



## THE BLACK SEA REGION – GEOGRAPHICAL, GEOPOLITICAL, GEOSTRATEGIC AND GEOECONOMIC IDENTITY –

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*One of the most competitive subareas in Eurasia is the Black Sea Region. For the last century, this region has undergone spectacular upheavals in its geopolitical status, which have resulted in changes in terms of borders, wars and frozen conflicts, land fragmentations, multiplication of regional and extraregional players.*

*Which are the geographical, geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic features that cause the regional geopolitical dynamics? Why is the Black Sea Region still included in the category of fault line areas, a statute that makes it prone to an increased geopolitical competition, instability, insecurity and regional conflict? These are some of the questions that generate a particular interest in this study and which will be answered by going through the information presented below.*

*Keywords: Black Sea region; geopolitical limes; geoeconomic hub; nexus; the Pentagon of the five strategic seas;*

Translated by Iulia SINGER.



*Motto:*  
*“The dark clouds make the black sea”.*  
Charles de Leusse

## INTRODUCTION

The Black Sea region is one of the most contested geopolitical subareas in Eurasia. In the last hundred years, there have been spectacular upheavals of geopolitical status in this region, resulting in border changes, wars and frozen conflicts, territorial fragmentation, changes of regional and extra-regional players. In the first half of the twentieth century, under the devastating impact of the two world conflagrations, the monarchical regimes in Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and present-day Ukraine were replaced by communist republics, and the Caliphate and Ottoman Sultanate became the secular Republic of Turkey today. If, between 1918 and 1940, Moldova was a province of the Kingdom of Romania, along with Herța, Bugeac and Northern Bukovina, after 1940, all these territories were incorporated into the Soviet Union. Ukraine and Georgia also suffered the same fate, for a short time between 1917 and 1921, in the context of the collapse of the Tsarist Empire and the chaos generated by the Bolshevik Revolution (1917-1923), they declared independence but, after 1921, they were occupied by the Soviets.

Then, after 1991, all these states and territories freed themselves from the occupation of the Soviet Empire. Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia declared their independence, and the rest of the Romanian territories occupied by the Soviet aggressor remained part of the newly established Ukrainian state. Also after 1991, the states belonging to the communist bloc, i.e. all the riparian states, except Turkey, became either democracies, part of the Euro-Atlantic area (Romania and Bulgaria), or autocracies (Russia), or failed in their western becoming, consumed by frozen conflicts orchestrated by the Russian Federation (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova).

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*At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Black Sea region brought together three empires (Habsburg, Ottoman, Tsarist) and two constitutional monarchies (Kingdom of Romania and Kingdom of Bulgaria), at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the same space brought together: supra-state formations; national states; federal states; military alliances; extra-regional state actors; international organisations; non-state actors.*

and two constitutional monarchies (Kingdom of Romania and Kingdom of Bulgaria), at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the same space brought together:

- supra-state formations – the European Union (EU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);
- national states – Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Turkey;
- federal states – Russian Federation;
- military alliances – North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO);
- extra-regional state actors – United States of America (USA), China, Israel, etc.;
- international organisations – the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), etc.;
- non-state actors – multinational companies, organised crime and terrorism networks, separatist regions (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia – Tskhinvali, Crimea).

Looking at all these geopolitical processes that affected the region in the last century, we find that after an initial fragmentation following the implosion of continental European empires at the end of World War I, the region coagulated through the emergence of the Soviet Empire and the creation of the Soviet bloc. At present, we are witnessing a new and much more intense fragmentation, a dissipation of power between the riparian states, an aspect that favours the domination of the region by a great global power – the Russian Federation – and its main circumstantial ally – China.

*What are the geographical, geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic attributes that generate regional geopolitical dynamics? Why, even today, is the Black Sea region included in the category of fault line areas, a status that prones it to increasing geopolitical competition, instability, insecurity and regional conflict?* Let us try to answer these questions below.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The Pontic region, described as “a varied coastline surrounding an inland sea” (Sundseth, Barova, 2010), stretches counterclockwise around the Black Sea, starting from Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria,

through northern Turkey, to Georgia, the Pontic coast of the Russian Federation and ending with the coast of Ukraine.

Reminiscence of the Thetys Ocean and the Sarmatian Sea, the Black Sea is a semi-closed, intercontinental sea located in southeastern Europe, between the parallels of 40°54'– 46°38' north latitude and 27°27' – 41°42' east longitude (Encyclopedia of Romania, *Black Sea*).

