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EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

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Paper presented at the conference on “The Challenges of European Neighbourhood Policy”
Rome, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Piazzale Farnesina, 26 -27 November 2004

IAI0422

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

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1. Regional and subregional cooperation in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy

It is well known that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as a tool for privileged cooperation between the European Union and its neighbouring States in the context of the so-called *Wider Europe*, finds its most significant expression in the *Council Conclusions* of 6/14/2004.¹ This policy aims at creating an area of political stability and economic development through stable and transparent regulations in the pan-European and Mediterranean region.²

One of the tools for the fulfillment of the ENP is regional cooperation between the participating countries; in fact, the cited *Conclusions* indicate, though very briefly, that the plans of action between the EU and the single ENP countries “*should also contribute, where possible, to regional cooperation.*”³ A more detailed note is found in the previous *Commission Communication* of 5/12/2004, which makes reference to regional cooperation between ENP member States both in the general section and in the part specifying the various initiatives.⁴ These positions, despite their brevity, represent a partial evolution compared to the two previous Communications of the Commission from 7/1/2003 and 3/11/2003, which said nothing on this point, just as there were no references to it in the *Council Conclusions* of 2003⁵. This development seems to have been provoked by the European Parliament, which, in its November 2003 Report,

¹ The European Neighbourhood Policy implies the definition of *Europe's Borders* and the identification of which States can and can not obtain the *status* of members in the future, according to the *everything except the institutions* formula. This choice objectively deprives the Union of an effective tool for pressuring the *excluded* states to accept *European norms and standards*. On the issue of *Europe's Borders*, in the context of the varied literature on the subject, cfr. LEVY J., *L'Europa. Una geografia*, Milano, 1999; BARNAVI E. et GOOSSENS P. (eds.), *Les frontières de l'Europe*, Bruxelles, 2001; DE GIOVANNI B., *L'ambigua potenza dell'Europa*, Napoli, 2002 and, more recently, POSELSKYY V., *The Frontiers of Europe and the Wider Europe Strategy*, in *Eurojournal.org*, July 2004.

² It seems clear that the ENP represents an early application of art.I-56, c.1 of the Treaty that establishes a European Constitution, that indicates the following: “The Union develops privileged relations with neighboring States in order to create an area of prosperity and a good neighbourhood based on the Union's values and characterized by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.” On this theme, cfr. CREMONA M., *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and Institutional Issues*, Workshop 10/4-5/2004, Stanford University, Promoting Democracy and Rule of Law: American and European Strategies and Instruments.

³ Cfr. *European Neighbourhood Policy. Council Conclusions, 10292/04, Brussels, 14 June 2004*, sub 5.

⁴ *Communication de la Commission Politique européenne de voisinage Document d'orientation, Bruxelles, le 12.5.2004 COM (2004) 373 final*, pp.22-25 where not specified, for the Eastern European and Mediterranean areas, the possible areas for cooperation and useful tools.

⁵ *Council Conclusions on wider Europe – New Neighbourhood, 10447/03, Brussels, 12 June 2003* where, sub 4, it is noted that “*The new neighbourhood policies should not override the existing framework for EU relations with... , as developed in the context of the relevant agreements, common strategies.... Implementation of the existing agreements remains a priority*”.

explicitly referenced forms of regional cooperation existing between both Eastern European countries and Mediterranean countries as among the ENP's tools for action.⁶ Indeed, the ENP defines an articulated approach, which is both collective and individual at the same time; collective regarding all of the States involved, and individual regarding the single States. Furthermore, almost as if to define an intermediate level of cooperation between the EU and the regional organizations of which the ENP countries are a part, it is specified that the plans of action, *wherever possible, should also contribute to regional cooperation*. Nonetheless, we are dealing with a substantially limited emphasis on the question, even though the *EU approach* definition refers to, among other things the '*Promotion of intraregional, subregional and cross-border co-operation*.'⁷ Currently, it is easy to see that this regional cooperation is not a priority in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, but rather is seen as a medium-term perspective. Further confirmation of the only relative importance attributed to regional cooperation among ENP countries can be found in the indications the Council sent to the Commission regarding future activities, among which there is no mention of the problem under discussion here.

Therefore, it is in this medium-term context that the outlines of a future policy for regional cooperation must be defined; in our view though, this policy takes on some importance, because it will play a defining role in determining the EU's basic strategic choices regarding the neighboring countries which are part of the ENP, and above all, as we will see, towards Eastern European countries.

Preliminarily, it seems appropriate to remember just which States are involved in the ENP. For Eastern Europe, the countries are Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, as well as the Trans-Caucasian countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (these are all ex-Soviet Republics, and with the exception of Belarus, are members of the Council of Europe).⁸ For the Mediterranean countries, the ENP involves Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya,⁹ Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority (all of whom, with the obvious exception of Israel, are members of the Arab League). These are States, as we shall see, in which regional cooperation has not yet been significantly developed.

2. Organizations of ENP countries eligible for cooperation with the European Union in Eastern Europe (OCEMN and GUUAM) and the Mediterranean (UMA)

In order to fully develop the theme we are dealing with today, it will be useful to identify, first of all, the main organizations in which ENP countries participate, and with which the EU can realistically establish cooperation in the framework of the ENP.

⁶ *Relazione su "Europa ampliata – Prossimità: un nuovo contesto per le relazioni con i nostri vicini orientali e meridionali A5-0378/2003 finale, 5.11.2003*, (relatore Napoletano), in numerous places.

