Black Sea - the geopolitical, economic, social and military importance

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Abstract. The Black Sea started to play an essential role in our geopolitical calculations only when threat coming from that direction began to grow bigger and bigger. Truthfully, even during the ancient Greek period, Europe didn't pay too much attention to the Black Sea, although we can search in history for some exceptions like the Crimean War. If we considered the Black Sea like a Cinderella, the worldwide and European geopolitics had resembled it like an ugly duckling. But during the past years, the Black Sea area was brought into the spotlight by European organizations, Transatlantic organizations and the global powers, considering its geographical position, it's current threats and not to forget the advantages offered like economic, political and military co-operation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The marine environment is a preference for unconventional asymmetric threats (terrorist threat, smuggling of weapons and strategic materials, drugs and people trafficking, illegal migration), the effects of which may be the most serious. The sea covers a wide variety of possible "opportune targets" with a great impact on the security and defense, economy, or ecological system of the coastal state. There is no doubt that the use of the sea is the way of sustainable economic development for all modern nations. All states, smaller or bigger, based on a market economy could be catastrophically affected if "targets" like ships, ports, oil tankers, drilling or extraction platforms, and other related sectors would be targets of terrorist attacks. Even if in the recent history of terrorism, the attacks on shipping traffic, port facilities, etc. have been relatively few, we must take much seriously the more significant impact that they may have on the land, the objectives of the national territories and the population. Besides the reduction of maritime traffic and its implications on the economy, significant in such a situation are the dramatic decreases in investments, the import-export crises of the products necessary concerned for the life of the region. Of course, this is a possible reality given that most of
the world trade is at sea and without business, the economy is almost non-existent, which affects the standard of living.

The Black Sea started to play an essential role in our geopolitical calculations only when threat coming from that direction began to grow bigger and bigger. Truthfully, even during the ancient Greek period, Europe didn't pay too much attention to the Black Sea, although we can search in history for some exceptions like the Crimean War. If we considered the Black Sea like a *Cinderella*, the worldwide and European geopolitics had resembled it like an ugly duckling. But during the past years, the Black Sea area was brought into the spotlight by European organizations, Transatlantic organizations and the global powers, considering it’s geographical position, it’s current threats and not to forget the advantages offered like economic, political and military co-operation.

![Figure 1 The Black Sea dimensions, and its coastal states](image)

Source: processed after the map of Nicolaev and Bologa, GEO-ECO-Marina Review 11/2005

Thus, has resulted in more severe debates for finding solutions in this area to maintain stability. This zone situated between two vast potentially conflictual spaces (Balkans and Caucasus) and the eastern Mediterranean Sea basin (marked by Middle East conflicts and growth of the Islamic terrorism) has great importance, which will be pointed below (Hanganu, 2005):

- represents the space which acts as a nodal point of three geopolitical and geostrategic areas considered nowadays to be on top but with issues with stability and security (Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East);
- it is the exit gate towards the ocean for Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, and Transcaucasian countries;
- different petrol and hydrocarbon transport routes are passing this area, which connects the Caspian Sea and Central Asia with the Western world and in the future, it will have energetic pipelines;
- includes at least one segment of drug traffic from Central Asia and the Middle East, arms traffic from ex-Soviet Union countries and even immigrant’s transportation from East towards Western Europe;
- it has excellent submarine resources, a broad ports network, good seashore facilities, and even a fair shore with multiple commercial and touristic co-operations facilities;
- it has a useful framework for extending military co-operation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Black Sea basin geopolitical, economic, social and military potential is presented through the comparative analysis of the official international and national statistical data up to the level of 2015. This analysis was focused on the Black Sea coastal states, extended to the Black Sea Basin area, as well. The data processed by quantitative/statistical, and qualitative methods have been transposed into tables and graphs, to find the meaning of those processing results. The results of the processing and analysis allowed the elaboration of conclusions whose broad interpretation, and generalization could be the subject of much more extensive work.

3. RESULTS

The results of this research present the geopolitical, geographic, social, economic and, in short, the political and military potential of the Black Sea, as a support for this.