It has an oval shape, with a maximum length of about 1,149 km, on the East-West axis, between Burgas and the Caucasian coast, and the minimum, of about 267 km, on the North-South axis, between Cape Sarici (Crimea) and Cape Kerempe. (Turkey). It has an area of 413,488 km<sup>2</sup> (451,490 km<sup>2</sup> with the Sea of Azov), a maximum depth of over 2,258 m, reached in the central-southern sector, and a slightly lacy coastline (ib.) (*Appendix no. 1*). The northern and north-western shores are low, furrowed by the mouths of the great continental watercourses (Danube Delta, Dniester, Dnieper, Bug estuaries, to which the Don estuary from the Sea of Azov, Casimcea, Rioni, Kuban etc. rivers are added). The eastern and southern shores are steep and furrowed by the mouths of the rivers Yerşilirmak, Kâzâlirmak, Sakarya. The northern coast is dominated by plain, with the exception of the Crimean Mountains, while the south and east are mostly mountains (*map in figure no. 1*).

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Figure no. 1: Physical-geographical map of the Black Sea Region  
 ([https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/physiography-of-black-sea-biogeographical0region/image\\_large](https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/physiography-of-black-sea-biogeographical0region/image_large), retrieved on 10 May 2021).

In the north, the land enters the sea, forming the Crimean Peninsula and the Kerch Peninsula, and in the west, it forms the region with a peninsular appearance Dobrogea. The islands are few and small,



*At the regional level, there are 54 sea and river ports, many natural, some of which are deep, such as Odessa, Chornomorsk, Pivdenny in Ukraine, Erdemir and Rize in Turkey, Burgas in Bulgaria, Novorossiysk, Tuapse and Taman in Russia and, the largest of them, the Romanian port of Constanța.*

the largest being Snake Island (Zmiyinyy), east of the Danube Delta, and Berezan Island near the mouth of the Dniester Estuary (both in Ukraine). And, also in the north, the Black Sea communicates, through the Kerch Strait, with the Sea of Azov and, from here, through the Volga-Don river corridor, with the Caspian Sea.

In the southwest, it is connected with the Marmara Sea through the Bosphorus Strait and, further with the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean through the Dardanelles Strait.

Some bays are wide (Burgas, Varna, Sinop, Samsun, etc.) and do not provide efficient shelter for ships during storms, and others are separated by wide ridges, which turn them into estuaries (Dobrogean and Dniester estuaries).

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Due to the increased volume of fresh water discharged by the rich riparian network, the salinity of the Black Sea, of about 15-22 ‰, is low compared to the salinity of the Planetary Ocean, of 35 ‰. At the mouths of the Danube, the salinity of the sea is even lower, reaching up to about 3-10 ‰ (Enciclopedia României, Ib.).

## GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS

The Black Sea region consists of the geopolitical complex formed by the Black Sea and its riparian states, represented by the Republic of Ukraine to the north, the Russian Federation to the northeast, the Republic of Georgia to the east, the Republic of Turkey to the south, the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Bulgaria to the west. Also in the west, the Republic of Moldova, although a landlocked state, is also riparian to the Black Sea through the port of Giurgiulesti, located at km 133.8 of the Danube River.

The ancient astronomer Ptolemy (87-165 AD) went down in history through his observations on the status of the Eurasian border of the strip of land between the two aquatic masses of Eastern Europe, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, later called , Ponto-Baltic Isthmus (Parker, 1960, p. 293) (*map in figure no. 2*). Although, on the north-south axis,

it is well delimited by the coasts of the two seas, on the east-west axis, the Isthmus has a less clear delimitation, between the Moravian Gate and the Georgian coast (Romer, 1917).



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Figure no. 2: Ponto-Baltic Isthmus

([https://media.hotnews.ro/media\\_server1/image-2016-10-24-21370829-0-istmul-ponto-baltic.jpg](https://media.hotnews.ro/media_server1/image-2016-10-24-21370829-0-istmul-ponto-baltic.jpg), retrieved on 10 May 2021).

The Ptolemaic thesis, later shared by some geographers, gained geopolitical and geostrategic features, as, from East Asia and Western Europe, the dominant powers developed that coagulated around them the great civilisation spaces of Eurasia<sup>1</sup> and transformed the confluence area near the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus into a *geopolitical limes*.