⁷ *Council Conclusions on wider Europe – New Neighbourhood, 10447/03, op.cit.*, sub 6, letter m. Further ideas can be inferred from the references (again, sub 6) to "... *Preferential trading relations... in accordance with WTO principles*" as well as to cooperation in the structural field (transportation, energy and telecommunications) which assumes regional integration.

⁸ The participation in the ENP of the Trans-Caucasia countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, hoped for by the Commission, was approved in the Council Conclusions of 2004. Moreover, those States have signed single *Partnership and Co-operation Agreements* which have been in effect since 7/1/1999.

⁹ The EU position towards Libya was defined in point 14 of the Council Conclusions of 2004, although recently there have been other significant developments.

This preliminary definition seems absolutely necessary, as there appears to be little clarity on this point. In fact, the Commission Communication of 5/12/2003¹⁰ lists the regional initiatives that “...ont un rôle important à jouer, au même titre que les Eurorégions et la coopération transfrontalière au niveau local.” For Eastern Europe, this includes the Council of Europe, the Baltic Sea Council, the Central European Initiative, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Stability Pact, while there is no reference to the Mediterranean area. On the other hand, the European Parliament Report mentions the Arab Maghreb Union.

Actually, the initiatives I cited are extremely varied, but above all, they involve the participation of a net majority of European countries not included in the ENP. Thus, the Council of Europe includes all European States (including those in the Trans-Caucasia region), but excludes Belarus. Only three ENP States are part of the Central European Initiative (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine), while the majority are EU member States (6) or candidate States (3) or European States not part of the ENP (3). The marginal nature of the ENP countries is even more evident for the Stability Pact, in which extra-European members participate. Lastly, regarding the Baltic Sea Council (to be precise, the *Council of Baltic Sea States*), the only State which is potentially an ENP State is Russia, which has established an autonomous *strategic partnership* relationship with the EU.¹¹

Based on the clear *numerical* minority of the ENP countries, it seems that the initiatives indicated by the Commission, with the lone exception of the Black Sea Cooperation, can not be included in the ENP, in the sense of establishing relationships of cooperation and complementarity. Even though, evidently, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that cooperation between ENP and EU states can continue and develop fruitfully in the context of those organizations.

The present analysis will take a different approach, and first of all, will seek to identify the organizations with a majority (or at least a very significant presence) of ENP States with which the EU can establish bilateral relations. Based on this analysis, we will attempt to understand the relations that currently exist and the potential for future cooperation between the EU and these organizations in the framework of the ENP.

Regarding Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics, the principal organization is the *Community of Independent States* (CIS) founded in 1991.¹² Within this flexible structure for cooperation, other minor forms of cooperation have arisen, such as, among others,¹³ the *Eurasian Economic Community* and the *GUAM* (acronym formed by the

¹⁰ The Commission Communication of 5/12/2003, *op.cit.*, p.23. On the Eastern European organizations, cfr. COTTEY A. (ed.), *Subregional Cooperation in the New Europe, building Security, Prosperity and Solidarity from the Barents to the Black Sea*, London, 1999 and also BREMMER I. a. BAILES A., *Subregionalism in the Newly Independent States*, in *International Affairs (London)*, 1998, n.1, p.131 and CRISTESCU J., *Coopérations en Europe du Sud-Est*, in *Courrier des pays de l'Est*, 2003, n.1039, p.17.

¹¹ Some diplomatic documents and scientific studies also cite regional initiatives such as the *Barents cooperation*, in which Russia is the only potential ENP State participating, and the so-called *Northern Dimension* in which both Russia and Belarus participate. Both of these cases represent forms of cooperation that can certainly function profitably, but that, at the moment, do not seem to fit into the bilateral cooperation relationship with the EU.

¹² The CIS was founded by the *Agreement of the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, done at Minsk on December 8, 1991*, followed by the Protocol of 12/21/1991. Cooperation was later increased through the signing of the *Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, done at Minsk on January 22, 1993*.

¹³ Among the organizations whose member States are prevalently not ENP, we mention the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (St Petersburg, 6/7/2002) and the *Central Asian Cooperation Organization*

initials of the participating States: Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Moldova), while *third* States (non former-USSR states) also participate in the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization* (OCEMN).

In terms of the participant countries, 12 former Soviet Republics have joined the CIS: these are the seven Eastern European ENP States and five non-ENP States (the Central Asian Republics). 5 States are part of the *Eurasian Economic Community*,¹⁴ of which 2 are ENP States (Russia, Belarus) and 3 are non-ENP States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). As for the OCEMN, founded with the Istanbul Declaration of 6/25/1992 which established the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation*¹⁵ (BSEC), and formalized with the Yalta treaty of 6/5/1998,¹⁶ there are now 12 member States (plus one).¹⁷ This includes one State from the European Community (Greece), two for which membership in the Union will come soon (Bulgaria e Romania), one State which is already a candidate for membership (Turkey),¹⁸ six ENP States (Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), and two non-ENP Balkan States (Albania and Serbia-Montenegro).¹⁹ Finally, regarding the thirteenth State, there is Macedonia, where an internal ratification procedure is underway for the OCEMN treaty; Macedonia is not a ENP state, but it recently presented a request for membership in the EU.²⁰ As for the GUUAM, a *weak* organization established in 1997 yet only somewhat formalized in

that, founded in Alma Ata on 2/28/2002, without the participation of Russia, has recently (June 2004) seen that State join. Cfr. LATAWSKY P.C., *The limits of Diversity in Post-Soviet Space: CIS and GUUAM*, (Security in the Black Sea Region: Perspectives and Priorities, Conflict Studies Research Centre), March 2001

¹⁴ *Treaty Establishing the Eurasian Economic Community executed in Astana 10th day of October 2000.*

¹⁵ *Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, (herein the *Istanbul Declaration*) and *Bosphorus Statement, Istanbul 25 June 1992*. On the first phase of cooperation, cfr. HARTWIG I., *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Process*, in *Eipascope*, 1997, n.1, p.3.

