goals.

The large scale demandresources decreases the opportunities for cooperation while increases the competition as well as the access of competitors to the global commons.

NorthContinental Shelves in Asia, Europe and North America become more attractive for access due to the global warming, the progress in deep-sea mining techniques, the rise in prices of mineral resources. In addition the behavior of the fifth nation provokes inquiries in the field. In August 2007, [xxviii]the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Arctic region is growing, as symbolized by the planting of a Russian flag on the sea bed below the North Pole.

In this regard the situation in the high Northdescribes the liaison between the global warming, resources deficits, progress in technologies and the security of NATO.

In the context of the need of new or updated strategic documents in the field of security and defense, the Arctic domain should be consideredas a potential conflict zone, which could be neutralized by the principles of cooperation, mutual problem and claims solving, respecting the international law.

3/The more the Alliances coordinate their efforts to control the Air traffic, the better they will provide access to international airspace. The key question is what should be the role of NATO and its level of participation in the security of international airspace. From EU point of view, all the member states have to respectthe initiative Single European Sky and the delegated permissions to the organization for Eurocontrol in the field.

Taking into account that the potential opponents develop contemporary technologies (such as air drones) and different kind of barriers to the free access to the air domain,NATO should be prepared in the cases of response needed for collective defense in the field.

The high level of Alliances' interdependence, the uncompleted level of military compatibility between all member states, the further need of joint intelligent information exchange, the change in the air force strategies from short range missiles tolong range surface-to-air (SAM) and advanced generation air-to-air missile as well as the vulnerability of Anti-Ballistic Missile and Anti-aircraft warfare (AAW) systems, suppose NATO to determine its:

- role in the field;
- level of preparedness and readinessin order to be adequate to the changing security environment despite of the defense budget restrictions in the member states;
- level of trust and intelligent information sharing between the Allies, taking into account the political contradictions between Turkey and Cyprus;
- conclusions and lessons learnt from the so called modern wars;
- a better communication strategy to Russia, concerning Deployment of NATO anti-ballistic missile systems in Eastern Europe which is to protect the territory and the population in Europe, including Russia, not being against it.

4/Concerning the Outer space it's of key importance to be assured the protection of ground-based installations for management of space systems and facilities from physical damage and cyber-attacks, which could cause acollapse. For more security and optimization of capabilities and knowledge in the field, it's needed to have more coordination between the member states of NATO and EU as well as between both organizations.

[xxix]In addition given possible scenarios and the trend toward further commercialization in space, planning needs to be done well in advance of operations, to identify and integrate space requirements into the strategic and operational phases.Such planning will help identify uncertainties that can have an effect on capabilities-based planning. In order to overcome the vulnerability of NATO in the field, the Alliance needs of comprehensive space policy.

The emerging problems and challenges suppose NATO and European space agency to initiate a well-coordinated policy for free access to Outer space, which could guarantee the peaceful use of it by the industry and military spectrum of stakeholders.

5/The strategic concept of NATO and the NATO Cyber defense concept give a new impulse for better cooperation, as the most developed countries in the field are respectively the most vulnerable from cyber -attacks. For this reason the armed forces of the Allies should be well trained and dispose with necessary capabilities to act in a complicated cyber environment. Part of the good coordination policy is the well planning, preparation and trainings.

In addition, [xxx]NATO and the EU, with a large overlapping membership, should be able to collaborate effectively on a comprehensive approach to cyber security. This would help eliminate duplication, improve capacity and sharing, and satisfy the needs of both organizations to enhance cyber security.

NATO and EU should accelerate their joint efforts to prevent and respond to cyber - attacks and challenges though capacity building and protection of their communication, command and control systems.

The free access of NATO and EU to the global commons (high seas, airspace, Antarctica, Outer space and cyberspace) is of extremely importance for the capabilities of the both organizations to achieve their strategic goals and ambitions, guarantying the security of the Member - state citizens and their economies. The main challenges concerning the global commons are related to: the emergence of non-state actors, new class of weapons and air drones systems; high level of interdependence and interconnection; budget restrictions for modernization in the field of security and defense as a result of financial and economic crisis; the existing, but uncompleted regulations in the field.