Or, in other words, they transformed the North-South Central and Eastern European corridor into a *buffer, inter-civilisation space, subject to geopolitical pressures from the Catholic and Reformed West and the Orthodox East. A compression space, with the potential to turn into a "ruin belt"*, a fact demonstrated, at present, by the existence of frozen conflicts in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, as a result of the intensified competition between the players of the two mentioned geopolitical spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (962-1806), respectively the Austrian Empire (1804-1867), the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) and the Kingdom of Prussia (1701-1918), in Western Europe, and the Tsarist Empire (1721-1917), in Eastern Europe.



*“Starting with the medieval period, the historical dynamics of the borders of the states of this area has been generated by the geopolitical pressure exerted on the axes: East-West: Russian-German; northwest-south: Habsburg-Ottoman; northeast-south: Tsarist-Ottoman and reached its peak in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the two world wars and the implosion of the Soviet Empire in 1991”.*

As far as the Pontic region is concerned, the geopolitical pressure is accentuated by the existence of a third space, southern, Islamic, which amplifies the geopolitical dynamics, increasing the potential for the “ruin belt”, already demonstrated in the Caucasus, by maintaining and periodically reheating the frozen conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Also from a geopolitical perspective, the unitary and distinct geopolitical area of the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus is “composed, on the north-south axis, of two geopolitical regions:

- Northern, Baltic, mostly Catholic, with three subregions:
  - of the Baltic states: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia;
  - Central European: Poland;
  - CSI: Belarus;
- Southern, Pontic, mostly orthodox, with two subregions:
  - of the EU member states: Romania, Bulgaria;
  - of the former Soviet states: Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia” (Popescu, 2020, p. 231).

Consequently, any geopolitical process developed within the geopolitical macro-complex related to the Isthmus affects the security and stability of the Black Sea region, an aspect demonstrated by its recent history, common to the space in question, marked by:

- “the assertion of the sovereignty of the riparian states during the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the implosion of the Habsburg, Ottoman, Tsarist Empires in 1918, and the Soviet one in 1991;
- involvement in the two world conflagrations;
- the borders drawn after the Peace Treaties signed in 1919-1920 and 1947, between the belligerent powers in the two world wars, borders reconfirmed in 1975 by the Helsinki Final Act, and subsequently re-established by the Border Treaties signed after the implosion of The Soviet Empire in 1991;
- inclusion in the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War” of all states in the region, except Turkey,
- and the fact that, “starting with the medieval period, the historical dynamics of the borders of the states of this area has been generated by the geopolitical pressure exerted on the axes:
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- *and reached its peak in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the two world wars and the implosion of the Soviet Empire in 1991” (Ib., p. 231).*

The same status of *geopolitical limes* is valid in the case of Turkey, which is:

- a state caught between the northern Orthodox pioneer front, the southern Arab Sunni pioneer front and the eastern Iranian Shiite;
- a sovereign over the Turkish Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles), one of the seven points of global maritime constriction;
- entitled, by the 1936 Montreux Convention, to regulate maritime traffic in the Black Sea.

Through the status of *“guardian”* of the straits, Turkey can turn the Black Sea into a closed sea, with important economic and military consequences for all other riparian states.

And, we must also mention the non-riparian state actors, such as the USA, Germany, France, Israel, China, the supranational ones, such as the EU, CIS or the non-state ones, such as NATO, CSTO, UN, OSCE, multinational companies, etc., present in the Pontic space, which complicates and dynamises regional competition.

## GEOSTRATEGIC ASPECTS

From a geostrategic point of view, the Black Sea region is *“a pivot, a transition space between Western Europe, Eurasia and the Levant, part of the inner ring, of security, of the power that dominates the northern pivot area” (map in figure no. 3)*, as noted by the British geostrategist Sir Halford J. Mackinder (1861-1947).

The same geostrategist made an essential observation about the isthmus between Germanic, Western, and Eastern Russian Russia, which includes the Black Sea region, saying that the pivotal area is surrounded by *“a succession of natural barriers, from the Arctic ice and the forests of Lena County in the mountains and arid plateaus of Central Asia, with one exception, that of the “wide open gate” between the pivot steppes and the European peninsula, the thousands of miles of communication line that stretches along the connecting isthmus connecting the Baltic Sea with the Black Sea” (Ibid., p. 228).* Therefore, the Black Sea region belongs to a *pivotal space* that can become:

- *“a great vulnerability for the state that dominates the northern pivot area, as it requires a wide deployment of its armed*



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*forces, which turns the control of the Isthmus into a strategic imperative for that state;*

- a strategic advantage, such as a “bridgehead”, for any European/ non-European power/alliance/coalition interested in blocking the emergence of the Eurasian continental bloc, the political, economic and military control of the Isthmus becoming a strategic imperative for that power”.