¹⁶ *Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Yalta, 5 June 1998* (herein the *BSEC Charter*). On this question, cfr. CANTIUC N., *Les dernières évolutions au sein de l'Organisation de la coopération économique de la mer noire*, s.d. (<http://www.robert-schumann.org/synth3.htm>); KYRIMIS S., *La coopération économique de la Mer Noire (CEMN): d'un forum multinational à une organisation internationale. Examen juridique de cette transition*, in *RHDI*, 2000, n.1, p.111; VALINAKIS Y., *The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe*, Chaillot Paper 36, July 1999 and RAM M.H., *Black Sea Economic Cooperation towards European Integration*, Presented at the Black Sea Regional Policy Symposium, March 29/April 1, 2002, Leesburg, VA. For an economic analysis, cfr. SAYAN S., *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for or A Complement to Globalisation Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?*, Working Paper No.9806, Cairo, Egypt: Economic Research Forum, 1998.

¹⁷ The political, economic, ethnic, religious, military and demographic lack of homogeneity of the BSEC member States involves, according to the theory, many problems in reaching the goals of cooperation; cfr. ARAL B., *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation after Ten Years: What Went Wrong?*, in *Alternatives*, 2002, v.1, n.4.

¹⁸ The coming membership of Bulgaria, Romania, and later Turkey, in the EU, allows for the opportunity to establish a systematic common policy towards the Black Sea basin, which will become the *border* of the EU. On this issue cfr. AYDIN M., *Europe's next shore: the Black Sea Region after the EU enlargement*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper n.53, June 2004.

¹⁹ On the occasion of the *Tenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Baku, 30 April 2004*, (resolutions) sub 1 Serbia-Montenegro was admitted.

²⁰ *Tenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Baku, 30 April 2004*, (resolutions) sub 2. Macedonia's request for membership in the EU does not seem to have been *particularly welcome* and, officially, the current requests for membership are limited to those of Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia.

2001 with the founding Declaration called the *Yalta GUUAM Charter*,²¹ there are five members States, of whom four are ENP countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia). Uzbekistan, which currently does not participate in the common activities of the GUUAM,²² is not part of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Moreover, in evaluating the activity of the various organizations in Eastern Europe, there are well known difficulties in their functioning.²³ In particular, the CIS has *great difficulty* in reaching its institutional objectives, and it can be said that it *organizes* relations between its members States only in very general terms. In the framework of the CIS, in fact, rules have been developed that are different for different areas, in which each agreement is subject to *acceptance* by the single States. The most significant result which this has produced, besides the possibilities regarding strategic agreements, is the *Eurasian Economic Community*, formerly the CIS Customs Union, which has only five member States. Furthermore, regarding the power relations between the member States, Russia has veto power regarding the decisions made by the Ministerial body known as the *Integration Committee*.²⁴ In addition, there are clear elements of contradiction and duplication in the *Single Economic Space* initiative, which is also applied inconsistently, established between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.²⁵

In conclusion, based on considerations of mere numbers and possibility,²⁶ the organizations in Eastern Europe that are potentially interested in the ENP should be the OCEMN and the GUUAM.

The OCEMN is the most mature association, which operated, at the beginning, through a *weak* organization - not based on a pact - and reinforced by a Secretariat²⁷ and by subsidiary institutions such as the *Black Sea Trade and Development Bank –BSTDB*.²⁸ Now, since the founding treaty has taken effect, a complex institutional apparatus with

²¹ *Yalta GUUAM Charter, June 7 2001, Yalta, Ukraine*. Despite being called a *Charter*, the cooperation between the GUUAM states functions at a political-diplomatic level, although there is a tendency towards institutionalization with the potential for a complex institutional apparatus.

²² Uzbekistan joined the GUUAM in 1999, but has not actively participated in its activities since 2002. That State's position seems to be very close to Russia's, as it joined the founding treaty of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* with China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia.

²³ On the real vitality of the organizations founded in the former Soviet Union, cfr. the position expressed by a Georgian diplomat, who stated: "After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a number of regional organizations have been created within this space (CIS, Customs Union, Russia-Belarus Union, Eurasian Economic Union Treaty, etc.). But most of them have been established either artificially or under pressure. That's why almost all such organizations today are defunct, and from this perspective not viable. One of the exceptions, or even the only exceptions, is GUUAM"; cfr. *Remarks by the Ambassador Tedo Japaridze At the GUUAM workshop The Stanford University November 17-18, 2000*.

²⁴ Art.13, c.2 of the *Economic Community Treaty* states that in the *Integration Committee*, Russia will have 40% of the votes, the two medium-sized States (Kazakhstan and Belarus) 20% each, and 10% for the two smaller States (Kyrgyzstan e Tajikistan). A two-thirds majority is needed for approval of decisions, while Russia has veto power. Vice versa, Art.13, c.1 states that the *Interstate Council*, formed by the Heads of State and Government, shall decide according to *consensus*.

²⁵ Cfr. *Réunion des Chefs d'Etat bielorusse, kazakh, russe et ukrainien sur l'EEU. Déclaration des Présidents et accord (Yalta, 19 septembre 2003)*, in *Documents d'Actualité Internationale*, 2003, n.23, p.83.