GEOPOLITICAL POTENTIAL OF BLACK SEA BASIN

Western world, NATO, EU, and the USA don't have yet a prominent, influential and active strategy for Pontic area which has become "of great interest" for the United States recently. European Union started nowadays to understand the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the Black Sea. Though it is a little late now, Black Sea has managed to transform from Cinderella to a charming princess, or from an ugly duckling into a magnificent swan.

After 1991 at the Black Sea have direct access six countries: Russian Federation, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia, and, indirectly from Danube River, Republic of Moldova (which can be considered a Black Sea riparian country). For four of these (Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia), Black Sea represents their sole maritime access point. Because of its geographical specific characteristics including its depth, Black Sea has a vast "hinterland" composed from countries with maritime access due to Danube River: Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary. Also because of the Danube River, we can give examples of other countries which have Black Sea access: Germany and former Yugoslavia countries. Moreover, from Belarus, the Black Sea can be reached thanks to Dnieper River. Another maritime exit point to the Black Sea is the Sea of Azov, and from Volga – Don Canal, a connection is made between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea.
After this region, it is another one defined as the extended region of the Black Sea. This concept was launched in 2004 by Asmus and Jackson, in direct connexion with developing similar ideas like Greater Middle East.

Regarding an extended Black Sea region in relevant published literature we have three versions:

- version 1: in Black Sea extended region we find riparian countries and part of Balkan countries connected with Danube River (Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia and Croatia) and Greece;

- version 2: extending the region even further to the north and east of Black Sea by adding all the south-caucasian countries; the first ring is composed of riparian countries members of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (B.S.E.C.); the second ring includes two countries which are members of a security structure named G.U.A.M. – Georgia, and Azerbaijan (G.U.A.M. is a regional initiative which connects four states; its name comes from the founding countries: Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Moldova); also there are included countries from Community of Democratic Choice (C.D.U.) in Baltic Sea and the Black Sea area (Belarus, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova), according to "A complete Europe" concept (see NATO Summit, Prague, Czech Republic, 1992);

- version 3: a combination of the first and second version.

**GEOGRAPHIC POTENTIAL OF BLACK SEA COASTAL STATES**

The geographic potential of Black Sea coastal states (2015) is given by territory, population and shore length (Table 1, 2, and Figure 2). In the coastal areas of the Black Sea about 15 million people live.

| No. | Country          | Surface (km²)/place in the worldwide hierarchy | Population (millions) / place in the worldwide hierarchy | Back Sea Coastal Population (millions) | Black Sea shore length (km) |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.  | Russian Federation | 17,078,242                                   | 142.6/10                                                  | 1,159                                | 800 (including the Azov Sea) |
| 2.  | Turkey           | 738,562                                       | 80.3/20                                                   | 6,700                                | 1,329                       |
| 3.  | Ukraine          | 603,550                                       | 44.2/32                                                   | 6,800                                | 2,782 (including the Azov Sea) |
| 4.  | Romania          | 238,391                                       | 21.6/59                                                   | 0.573                                | 225                         |
| 5.  | Bulgaria         | 110,879                                       | 7.14/102                                                  | 0.930                                | 354                         |
| 6.  | Georgia          | 69,700                                        | 4.92/123                                                  | 0.650                                | 310                         |
7. Republic of Moldova

| Region                        | Surface (km$^2$) | Population     | Coastline length (km) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| World                         | 510,000,100,000  | 7,300,000,000 | 847,943                |
| Eurasia                       | 54,697,000       | 4,406,000,000 |                        |
| EU 28                         | 4,413,844        | 505,700,000   | 65,883                 |
| Black Sea Basin (including Russian Federation) | 18,873,175 | 304,270,000 | 4,417 |

Table 2 Geographic potential of Black Sea coastal states – world level comparison
Figure 2 The Black Sea position in Eurasia
Source: processed using the Black Sea map, http://www.emodnet.eu/black-sea

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI-2015) OF THE BLACK SEA COASTAL COUNTRIES

Regarding human development index (HDI), the Black Sea coastal countries are situated in the second category of HHD – *High Human Development*, and Republic of Moldova in the third category of MHD – *Medium Human Development* (the HDI is measured for four types of countries) (Table 3).