Figure no. 3: Geographical Pivot of History (1904)  
(Mackinder, 1904, p. 435)

Or, in other words, “the “gemstone” of the “security ring” of the pivot zone is on the European isthmus” (Ib.).

A “gemstone” that “sparks even brighter” and more “attractively” in the Black Sea Region, through the presence of Turkish straits and mouths of inland waterways, real strategic corridors of naval transport and communication, which unite or will unite:

- the Pontic region with the Caspian region, through the Volga-Don river corridor;
- the Pontic region with central Europe, through the river corridor of the Danube;
- the Pontic region with Western Europe and the Atlantic Ocean, through the Danube-Elbe-Oder, Danube-Main-Rhine corridors;
- the Pontic region with the Baltic region, through the river corridors of the Dniester, Dnieper and Bug.

A “gemstone” on whose control the future status of Europe, the Atlantic promontory or the peninsula of Asia depends. Or, in other words, a “gemstone” on whose control Europe’s Euro-Atlantic future versus its Eurasian future depends.

It should also be mentioned that the Black Sea Region belongs to the security macro-complex of the “Eurasian Balkans” or “World Balkans”, described by the author of the concept, the American geostrategist Zbigniew K. Brzezinski (1928-2017), as the “central area of global instability” (map in figure no. 4), a region “where injustice and social deprivation, overcrowding and latent violence are most concentrated”, but also “the largest amount of natural gas and oil resources”, respectively “68% of the planet’s oil reserves and 41% of natural gas ones” (Brzezinski, 2005, p. 60).

Referring to the “World Balkans” and the explosive challenges they could pose to global security, Brzezinski said that, “for the next period, the region with the greatest potential to cause global chaos is that of the New Balkans. This is where America could collide with the Islamic world. In addition, the differences in the approach of this region, between Europe and America, could cause the disintegration of the Atlantic Alliance.



Figure nr. 4: Eurasian Balkans and instability areas  
 ([https://fromestopwarscampaign.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/eb\\_map.jpg](https://fromestopwarscampaign.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/eb_map.jpg),  
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is that of the New Balkans. This is where America could collide with the Islamic world. In addition, the differences in the approach of this region, between Europe and America, could cause the disintegration of the Atlantic Alliance. These two possibilities, together, could jeopardize even American hegemony” (Ib., p. 59).

The Black Sea region belongs to the macro-space of compression between the maritime and the continental block and between the West and the East, known as the “new global pivot”, thus defined, in 2008, by the French geopolitician Xavier Martin.