²⁶ It should be considered that the EU's relations with Russia are part of a specific *strategic partnership*, while regarding Belarus, the current internal political situation does not allow for participation in the ENP.

²⁷ The *BSEC Permanent Secretariat -BSEC PERMIS-*, founded on 3/10/1994 in Istanbul, is now regulated by art.16 of the *BSEC Charter* and by a series of other secondary documents.

²⁸ *Agreement Establishing the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, Tbilisi, June, 30, 1994*. The BSTDB activities, which are headquartered in Salonika, began in June of 1999.

an intergovernmental character is to be developed,²⁹ as well as an interparliamentary dimension (*Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC -PABSEC-*)³⁰ and bodies that represent the business world (*BSEC Business Council*) and the academic world (*International Center for Black Sea Studies -ICBSS*), besides the Secretariat I already mentioned.

The *Principles and Objectives*³¹ and the powers regarding security and stability,³² as well as those regarding general and sectorial economic cooperation,³³ appear to be substantially coherent with what is called for in the ENP; and, apart from the not quite impressive results obtained so far, the regular meetings held in the context of the OCEMN contribute to the stability and security of an area characterized by significant internal and international tensions.³⁴

As for the GUUAM, this is a political-diplomatic organization not based on a pact, in which member States tend to strengthen political and economic cooperation both internally and internationally. The GUUAM and its member States seem to move internationally, *very cautiously* attempting to escape from the influence of Russia, with the support of the United States.³⁵ The GUUAM also cites, first of all, the documents of the United Nations Charter and the Paris Charter and is devoted to the principles of democracy, respect of fundamental human rights and freedoms, rule of law and market economy and basic principles of international law such as sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity etc.³⁶ Both the political-strategic³⁷ and technical-functional³⁸

²⁹ The intergovernmental cooperation is carried out, in addition to at the level of Heads of State and Government, Foreign Affairs and other competent Ministers, also through meetings of the *Committee of Senior Officials*, fifteen *Working groups* and a variety of groups and subgroups.

³⁰ Interparliamentary cooperation was initiated by the *Speakers* of the national Parliaments with the *Declaration on the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Istanbul, 2/26/1993* and was formalized in art.20 of the *BSEC Charter*.

³¹ In the premises of the *BSEC Charter*, reference is made to the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter, generally accepted legal principles and norms, and also, among other things, (art.3), “*a spirit of friendship and good neighborliness and enhanced mutual respect and confidence, dialogue and cooperation among the Member States.*”

³² In the *BSEC Charter* reference is made to *confidence building measures*, meaning the creation of an *area of peace, stability and prosperity, through the promotion of friendly and good-neighbourly relations among the participating nations*. Economic cooperation both in terms of trade and specific economic sectors (transportation, communications, energy, environment) is also foreseen.

The pursuit of political stability in the area is even more important now, as an *arc of instability* has emerged, from Palestine, Iraq, the Caucuses and Central Asia. On this subject RAM M.H., *op.cit.*, p.3 correctly observes that “*The EU and United States hoped that by encouraging subregional cooperation they might strengthen regional stability and security. In particular, candidate countries were required to sign friendship treaties with their neighbours and resolve any outstanding border disputes and cross-border minority right issues.*”

³³ Cfr. art.4 of the *BSEC Charter: Areas of cooperation*.

³⁴ On the same subject RAM M.H., *op.cit.*, p.14 note how, from a political standpoint, the BSEC serves as a regular forum for the discussion of both multilateral and bilateral problems whose solutions do not involve the EU. On the BSEC, as a tool for *confidence-building*, cfr. MICU N., *Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) as a Confidence-building Measure*, in *Perceptions*, 1996 Dec.-1997 Feb., v.I, n.4.

³⁵ The GUUAM States and the United States sign *Joint Statements* and have elaborated a common *Framework Program*; in the field, cfr. MAC FARLANE S. N., *The United States and regionalism in Central Asia*, in *International Affairs (London)*, 2004, n.2, sp. is., p.447.

³⁶ In the initial considerations of the *Yalta GUUAM Charter*, we find: “*Guided by the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter for New Europe and the Charter for European Security of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Being devoted to the principles of democracy, respect of fundamental human rights and freedoms, rule of law and market economy, acknowledging that regional cooperation is a part of globalization process, and may contribute*

powers seem to be fully coherent with the ENP, such that, in our view, both the GUUAM and the OCEMN are fully compatible for future cooperation with the EU on a regional level.

We now move on to an evaluation of the organizations of Mediterranean countries. I have already mentioned the potential for cooperation with the Arab League; however, the abundance of participants and the political relevance of Euro-Arab relations³⁹ leads us to exclude the possibility of Arab League participation in the ENP in the short term. A lower level of participation can be found in two organizations of which the ENP states in the Mediterranean are a part: these are the UMA and the so-called CEN-SAD.

The UMA, founded in 1989,⁴⁰ includes four ENP countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) and one non-ENP country, Mauritania, whose position is not clear.⁴¹ The UMA was active in the initial years after it was founded, yet internal contrasts, especially between Algeria and Morocco, affected its development; its main body, the Heads of State and Government Summit, has not met since 1994.⁴² Currently, in a paradox, the relations established between certain UMA and EU countries in the context of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean policy seem to be more developed than those among UMA members themselves.⁴³

to consolidation of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the GUUAM Member States, promote peaceful settlement of conflicts and improve well-being of their peoples”.