As a response of those challenges, the main recommendations are related to the need of: more trust between EU and NATO member states, exchange of information and intelligence; higher level of integrity, compatibility, complementary of Alliances' capabilities; optimization of the available resources through the principles of "smart defense" and "pooling & sharing"; further development of the intelligence and monitoring capabilities; initiation of European defense semester; free access to global commons following the principles of cooperation, mutual problem and claims solving.

IV. UKRAINE: LESSONS FOR THE COUNTRIES FROM THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION

The situation in Ukraine is an example of the so called [xxxi]'new war' - an internal conflict that is destabilizing the region. The challenge here is to find the right balance between respect for state sovereignty and the need for

timely actions in response to violence in order to defend citizens' human rights. And this challenge is valid for the EU, NATO and the international community as a whole.

Additional challenges are:

• the different approaches of Europe, NATO and US in the conflict situations;

• the contrast between the active and strong France-Germany leadership in the name of Europe and the simultaneous faceless of the EU itself;

• the vision of Moscow for a new alternative of the current existing security system in Europe, promoting the idea of Eurasia and Eurasian security community opposed to the Euro–Atlantic one.

• the use by Russia of democratic tools (as referendums)in order to legitimize non- democratic objectives and actions;

• the close relations of the considerable number of socialist and nationalist parties in the post-Soviet space in Europe with the current Russian government and business, which abuse with the positive historical and cultural memories of the silver generation as well as with the Slavic and Christian orthodox people sentiment in order to promote economic and energy projects, which are in the geostrategic sphere of influence of Moscow;

• the different perceptions about threats, of EU and NATO' member states and Russia, which is still supporting the balance of power concept and opposing the process of NATO's Eastern enlargement.

The first demonstration of direct attack against NATO enlargement to the East was the negative reaction of President Putin from the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, concerning the [xxxii]welcomed Georgian and UkrainianEuro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in the Alliance and expressed willingness for a Membership Action Plan process of both countries.

The second demonstration of Russia's aggressive behavior provoked by a similar motivation was the invasion in Georgia in 2008 and the breakaway of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The war of Russia against Georgia in 2008 and the withdrawal of South Ossetia and Abkhazia from the Georgian territory put the Black sea region in a new geopolitical reality, which should be strictly analyzed in order to answer the question how the geopolitical dynamics within the region will affect the energy and transport infrastructure. The annexation and accession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to Russia brings closer the only independent of it oil pipeline from Caspian sea: from Baku (Azerbaijan) through Tbilisi (Georgia) to Ceyhan (Turkey), built by international consortium, led by the British-American company "British petroleum", without the participation of Russian companies.

The third comparable demonstration was recently in Eastern Ukraine, related to the annexation of Crimea and military activities.

The annexation of Crimea gives three strategic advantages to Russia.

The first one is related to the fact that in this way the Black sea navy of Russia has an easy access to the basis of a country with increasing Euro Atlantic orientation. With the acquisition of Sevastopol and the other military basis in Crimea, Russia reestablished its previously destabilized strategic military advantage in the Black sea. The annexation of Crimea and Abkhazia give more opportunities for the deployment of a large navy. In this regard Moscow declared in a very open way its intentions to enlarge and modernize its navy at the Black sea. In addition, Russia has the status advantage to limit the foreign ships' presence in Black sea as it is a closed sea area.

The second advantage from the annexation of Crimea is related to the triple increase of Russian zone of influence in the Black sea shelf as well as the gained control over the Sea of Azov. Russia [xxxiii]acquired not just the Crimean landmass but also a maritime zone more than three times its size with the rights to underwater resources (especially vast oil and gas reserves), potentially worth trillions of dollars. It makes Ukraine more vulnerable as it is deprived from its own key energy resources, being at the same time energy dependent from Russia. The new maritime territory is three times bigger than the ground territory acquired by Russia with the annexation of Crimea.

The third advantage is related to the increased control of Russia over the transport communications in Black sea guaranteeing the safety of its deliveries to sea.

In the [xxxiv]final report of the High representative for the December 2013 European Council on Security and Defense, it is noted that the security challenges in Europe come from the South, emphasizing on the Arab uprisings which led to increased instability and conflict. To the east, the focus in mainly on the frozen conflicts, disregarding potential risks from the emergence of new ones (like in East Ukraine).