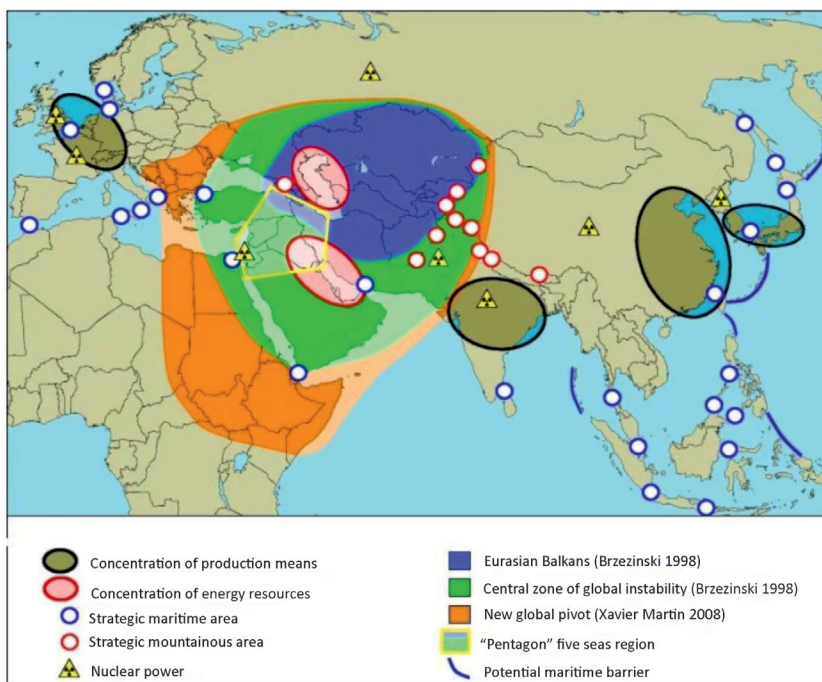


Figure no. 5: Fault lines areas in Afro-Eurasia  
 (https://external-preview.redd.it/FaUW0W6qpS44Tx5ZF0J2ymjnqkHVlx8xDn8QB530fRw.jpg?auto=webp&s=3c16f4ec5bfe6d418962be0d2341823e2a90cbed, retrieved on 1 May 2021).

And, last but not least, as can be seen in the map in figure no. 5, the Black Sea region belongs to the macro-space of compression between the maritime and the continental block and between the West and the East, known as the “new global pivot”, thus defined, in 2008, by the French geopolitician Xavier Martin. This extremely valuable geostrategic area, stretching from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East to the Greater Black Sea Region and the Eurasian Balkans, is considered the main strategic fault of the Afro-Eurasian continental mass, at which future cleavages between the dominant powers can be recorded. the level of the international system. In this area are concentrated large energy deposits, there are four of the global maritime constriction points (Turkish Straits, Bab-el Mandeb

Strait, Hormuz Strait and Suez Canal), three strategic mountain ranges (Caucasus, Carpathians, Balkans) and, very importantly, “*Pentagon of the 5 Strategic Seas*”, consisting of the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Aden and Persian Gulf, a strategic area of inestimable value, the permeability and stability of which depend on the flow of goods and energy transport globally.



## GEOECONOMIC ASPECTS

The Black Sea region is a hub of economic corridors for the transport of goods, hydrocarbons, data, people who, on the north-south axis, unite northern Europe of the Levant and, on the east-west axis, unite Asia of Europe.

It is also a nexus of intercontinental trade and politics, strengthened by the existing sea and river ports in the region and by the river corridors Danube, Dniester, Dnieper, Bug, Don, interconnected, in turn, with other continental rivers.

As a result of this status, states of the Black Sea Region are included in the transport and communications master plans linking the Scandinavian Peninsula with the Balkan Peninsula and the Levant, such as the *Three Seas Initiative*<sup>2</sup> and the *17 + 1 Format*<sup>3</sup> (map in figure no. 6), or in those that unite China and Russia with Western Europe, such as the *Belt and Road Initiative*<sup>4</sup> (map in figure no. 7) or the “*Razvitie*” Trans-Eurasian Belt<sup>5</sup> (map in figure no. 8).

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<sup>2</sup> Platform for political and economic cooperation established in 2015 at the level of state presidents. Currently, the platform brings together 12 geographically located states between three seas: Baltic, Black and Adriatic (BABS), respectively Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia (<https://3seas.eu/>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).

<sup>3</sup> In 2011, the 16 + 1 Framework Format for Economic, Political and Cultural Cooperation between China and 11 Member States of the European Union was initiated, plus five other Balkan states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia. In 2019, the format expanded with the accession of Greece, becoming 17 + 1, and in March 2021, it returned to the initial number of participants, by leaving the partnership by Lithuania (<http://www.china-ceec.org/eng/>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Officially presented on 28 March 2015, the strategy envisages the construction of a maritime and terrestrial economic “*bridge*” between three continents (Asia, Europe, Africa) and three/four oceans (Pacific, Indian, Atlantic/Arctic) (<https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/belt-and-road/>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).

<sup>5</sup> The Trans-Eurasian Razvitie – Development or TEBR belt will represent a new telecommunications network, energy transport, as well as high-speed road and rail, which will unite the markets of Europe and Asia (<https://blog.iiasa.ac.at/2015/09/21/a-new-vision-of-trans-urasian-transportation/>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).