³⁷ The *Yalta GUUAM Charter* identifies the goals of cooperation as “*promoting social and economic development; strengthening and expanding trade and economic links; development and effective use in the interest of GUUAM states of the transport and communication arteries with its corresponding infrastructure situated in their territories; strengthening of the regional security in all sphere of activity; developing relations in the field of science and culture and in the humanitarian sphere; interacting in the framework of international organizations; combating international terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking*”. The *Directions of cooperation of the GUUAM* are specified in point n.3 of the *Yalta GUUAM Charter*.

³⁸ The substantial activity is carried out with the signing of common declarations in terms of both internal and international policy, and with the establishment of a series of agreements, among which we find important agreements on trade matters (*Agreement on the Establishment of Free Trade Area among the GUUAM Participating States, July 20, 2002, Yalta, Ukraine*) and the fight against terrorism (*Agreement on the Cooperation among the GUUAM Member States in the Fields of Combat Against Terrorism, July 20, 2002, Yalta, Ukraine*).

³⁹ On relations with the Arab world, , cfr. the Commission document on *Strengthening the EU’s Partnership with the Arab World, Brussels, 4 December 2003 D(2003) 10318* and also *EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, approved by the European Council of Brussels on 6/17-18/2004 (*Euromed Report*, 23.6.2004, n.78).

⁴⁰ *Traité de création de l’Union du Maghreb Arabe, Marrakech, 17.12.1989*.

⁴¹ The UMA should coincide with the *Regional Economic Community* competent for North Africa, as provided for by art.4 of the founding Treaty of the *African Economic Community* from 6/3/1991. From the standpoint of the participants, the absence of Egypt is significant, as in the past, this country had taken on the role of observer, and had, on the other hand, joined the COMESA, active in Eastern and Southern Africa, and the CEN-SAD.

⁴² The last UMA Summit was held in Tunisia on April 2-3, 1994. A summit was called in Algiers in 2002, but put off *sine die* due to other disagreements.

⁴³ Tunisia has the closest relations with the EU, and hopes (as Morocco does) to take on an intermediate *status* between being an associate and being a member; cfr. statements by Prime Minister M. Ghannouchi during the working session with President R. Prodi on 4/1/2003 (<http://www.infotunisie.com/2003/04/010403-1.html>).

On the necessity of the UMA reaching a common political position with respect to EU enlargement in 2004, cfr. the statement of the UMA General Secretary BOULARES H., *L’élargissement et les nouveaux*

The *Communauté des Etats Sahélo-Sahariens* (commonly called CEN-SAD)⁴⁴ was founded in 1998 on the initiative of Libya with the original participation of six States.⁴⁵ Currently, there are eighteen member States, including four ENP countries (Libya, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia), along with fourteen other non-ENP States, (all from the Sahel region and beyond).⁴⁶ This enlargement of the number of participants, causing the sub-Saharan States to be in the majority, leads us to exclude the possibility of participation in the ENP; thus, for the Mediterranean area, the ENP may need to only refer to the experience of the UMA.

An interesting change in the field of cooperation between Arab ENP countries is represented by the recent *Agadir agreement* of 2/25/2004 that, in the perspective of a wider Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone, establishes a free trade zone between four Arab States (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia). However, due to its early phase of cooperation, the relatively limited powers, the non-continuous geographic nature of the member States, as well as the limited institutional structure, we are led to put off any evaluation of the possibility of including this initiative in the context of the ENP.⁴⁷

3. Current relations between the European Union and the organization of Eastern European (OCEMN, GUUAM) and Mediterranean (UMA) member states of the European Neighbourhood Policy

As we limit our analysis to the Eastern European cases of the OCEMN and the GUUAM and, for the Mediterranean countries, the UMA, it is necessary to evaluate current relations with the European Union. To this end, we will first proceed to analyze how these organizations present themselves to the European Union, and then examine the European *response*, which appears differentiated, but overall, quite *lukewarm*.

Of the two Eastern-European organizations, the one which shows the most interest in European integration is the OCEMN.⁴⁸ This is evident first of all due to the

équilibres méditerranéennes, Vième Forum International de Réalités, Tunis, 26-27 septembre 2003, (allocutions/001.htm).

⁴⁴ The *Communauté des Etats Sahélo-Sahariens* is commonly called CEN-SAD (in reference to the Arab terms Sahara and Sahel) to avoid confusion with the other regional African organization, the *Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa -COMESA-*, founded by the treaty of Kampala on 11/5/1993.

⁴⁵ *Traité sur la création de la Communauté des Etats Sahélo-Sahariens, signé à Tripoli le 4.2.1998.* The founding treaty was signed by Libya, Sudan, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. On this organization cfr. KERDOUN A., *Régionalisme et intégration en Afrique. Vers un nouveau groupement des pays sahélo-sahariens*, in *RJPIC*, 1998, n.1, p.48 and MATTES H., *Die Sahel- und Sahara-Staatengemeinschaft (SinSad): Instrument der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, Konfliktvermittlung und regionalen Interessensicherung*, Deutsches Übersee-Institut, November 2001.

⁴⁶ Besides the six original States and the Mediterranean countries of Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, numerous African States have joined the CEN-SAD (Benin, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Eritrea, Gabon, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Togo), which are outside the original area of competence. Furthermore, we note the absence of two countries in the Sahara area, Algeria and Mauritania.