Before the Ukrainian conflict there were diverging perceptions of EU and NATO member states about Russia. The countries from Eastern Europe perceived quite often Russia as a threat in front of their security due to their historical background, being in the past beyond the Iron curtain, under totalitarian communist regime, while those from the West perceived Moscow as a potential economic partner.

V. CONCLUSION

Now it is time to change the perceptions from the confusion to clarity in order not only to overcome the current challenges in the wider Black sea area, but to avoid them - to act preventively, not to react.

For this reason there are three main necessities. First the EU needs to create a new European security and defense strategy based on a common security strategic culture. NATO' strategic concept needs also some updates. Secondlya coordination and mutualization of capabilities in EU is needed as well as an effective early warning system, supported by all member states, which to foresee and to prevent such conflicts in the future. Thirdly a change is

needed in the Euro-Atlantic integration approach of the Black Sea countries and post-Soviet space.

Until recently, due to the military and economic reasons, the eastward NATO enlargement got ahead of the EU enlargement. As Russia needs to be convinced that Euro-Atlantic integration doesn't put its interests at risk, it is better the countries from the post-Soviet space to integrate first to EU and then to NATO, Euro-Atlantic integration.

The approach of "pooling and sharing" of resources is well perceived in principle, but not implemented in practice. In this regard there is a big potential, but still not assumed importance by some member states and EDA of the idea, dated from 2013, of Bulgarian minister of defense for a [xxxv]European defense capability white paper. It is a proposal concerning the need of a platform for European analysis of the challenges and defense capabilities needed. The immediate goal of such comprehensive review is to overcome the exiting capability gaps. In long term the ambition is to build up, develop and maintain the necessary EU capabilities for CSDP operations and missions. Such a White paper will identify the existing deficits and surplus in the field as well as will suggest wider range of potential and effective decisions, as one of them is the initiative for Pooling and sharing. European defense agency could coordinate such a process, which aim is not only to avoid duplication of efforts and resources, but also to invest in the capabilities that are really needed given the characteristics of current challenges and anticipated strategic environment. During the last years EDA is focusing mainly on the military industrial sphere and not on the EU policy making in the field, needed after the Lisbon treaty.

The "soft-power" narrative shapes the image of the EU as a "soft" security provider. This image should be part of a strategic vision with clear goals and instruments for their achievement.

The relations between Russia and NATO have military and political dimension while those between Russia and EU are related to their economic interdependence and the absence of geopolitical rivalry, which is a good basis for dialogue and mutually acceptable decisions.

The complex character of security threats supposes the implementation of hybrid type of security strategies.

It is more important for the future of Europe to be given priority to the enlargement of the economic space to the East and not to the eastward Euro-Atlantic one. The priority for NATO enlargement could be given to the Western Balkans, while EU should mobilize efforts and focus on Eastern partnership initiative.

Concerning the Black sea, it should be noticed that the frozen conflictshamper the accession of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova to NATO, because countries with unsolved territorial problems could involve the Alliance in dangerous military confrontation. The frozen conflicts could be also perceived as a buffer zone between Russia and Europe.

In this regards, an overall EU Black sea strategy is needed, in order to have a targeted policy of the Union in the wider Black sea area.NATO could also initiate a structural partnership with Black sea countries, similar to the existing form of Mediterranean dialogue.

A key moment in the preparation/actualization process of strategic security documents is to be taken into account the following points: the interdependence between the energy policy of EU and the CFSP/CSDP as well as the hybrid character of threats and challenges, which suppose the implementation of comprehensive approach, combining military and civil instruments.

Given the complex character of security threats, the EU and NATO member states should overcome the high level of sensitivity towards their sovereignty in the context of energy issues, as a part of collective security and defense.

The free access of NATO and EU to the Global commons – High Seas; the Atmosphere; Antarctica; Outer and Cyber Space should also be taken into account in the process of strategic documents' modernization in the field of security and defense as it's of key importance for the capability of both organizations to achieve their strategic objectives and ambitions, guaranteeing the security of member states' citizens and the stability of their economies.

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