*The Black Sea Region is also an independent geoeconomic area, which by 2020 has brought together over 308 million consumers (including the Russian Federation), mostly educated, and a total GDP (PPP) of 7,771.2 trillion USD.*

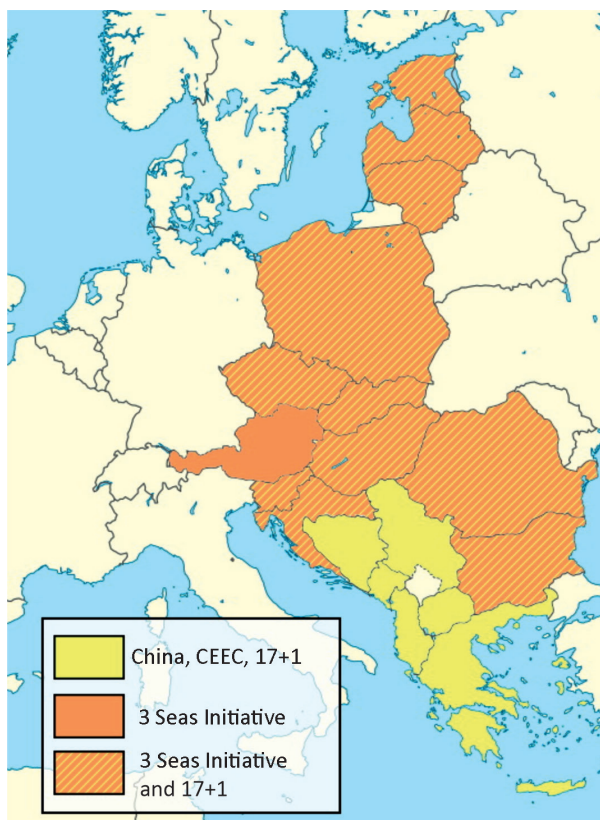


Figure no. 6: Three Seas Initiative and the 17+1 Format (<https://www.oboreurope.com/en/three-seas-initiative-bri-europe/>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).

The Black Sea Region is also an independent geoeconomic area, which by 2020 has brought together over 308 million consumers (including the Russian Federation), mostly educated, and a total GDP (PPP) of 7,771.2 trillion USD. It is an insufficiently developed and exploited geoeconomic space as a result of the geopolitical pressure to which it is subjected.

And last but not least, the Black Sea Region is known for its rich natural, terrestrial, aquatic and underground resources. Thus, according to data provided by the *CIA WorldFactBook* portal:

- Romania has oil, natural gas, wood, coal, uranium, copper, gold, silver, iron ore, salt, arable land, hydropower, etc.;
- Bulgaria has bauxite, copper, lead, zinc, coal, wood, arable land, etc.;

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 – Geographical, Geopolitical, Geostrategic and Geoeconomic Identity –

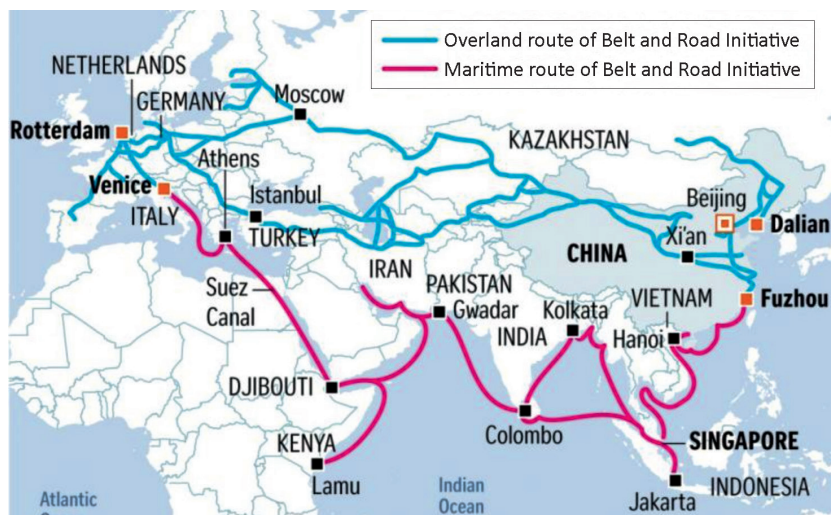


Figure no. 7: The Belt and Road Initiative

(<https://www.asiagreen.com/en/news-insights/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-rising-importance-of-china-s-western-cities>, retrieved on 1 iulie 2021).