⁴⁷ The participation of Mediterranean Arab States in a variety of competing associations may indicate a merely formal commitment to these groups, as the real prospects for development of these organizations appear quite weak. As an example, we recall that Morocco and Tunisia are simultaneously members of the UMA, the *Agadir agreement* and CEN-SAD; likewise, Egypt is a member of the *Agadir agreement*, CEN-SAD, and also COMESA.

⁴⁸ For a clear, but dated, analysis of the perspectives for BSEC-UE cooperation, cfr. OZER E., *The Black Sea Economic Co-operation and the EU*, in *Romanian Journal of International Affairs*, 1997, n.3, p.108 and, more recently, the writings of VALINAKIS Y., *op.cit.* e AYDIN M., *op.cit.*

participation of Greece,⁴⁹ four other candidate States, and European and Trans-Caucasia States that *define themselves as potential candidates for EU membership*.⁵⁰ The only OCEMN State currently not interested in *membership* is, understandably, Russia, which has established a privileged *partnership* relationship with the EU that is tendentially based on equality between the two; the so-called *strategic partnership*, that, de facto, encompasses Russia's participation in the ENP.⁵¹

Constant references to the potential for cooperation between the OCEMN and EU are found in the Concluding Declarations of the Heads of State and Government Summits,⁵² while the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs approved the *Resolution on BSEC-EU Cooperation in 1999*.⁵³ Subsequently, the *interest for Europe* has been reaffirmed on numerous occasions;⁵⁴ in particular, at the *Fifth meeting* in October 2001, the Ministers mentioned OCEMN-UE relations⁵⁵ and the *BSTDB* initiative relative to the *Black Sea – EU Conference (Thessaloniki, 9/10/2001)*, while during the *Sixth meeting* in 2002 they mentioned the *high level consultations* held in Brussels in March 2001.⁵⁶ In the *Eighth meeting* in April 2003⁵⁷ the Council called for qualitative improvements in cooperation, with a strengthening of relations between institutions, while, on substantial questions, the OCEMN considers cooperation with the EU in the context of an *emerging new European Architecture*, and is attempting to define the operative tools for this

⁴⁹ Greece, due to its double participation, has several times been called upon to represent the *needs* of the OCEMN within the EU. Nevertheless, until now, as emphasized by AYDIN M., *op.cit.*, p.29, Greece has not, for various reasons, carried out this task.

⁵⁰ “*Les objectifs à atteindre sont pragmatiques et progressifs. Ils ne sont pas exclusifs, l'aide des organisations internationales, et en particulier celle de l'Union Européenne, est particulièrement nécessaire dans la perspective d'une intégration à l'Europe. L'OCEMN se veut une organisation complémentaire à l'Union Européenne, qui pourrait constituer une étape préparatoire pour l'intégration à part entière des Etats membres dans l'Union* » thus says CANTIUC N., *op.cit.*, p.5. The BSEC States, with the lone exception of Russia, consider the organization not as an end in itself, but as a means for getting closer to the *West*, meaning, first of all, the EU, but also NATO and the OSCE. Moreover, all of the OCEMN States have signed individual agreements with the EU, with various names and varying contents, and in 2003 Council made reference to the need to respect these agreements. On the possible development of EU-OCEMN cooperation, in particular in the framework of the ENP, cfr. AYDIN M., *op.cit.*

⁵¹ FOSBERG T., *The EU-Russia Security Partnership: Why the Opportunity was Missed*, in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2004, p.247.

⁵² Cfr., in particular, *Yalta Summit Declaration, 5 June 1998*, sub 8 where we find a reference to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Union.

⁵³ *(First) Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki, 27 October 1999, I Resolutions A- BSEC-EU Cooperation (or Platform of co-operation BSEC-EU)*.

⁵⁴ The position of the Foreign Ministers of the OCEMN has not always been consistent; thus, BSEC-UE cooperation was emphasized in the *Second Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Chisinau, 27 April 2000*, sub 8-11, the *Third Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, 20 October 2000*, sub 58 where, in particular, hope is expressed for the establishment of direct relations between the Presidencies of the two organizations, and PERMIS is authorized to maintain relations with the Commission, and again on the occasion of the *Seventh meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Tirana 25 October 2002*, sub 9-11. On other occasions, the question has not been addressed, such as in the *Fourth meeting* in Moscow in April 2001 and, more recently, the *Ninth meeting* in Baku in October 2003 and the *Tenth meeting* in Baku in April 2004.

⁵⁵ *Report of the fifth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Antalya, 26 October 2001, sub 21-28* with a series of initiatives also from PERMIS.

⁵⁶ *Report of the sixth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Kyev, 25 April 2002 and Sixth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Kyev, 25 April 2002, sub 9*. Surprisingly, there are no European Community documents regarding this consultation.

⁵⁷ *Report of the eighth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Yerevan, 18 April 2003*.

cooperation.⁵⁸ Finally, in June 2004, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed that “*We consider the BSEC region as an integral part of Europe*”⁵⁹ and praised “*the unique experience of the European Union*” and the interdependence between the two regions.⁶⁰

As for the other OCEMN institutions, the Vice-Secretary General is responsible for relations with the EU, while the PABSEC has established a direct relationship with the European Parliament⁶¹ approving the *BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership*.⁶²

Essentially, the OCEMN has explicitly stated its intention to come *closer* to the EU, but until now, the institutional tool connecting the two organizations has been lacking, and on substantial issues, the collective proposals, alongside the individual approaches expressed by each single BSEC State, seem rather vague.⁶³

In the GUUAM, there is a more prudent attitude towards the EU, found in particular in the older documents where there are only occasional references to cooperation with pan-European organizations⁶⁴ and specific Euro-Asian transport (TRACECA) and energy issues. On the other hand, the reference to cooperation in the context of the OSCE, and especially, to *the high level of cooperation with USA*⁶⁵ was (and is) traditionally present. Only recently, as we will see soon, have the first occasional forms of cooperation between the GUUAM and the EU been established.