Table 3 Black Sea coastal countries – HDI index, 2015

| No. | Country/ place in the worldwide hierarchy | HDI | GDP per capita (USD) | FDI Inflow Billion USD |
|-----|----------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1.  | Russian Federation                      | 50  | 0.798               | 26,100                 | 118.5                  |
| 2.  | Romania                                | 52  | 0.783               | 21,100                 | 38.3                   |
| 3.  | Bulgaria                               | 58  | 0.782               | 19,400                 | 27.4                   |
| 4.  | Turkey                                 | 72  | 0.761               | 20,700                 | 177.1                  |
| 5.  | Georgia                                | 76  | 0.754               | 9,700                  | 1.65                   |
| 6.  | Ukraine                                | 81  | 0.747               | 8,100                  | 2.9                    |
| 7.  | Republic of Moldova                    | 107 | 0.763               | 5,100                  | 0.22                   |

Source: http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI, 2017, and http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2017_en.pdf, accessed 14.09.2018

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE BLACK SEA COASTAL COUNTRIES

The gross domestic product of Black Sea coastal countries is 3.2% of world total; the total volume of commerce (import/export was 1.123 billion USD in 2015) (Table 4, and 5), until the world global
export in 2015 was about 21,273 trillion USD, and the world global import is 2015 was nearly 20,715 trillion USD.

Table 4 Black Sea coastal countries GDP, GDP per capita - 2015

| No. | Country        | GDP (billion USD) | Place in the worldwide hierarchy | GDP per capita (USD) | Place in the worldwide hierarchy | Actual growth rate (2015) | Place in the worldwide hierarchy |
|-----|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Russia         | 3,745,0           | 7                                 | 26,100               | 73                               | -3,7%                      | 201                               |
| 2.  | Turkey         | 735,7             | 18                                | 20,700               | 85                               | 4%                         | 85                                |
| 3.  | Romania        | 420,2             | 44                                | 21,100               | 83                               | 3,7%                       | 37                                |
| 4.  | Ukraine        | 344,6             | 51                                | 8,100                | 149                              | -9,9%                      | 156                               |
| 5.  | Bulgaria       | 138,9             | 77                                | 19,400               | 88                               | 3%                         | 101                               |
| 6.  | Georgia        | 36.15             | 120                               | 9,700                | 138                              | 2,8%                       | 83                                |
| 7.  | Republic of Moldova | 18.18          | 149                               | 5,100                | 170                              | -0,5%                      | 138                               |

Source: compilation after UNCTAD and World Bank statistics, 2016-2017

The export/import value of the Black Sea coastal countries in 2015 is about 580 billion USD/540 billion USD (Table 5).

Table 5 Black Sea coastal countries export/import value in billion USD - 2015

| No. | Country            | Export (billion USD) | Import (billion USD) |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1.  | Russia             | 341,5                | 193                  |
| 2.  | Turkey             | 152                  | 200,1                |
| 3.  | Romania            | 54,52                | 63,12                |
| 4.  | Ukraine            | 35,5                 | 38,9                 |
| 5.  | Bulgaria           | 24,62                | 26,74                |
| 6.  | Georgia            | 3,0                  | 7,36                 |
| 7.  | Republic of Moldova| 1,5                  | 3,5                  |
| Total|                   | 586,3                | 536,7                |

Source: compilation after UNCTAD and World Bank statistics, 2016-2017
MERCHANT FLEET OF BLACK SEA COASTAL STATES

The Merchant fleet of the Black Sea coastal countries has a total displacement that sums 51.4 million dwt (4.3% of the global total of 1,750 million dwt). The total number of merchant ships is 3,847 (2.93% of the world total of over 89,000 ships) (Table 6). The total number of ports is 43 from which 9 are considered main ports as it follows: Romania – 7 with 4 of them fluvial, principal port: Constantza; Bulgaria – 3, major port Varna; Turkey – 13, major port Istanbul; Georgia – 3, major port Batumi; Russian Federation – 3, principal port Novorossiyisk; Ukraine – 14 with 4 of them fluvial, major port Odesa; Republic of Moldova: major port Giurgiulesti (on Danube River) (Figure 3).