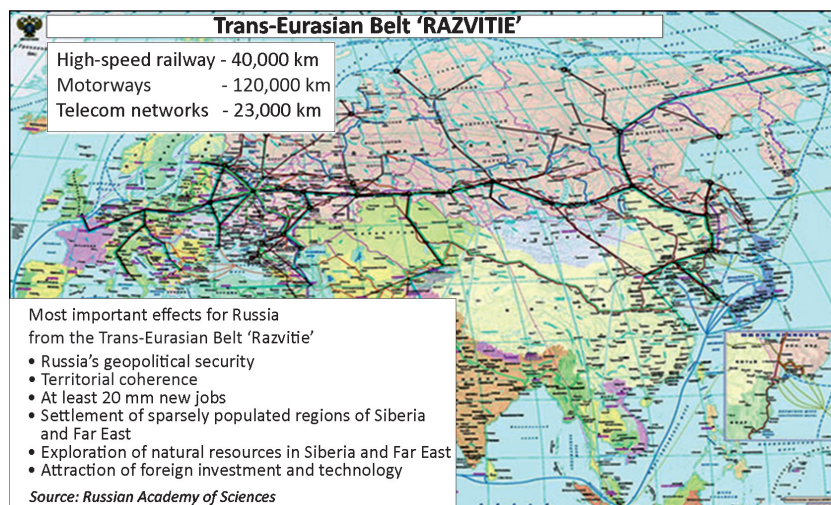


Figure nr. 8: Trans-Eurasian Belt "Razvitie"

(<https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:AND9GcSYGORKcsQvL0bNt1IW-SOX1eM4bQPXWzIHEw&usqp=CAU>, retrieved on 1 July 2021).

- Turkey has coal mines, iron ores, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, gold, barite, borate, celestite (strontium), emery, feldspar, limestone, magnesite, marble, perlite, pumice, pyrite (sulfur), clay, arable land, hydropower;



*Ukraine is known for the quality of the arable land that turned it into the granary of Europe. At the same time, it holds deposits of iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, sulphur, graphite, titanium, magnesium, kaolin, nickel, mercury, wood.*

- Georgia has manganese, iron ore, copper, wood, hydropower, coal and oil deposits; the coastal climate and soils allow the intensive growth of tea trees and citrus fruits;
- The Russian Federation is one of the richest states in the world, benefiting from large deposits of oil, natural gas, coal, strategic minerals, bauxite, rare earths, wood;
- Ukraine is known for the quality of the arable land that turned it into the granary of Europe. At the same time, it holds deposits of iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, sulphur, graphite, titanium, magnesium, kaolin, nickel, mercury, wood;
- Moldova is rich in lignite, phosphorites, gypsum, limestone, arable land (World Fact Book).

To these riches are added the fish reserve in the Black Sea and in the riparian river basins, the fauna of the forests (some still virgin), of the Danube Delta and of the estuaries of the riparian rivers, as well as the abundant vegetation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, we can say that the Black Sea Region represents:

- a space of geographical transition between the great Russian plain, in the North, and the Carpatho-Caucasian alpine mountain relief, in the South;
- a buffer geopolitical *limes* (arranged between the Russian Federation and Central and Western Europe), a compression zone at risk of turning into a ruin belt, due to its location at the intersection of three civil and geopolitical spaces (Western, orthodox, islamic);
- a pivotal space with bridgehead potential, of exceptional geostrategic value for any power interested in dominating Eurasia, part of the “*Pentagon of the 5 Strategic Seas*”, the central area of global instability related to the World Balkans and the *new global pivot*;
- a *hub* and a *nexus* of transcontinental and intercontinental transport geoeconomic and geopolitical corridors, as well as an attractive geoeconomic market.

This very valuable geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic status explains the intense regional geopolitical dynamics of the last century, expressed by frequent border changes, the existence

of periodically reheated frozen conflicts, the multiplication of regional state and non-state players and their intense competition for control and domination. And, very importantly, it announces future tensions in the conditions of intensifying competition between the main regional players: the Russian Federation, China and the Western bloc.