Regarding the Mediterranean area, the UMA approach towards the European Union seems to be quite prudent, since the organization’s founding treaty specifies that the preferred organisms for international cooperation are to be found in the context of the United Nations with respect to development aid, and understandably, in Arab and Islamic organizations. Nevertheless, in practice, immediately after the birth of the UMA (as we shall now see), relations with the European Union and other global and regional organizations were established.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ *Eighth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Yerevan, 18 April 2003, sub 8-12.*

⁵⁹ *Statement of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States on the BSEC contribution to security and stability, Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 25 June 2004, sub 11.*

⁶⁰ The *Statement* cited identifies the BSEC’s vision in an exemplary manner, and proceeds to say “*Therefore we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the proposed Platform of the EU-BSEC cooperation. We emphasize the significance of the unique experience of the European Union. The interdependence between the EU and the BSEC region, stemming from increasing political, economic and cultural ties realistically expected to reach a higher level. A clear and visible European perspective could be a strong incentive for the Member States to forge a lasting cooperative environment in the region, in accordance with the principles of international law.*”

⁶¹ In March of 2002 the *Speaker* of the PABSEC, Mrs. N. Burjanadze, visited the European Parliament.

⁶² *Report The Black Sea Region within the Context of the Enlargement of the European Union, Doc.: GA22/LC/REP/03 The Twenty Second Plenary Session of the General Assembly. Legal and Political Affairs Committee, adopted in Bucharest on December 9 2003.*

⁶³ *Cfr.*, along the same lines, AYDIN M., *op.cit.*, p.30.

⁶⁴ In the *New York Memorandum* of 9/6/2000 we read “*Noting the importance of integration process and of collaboration between their (GUUAM) States in cooperation with the European structures, including the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme.*”

⁶⁵ *Cfr. Final Communiqué of Guuam Summit, Yalta, 7/3-4/2003.* The Summit that was to be held in Georgia in June 2004 was postponed due to doubts about the location expressed by Moldova.

⁶⁶ The *Traité de création de l’Union du Maghreb Arabe* only provides for a limited competence in terms of international relations that, nevertheless, developed rapidly. The UMA has thus carried out certain diplomatic activities and made agreements with global international organizations (OMC, ONUDI, CNUCED, CEA, CIND) and regional organizations (CILSS, UDEAC, CEDEAO).

The EU *response* was differentiated, but as we have said, it was fairly lukewarm overall; despite the fact that at the beginning of the 1990s there was undoubtedly a *favorable* attitude towards the UMA, in particular through the so-called *5+5 Dialogue*.⁶⁷ However, faced with internal difficulties over cooperation and the emergence of the Libyan problem, the EU preferred to seek bilateral relations with single States in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean policy (the *Barcelona Process*)⁶⁸ and its various tools for action, particularly at the technical-functional level.⁶⁹ Recently, in a changed political environment, the *5+5 Dialogue* was reactivated at the highest level,⁷⁰ while a potentially significant contribution to the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone is represented by the *Agadir agreement*, which has already been mentioned.⁷¹ As for the GUUAM, only after the signing of the *GUUAM Yalta Charter* in 2002, did the EU's position seem, at least at times, to be more attentive. The participation of the Commission's representative at the Summit where the cited *Charter* was signed appears significant in this sense, although it may have been more formal than substantial.⁷² Subsequently, there was some European participation in certain GUUAM activities, such as in a *working group* on the creation of the *GUUAM Free Trade Area*, which saw the participation of a representative of the Commission.⁷³ At a higher level, a delegation of the Commission (together with delegations from the United States and other global

⁶⁷ The EU's contribution to the strengthening of the UMA was achieved, in particular through the so-called *5+5 Dialogue*, with the Rome meeting in 1990 and the Algiers meeting in 1991 among the five UMA countries and five European countries (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Malta). On this subject, cfr. RISI C., *Note sul Maghreb arabo*, in *Oriente Moderno*, 1993, n.1-6, pp.27-31; HOULISTON R., *L'UMA – état et perspectives*, in *Etudes Internationales (Tunis)*, 1999, n.2, p.31 and ATTIA A., *Les relations euro-maghrébines*, in *Etudes Internationales (Tunis)*, 2002, n.3, p.26.

⁶⁸ For the most recent contributions to the development of Euro-Mediterranean policy almost ten years after the Barcelona Conference, cfr. *Euro-Mediterranean Mid-Term Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Dublin, 5-6 May 2004) Presidency conclusions*.

⁶⁹ An important tool for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is the MEDA Program, regulated by the *EC Regulation n.1488/96 of the Council, of 7/23/1996, on financial and technical measures to accompany (MEDA) the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership*, in GU, n. L 189 of 7/30/1996 as modified by the *EC Regulation CE n.780/98 of 4/7/1998*, in GU, L 113 of 4/15/1998 and by the *EC Regulation n.2698/2000 of 11/27/2000*, in GU, n. L 311 from 12/12/2000. This program calls for support for regional, subregional and cross-border cooperation, including through the creation and development of regional cooperation structures among Mediterranean countries, and between those countries, the EU and its member States.