Table 6 Black Sea coastal states Merchant fleet in 2014/2015 (dwt; no. of ships; percent global fleet)

| No. | Country               | 2014 (dwt displacement/no. of ships) | 2015 (dwt displacement/no. of ships) | 2016 (dwt displacement/no. of ships) | Percent global fleet (%) | world place |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1.  | Turkey                | 29,266,000                           | 27,687,770                           | 27,951,433                           | 1.56 (15)                |             |
| 2.  | Russian Federation    | 18,833,000                           | 18,324,079                           | 18,143,705                           | 1.01 (20)                |             |
| 3.  | Ukraine               | 3,081,000                            | na                                   | na                                   | 0.184                    |             |
| 4.  | Bulgaria              | 1,297,000                            | na                                   | na                                   | 0.076                    |             |
| 5.  | Romania               | 1,044,000                            | na                                   | na                                   | 0.062                    |             |
| 6.  | Georgia               | 8,000                                | na                                   | na                                   | 0.0                      |             |
| Total|                       | 53,529,000                           | na                                   | na                                   | na                       |             |
| Total (global merchant fleet) | 1,676,853,000                  | 1,749,222,000                        | 48,525                              | 1,791,584,400             | 49,223      | 3.19%       |

Source: compilation after Review of Maritime Transport 2014-2017, UNCTAD Org.
BLACK SEAPORTS CARGO THROUGHPUT

The seaborne trade in the Black Sea is about 229 million tons, disposed of like this: Romania: 44 million tons; Bulgaria: 31 million tons; Turkey: 17 million tons; Georgia: 11 million tons; Russia: 66 million tons; Ukraine: 60 million tons. The total capacity of cargo from loading and unloading operations processed in Black Sea ports is approximately 400 million tons. The number of ships which transit Bosporus and Dardanelles Straits annually is over 26,663 (2015). The port traffic capacity in the Black Sea is over 390 million tons: Romania – 123 million tons, Ukraine 80 million tons, Russian Federation 76 million tons, Bulgaria 62 million tons, Turkey 24 million tons, and Georgia 16 million tons (Table 7).

Table 7 Traffic capacity and cargo traffic in Black Sea ports – 2015

| Country   | Port      | Traffic capacity (million tons) | Cargo operations (million tons) | Total cargo traffic by country | Total traffic capacity by country |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Romania   | Constantza| 105                             | 44.5                            |                               |                                  |
|           | Galatzi   | 10                              | 9.1                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Braila    | 4                               | 2.2                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Tulcea    | 3                               | 2.5                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Mangalia  | 0.4                             | 0.2                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Midia     | 0.4                             | 0.3                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Sulina    | 0.5                             | 0.3                             | 60.1                          | 123.3                            |
| Bulgaria  | Burgas    | 50                              | 25                              |                               |                                  |
|           | Varna     | 18                              | 17                              |                               |                                  |
|           | Nesebar   | na                              | na                              | 26.1                          | 68                               |
| Turkey    | Eregli    | 10                              | 6.0                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Samsun    | 4.3                             | 2.5                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Zonguldak | 4                               | 3.0                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Trabzon   | 2.5                             | 2.0                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Giresun   | 2.5                             | 2.0                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Inebolu   | 0.8                             | 0.5                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Ordu      | 0.2                             | 0.07                            |                               |                                  |
|           | Fatsa     | 0.2                             | 0.15                            | 17                            | 24                               |
| Georgia   | Batumi    | 5                               | 4.6                             |                               |                                  |
|           | Poti      | 7                               | 2.5                             |                               |                                  |
In 2016, the Black Sea ports of Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia handled in total 2,460,028 TEU, of which 1,785,618 TEU were loaded containers (transshipment moves excluded). The growth of full containers handling was reported in all the countries: Ukraine (+30.66%), Russia (+7.52%), Romania (+4.71%) and Bulgaria (+4.65%), except for Georgia, where these volumes dropped by 12.09% (Table 8) [8].

