

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLACK SEA AREA BEFORE AND AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

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*The end of the Cold War also brought the end of the bipolar geopolitical system. The regional level of analysis regained its pre-Cold War importance. The text investigates the context in which the Black Sea region received a new strategic shape and, simultaneously, a new geopolitical importance. The instruments used by this analysis are especially those of the sociology of international relations. A special accent regards Romania's position in the Black Sea security complex.*

The common prejudice that history is a sum or succession of events of greater or less importance which significances will sooner or later end with imposing certain *post-factum* proven causality holds true for Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Black Sea area, which experienced a coming out of totalitarianism of a Communist type.

The time span that elapsed from the collapse of the Soviet system and the official end to the “Cold War” is, unfortunately, too short to allow for an explanatory historiographic paradigm able to evidence the dynamic and evanescent international realities of a decade in which the metamorphoses with direct impact in the area conventionally named the Black Sea basin were deep-going and speedy.

If, in strictly geographic terms this area comprises only the riparian countries – Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine – or sizeable parts of them, in geo-political and geo-economic terms, the same area denotes an expansion with less clear delineations that stretches toward the Balkans, the Aegean Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, the Near East and the Middle East as well as the Caspian basin. This is because the repercussions of the events or the connections between events in one or another region have directly/indirectly affected, to a greater or less extent, relations between the Black Sea riparian countries and the countries in their close proximity.

We mean, first of all, the Balkans, a region of multiple cultural and religious interconnections, with a tragic history, imbued with multi-century traditions and frustrations, the stage of successive army clashes and inter-ethnic conflicts of great magnitude, a region aptly called “the powder keg of Europe” (this region will be the object of our future analysis of the mutual determinations and influences between the Balkans and the Black Sea area).

The effects of such conflicts have led to economic and especially politic relations among states straining off, leaving an imprint on the standards of living and favouring dependency of these states upon states that are stronger in military