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*Appendix no. 1*

**The Main Physical-Geographical Data of the Black Sea**  
(Boşneagu, 2018, pp. 584-585; *Marea Neagră, lucr. cit.*)

Total surface area	451,490 km <sup>2</sup>
Volume	529,955 km <sup>3</sup>
Maximum depth	2,258 m
Average depth	1,271 m
Maximum length	1,149 km (662 nautical miles – M)
Maximum width	650 km (332 M)
Minimum width	267 km (144 M)
Coastline length	4,047 km (2,200 M)
Distance to the White Sea	1,300 km
Distance to the Persian Gulf	1,300 km
Distance to the North Sea	aprox. 1,300 km
Distance to the Mediterranean Sea (Gibraltar)	aprox. 1,300 km
Distance to the Suez Canal	aprox. 650 km
Distance to the Caspian Sea	aprox. 350 km

Extreme points	North - 46° 33'N Berezan Estuary, near Oceakov; East – 41°42'E between Batumi and Poti; South – 40° 56'N Giresun; West – 27° 27'E Burgas Bay
Romanian coastline length	225 km – from Vama Veche to Musura River mouth
Ukrainian coastline length	1,200 km – from Musura River mouth to Kerci Strait
Russian coastline	239 km – from Strait Kerci la Psou River mouth
Georgian coastline	310 km – from Psou River mouth to Chorotka River mouth
Turkish coastline	1,695 km – from Chorotka River mouth to Rezovka River mouth
Bulgarian coastline	378 km – from Rezovka River mouth to Vama Veche
Hydrographical basin	2,405,000 km <sup>2</sup>
The difference of level between the Elbrus peak (5.633 m) and the maximum depth	7,878 m
Continental shelf	133,000 km <sup>2</sup> (40% of the total surface)
Bosporus Strait water flow rate	450 km <sup>3</sup>
Fresh water flow rate	400 km <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen Sulphide	From the depth of 150-200 m

\*Distances are measured in straight line.

*Appendix no. 2*

### Black Sea Region Ports (Ib., pp. 585-586)

Nr.	Country	Port	Type	Size
1.	Romania	Brăila	Fluvial	Medium
2.		Galați	Fluvial	Medium
3.		Tulcea	Fluvial	Small



Nr.	Country	Port	Type	Size
4.		Sulina	Fluvial/Maritime	Medium
5.		Midia	Maritime/Danube-Black Sea Canal	Small
6.		<b>Constanța</b>	Maritime	<b>Largest port</b>
7.		Medgidia	Fluvial	Small
8.		Mangalia	Maritime	Small
9.	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Varna</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
10.		Balchik	Maritime	Small
11.		Nessebar	Maritime	Small
12.		Bourgas	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
13.	<b>Turcia</b>	<b>Istanbul</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
14.		Eregli	Maritime	Small
15.		Zonguldak	Maritime	Small
16.		Bartın	Maritime	Small
17.		Sinop	Maritime	Small
18.		Samsun	Maritime	Small
19.		Giresun	Maritime	Small
20.		Espiye	Maritime	Small
21.		Tirebolu	Maritime	Small
22.		Trabzon	Maritime	Small
23.		Rize	Maritime	Small
24.		Hopa	Maritime	Small
25.	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Batumi</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
26.		Supsa	Maritime/Oil Terminal	Small
27.		Poti	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
28.		Kulevi	Maritime	Small
29.		Sukhumi	Maritime	Medium
30.	<b>Russian Federation</b>	Sochi	Maritime	Small
31.		Tuapse	Maritime	Small
32.		<b>Novorossiysk</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
33.		Port Kavkaz	Maritime at Azov Sea	Small
34.		Taganrog	Maritime at Azov Sea	Small
35.	<b>Ukraine</b>	Kerch	Maritime	Small

The Black Sea Region  
 – Geographical, Geopolitical, Geostrategic and Geoeconomic Identity –



Nr.	Country	Port	Type	Size
36.		Mariupol	Maritime at Azov Sea	Small
37.		Berdyansk	Maritime at Azov Sea	Small
38.		Theodosia	Maritime	Small
39.		Yalta	Maritime	Small
40.		<b>Sevastopol</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
41.		Evpatoria	Maritime	Medium
42.		Chernomorsk	Maritime	Small
43.		Kerson	Maritime	Small
44.		Nikolaev	Fluvial	Medium
45.		Dneprobugsky	Fluvial	Small
46.		Youzhny	Maritime	Small
47.		<b>Odessa</b>	Maritime	<b>Large</b>
48.		Ilicevsk	Maritime	Medium
49.		Belgorod - Dnestrovsky	Fluvial	Small
50.		Ust Dunaysk	Fluvial	Small
51.		Kilia	Fluvial	Small
52.		Izmail	Fluvial	Small
53.		Reni	Fluvial	Small
54.	<b>Moldova</b>	Giurgiulești	Fluvial	Small