Table 8 Container throughput of Black Sea ports (in TEU), loaded containers 2015 - 2016

| Country        | 2016  | 2015  | Dynamics   |
|----------------|-------|-------|------------|
| Ukraine        | 533,278 | 408,155 | +30.66%    |
| Romania        | 446,275 | 426,213 | +4.71%     |
| Russian Federation | 444,940 | 413,829 | +7.52%     |
| Georgia        | 195,230 | 222,081 | -12.09%    |
| Bulgaria       | 165,895 | 158,519 | +4.65%     |
| Total          | 1,785,618 | 1,628,797 | +9.63%     |

Source: Louppova, J., *Black Sea container exports on the rise*, https://port.today/black-sea-container-exports-rise/, 2017

BLACK SEA BASIN TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK

The Black Sea Basin is part of central European road and waterway corridors. Trans-European terrestrial routes connected with the Black Sea are the following:
- corridor IV - Berlin-Arad-Brasov-Constanta-Istanbul
- corridor IX – Helsinki-Moscow-Kiev-Chisinau-Bucharest-Plovdiv, and Berlin-
  Timisoara-Calafat-Sofia-Salonic, respectively.

Fluvial corridors connected with the Black Sea are the following:
- Danube River is part of Pan-European VII corridor, which connects the North Sea and the
  Black Sea in the North-West and South-East directions;
- Waterways like the Baltic Sea – Volga, Volga – Don, which is making possible the connection
  between the Baltic Sea and the Caspian Sea and also Black Sea – Sea of Azov – World Ocean.

**POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN**

From the political point of view in the Black Sea basin, large international political actors act, like
the USA, Russian Federation, EU, China, etc., as well as regional, and local political actors
represented by the riparian states.

The current political situation view in the Black Sea is characterized by some actions made by
some important actors in world politics.

Some of the most relevant are:
- the extending of NATO in Black Sea region in the future;
- the desire of the Russian Federation to expand in this region;
- the possible expansion of the European Union in this region;
- the pro-European view of some state in Black Sea basin and Black Sea extended region;
- the recent evolution of political moves in some European Union border countries (Ukraine,
  Belarus, Moldova);
- the illegal annexation of the Crimea by Russian Federation;
- the political situation after the failed coup d'état in Turkey.

**MILITARY DIMENSIONS OF THE BLACK SEA BASIN**

From the military point of view, in the Black Sea two major military forces, NATO and the
Russian Federation, operate. Coastal states have a great navy and naval bases. Turkey, Romania, and
Bulgaria form the eastern flank of NATO, while Ukraine and Georgia act as independent states in
various forms of military co-operation with NATO.

Military dimension of Black Sea basin is given by:
- the growth of military forces in Black Sea basin and surrounding areas;
- maintaining a widespread foreign military presence;
- maintaining Russian military infrastructure in Ukraine, Moldova and other ex-Soviet Union borderline countries.

**NAVY FLEET OF THE BLACK SEA COASTAL STATES**

Military fleets of the Black Sea have a total of 256 fighting ships and 95 auxiliary ships (Table 9).

| Table 9 Back Sea coastal states - Navy Fleet potential |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cruisers                          | Romania | Bulgaria | Turkey | Georgia (Coast Guard) | Russian Federation | Ukraine |
| Destroyers                        | 1       |          |        |                      | 1                  |         |
| Frigates                          | 3       | 4        | 16     |                      | 3                  | 4       |
| Corvettes                         | 4       | 3        | 8      |                      | 16                 | 3       |
| Submarines                        | 1       | 1        | 13     |                      |                    | 3       |
| Fast attack crafts                | 6       |          | 21     |                      |                    |         |
| Patrol crafts                     | 12      | 18       | 12     | 7                    |                    |         |
| Minelayers                        | 1       |          |        |                      |                    |         |
| Minesweepers                      | 4       | 18       | 22     | 10                   |                   | 16      |
| LC Ts                             | 1       | 1        | 22     | 7                    |                   | 1       |
| Fleet support ships               | 2       | 1        | 4      |                      | 2                  | 1       |
| Tankers                           | 8       | 16       | 52     | 13                   |                   | 6       |
| Auxiliary                         | 2       | 1        | 5      |                      | 2                  |         |
| Training ships                    | 2       | 1        | 37     |                      |                    | 2       |
| Survey ships                      | 3       | 3        | 37     | 20                   |                    |         |
| Helicopters                       | 3       | 3        | 37     | 20                   |                    |         |
| Land-based air crafts             |         |          |        |                      |                    | 52      |

The Navy personnel of the Black Sea coastal states is approximately 100,000 in 13 naval bases (Table 10).

| Table 10 Staff and bases of the Black Sea coastal state |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Romania | Bulgaria | Turkey | Georgia | Russian Federation | Ukraine |
| Personnel | 7,800       | 3,600       | 44,250       | na               | approx.30,000       | 14,800       |
| Naval bases | Mangalia, | Varna, | Eregli, | Poti | Sevastopol, | |
|            | Constantza | Burgas | Bartin, |                      | Tuapse, | Novorosiysk, |
|            |            |        | Samsun, |                      | Trabzon | Feodosya    |
4. CONCLUSIONS

At present, the Black Sea is a geopolitical area of great interest in the confluence area of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa, located at about 1300 km from the North Sea, the White Sea, the Gibraltar Strait, and the Persian Gulf, and 350 km from Suez and the Great Caspian.

Its geopolitical, economic and military importance grew as the political and economic interest of the great world political actors in the Black Sea increased.

It has developed a new concept, that of the wider Black Sea area, with different sizes, depending on the interests of those working here.

The Black Sea, as the eastern gate of Europe, serves a large hinterland that far exceeds the territory of the coastal states.

The Black Sea has significant reserves of oil and natural gas, which are still unexplored and untapped.

Following the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the failed coup in Turkey, the political situation in the Black Sea basin became critical.

The gross domestic product of Black Sea coastal countries is 3.2% of the world total.

The export/import value of the Black Sea coastal countries in 2015 is about 580 billion USD/540 billion USD part of the sum of world global export in 2015 who was nearly 21,273 trillion USD, and the world global import is 2015 was approximately 20,715 trillion USD.

The merchant fleet of the Black Sea coastal countries has a total displacement of 51.4 million dwt (4.3% of the global total of 1,750 million dwt). The total number of merchant ships is 3,847 (2.93% of the world total of over 89,000 ships).

The total number of ports is 43 of which eight are considered major ports.

The number of ships which transit Bosporus and Dardanelles Straits annually is over 26,000. The port traffic capacity in the Black Sea is over 390 million tons.

In the Black Sea region has formed throughout history some "roads" which facilitated economic and cultural trades, known today as maritime commercial routes:

- "Petroleum road" between Asia and the Caspian Sea in Novorossiysk, Poti, Batumi, and Constanta ports;
- "Coal road" from Samsun port;
- "Mediterranean road" from Bosporus and Istanbul port to the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic;
- roads from Ukraine and Russia through Sevastopol, Sea of Azov and Novorossiysk;
- roads from Balkan Peninsula through Varna and Burgas ports;
- roads which connect Constantza and Mangalia ports with fluvial and maritime Danube;

Related to these Pontic roads, we can tell that they assure a connection with seas and oceans all over the world through the Mediterranean basin.
According to a map made during Tang Dynasty (618 – 907 AD) which can be found at the National Museum of China (Beijing), in that era, there was a detour route of the Silk Road through the north of the Black Sea and Dobrogea region, by connecting with Byzantium (Mircea Malita, “Dobrogea Silk Road” hypothesis, 2011).

The Black Sea Basin is part of central European road and waterway corridors, which links Western Europe with the eastern and south-eastern Europe.

Maritime cargo transport nowadays is made on some well-planed routes for all the oceans and seas of the world. In the Black Sea these routes appeared on major commercial trade routes, nevertheless old or new:

Constantza-Odesa with railway and highway access with Moscow and St. Petersburg; Constantza – Novorossiysk; Constanta – Sukhumi, Poti, Batumi – on the “Petroleum roads” in Caspian Sea; Constantza – Samsun or Istanbul connects Near East and Mediterranean basin; Constantza – Burgas, Varna makes connection with Balkan Peninsula and the Adriatic Sea.

In the Black Sea, the military fleets of the coastal states (in a real process of development and modernization), as well as many other ships belonging to NATO or other countries, act as joint training or military diplomacy as an expression of their geopolitical interests in the region.

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