⁷⁰ The relationship, suspended for almost ten years, resumed with the Ministerial meetings in Lisbon in 2001, Tripoli in 2002, St. Maxime in 2003, and above all, the Heads of State and Government Summit held in Tunis in 2003; cfr. *Déclaration de Tunis au premier Sommet des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement des pays du bassin occidental de la Méditerranée Dialogue 5+5 (Tunis, les 5 et 6 décembre 2003)*.

⁷¹ European Commissioner CH. PATTEN, *On the Occasion of the Signature of the Agadir Agreement, Agadir, Morocco, 25 february 2004* emphasized the agreement's importance for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone (<http://www.Eurunion.org/News/speeches/2004/040225cp.htm>). It is also important to remember, as a tangible sign of European support, that a program of support for the *Agadir Agreement* and the Secretariat that is being formed, including 4 million Euros in aid, is provided for in the context of MEDA.

⁷² At the GUUAM Summit in Yalta on 7/20/2002 representatives of ten States participated as *guests*, including Greece, the only EU member there, and the *Ambassador of the European Commission N. Justin*; (http://www.guam.org.ua/cgi-bin/valprint_guam.sh?1p02.html). This presence represents the first sign, although it is merely a formal one, of EU attention towards GUUAM.

⁷³ At the *GUUAM Free Trade Area Working Group* held in Kiev on 11/4/2002 *EU representatives* participated and confirmed the Commission's willingness "...to provide assistance and know-how to GUUAM countries through its bilateral TACIS programmes;" (http://europa.eu.it/comm/external_relations/osce/stment/eea211102.htm).

and regional organizations) was present, as a *guest*, at the *Third Meeting of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs* in 2003.⁷⁴ Finally, more recently, representatives of the Commission participated in the 2004 *Meeting of the Committee of National Coordinators*, where for the first time, there was discussion of *the establishment of GUUAM-US-EU cooperation*.⁷⁵ Therefore, there is a very cautious change in the EU's interest towards the GUUAM, even though, in our view, more attention would be advisable, since the absence of a systematic EU policy towards this organization leaves room for a *negative* influence from Russia and a *positive* one from the United States. If Europe intends to be a leading player in international relations, especially in an *area which is so close geographically* and is part of the ENP area, it would be a mistake to leave political and economic *space* to other *powerful* players, almost deliberately.⁷⁶

The same approach of tendential *disinterest*, although to a lesser degree, exists towards the OCEMN, which the EU seems to have underestimated (sometimes in an *almost schizophrenic* manner). Regarding inter-institutional relations, the Union's Presidency issued a brief *Statement* on the occasion of the signing of the founding treaty.⁷⁷

Furthermore, another expression of a wavering approach is represented by the EU's participation in the half-year meetings of the Foreign Ministers,⁷⁸ which are characterized by the alternation, without any apparent criteria of logic or time, of participation of representatives of the Commission as *official guests*,⁷⁹ and glaring absences.⁸⁰ One particular event, the *Sixth meeting* in Kiev in 2002, saw the simultaneous presence of both the Council and the Commission as *official guests*.⁸¹

From a substantial standpoint, considering the OCEMN's repeated votes in favor of strengthening cooperation, the response from the EU seems to have been merely formal until now, and almost inattentive. In November 1997, the Commission approved a Communication which was positive towards the initiative from a strategic political standpoint, and defined certain common interests. Nevertheless, the Communication showed a certain amount of caution regarding both the *classic* tools for cooperation (TACIS, MEDA, INTERREG) and the interlocutors considered as prevalently the

⁷⁴ *Third Meeting of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of GUUAM in Tbilisi*, (<http://www.guam.org/release/11129may03.htm>).

⁷⁵ *Meeting of the Committee of National Coordinators (CNC) of GUUAM*, (http://www.guam.org.ua/cgi-bin/valnewsprint_guam.sh?lposlrecent.shtml).

⁷⁶ If there is not a *deliberate* intention to enter into competition with the United States and Russia, European influence could be used *surreptitiously* in support of single technical-functional projects, as well as in the fight against terrorism and organized crime. On the basis of the *Decision of the Heads of GUUAM Participating States on the Status of Observers of GUUAM Activities, Yalta, 7/20/2002*, the EU could request observer status.

⁷⁷ *Presidency Statement on behalf of the European Union on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Summit, published in Kiev, Brussels and London on 4 June (1998)*.

⁷⁸ Certain EU States, including Italy, have observer status, which involves systematic participation in the various *Meetings*.

⁷⁹ *Report of the (first) meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki, 27 October 1999; Report of the second meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Chisinau, 27 April 2000; Report of the fourth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Moscow, 27 April 2001; Report of the eighth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Yerevan, 18 April 2003; Report of the ninth meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Baku, 31 October 2003*.

⁸⁰ In the *Third Meeting* in Bucharest, no EU representatives were present; the same was true in the *Fifth meeting* in Antalya in October 2001, the *Seventh meeting* in Tirana in October 2002 and the *Tenth meeting* in Baku in April 2004.

⁸¹ *Report of the Sixth Meeting ... op.cit.*, sub 5.

single States.⁸² The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in December 1997, simply *noted with satisfaction* the aforementioned Communication.⁸³ Subsequent relations between the EU and OCEMN have continued to be irregular and not particularly significant, so much so that in 2001 the Greek member of the Commission noted that the Council had not taken a clear position. This blocks the Commission from operating in a coherent manner⁸⁴ towards the OCEMN, while supporting single technical-functional initiatives.⁸⁵

Recently, there seems to be increased *political* attention from the EU, including due to the coming membership of Bulgaria and Romania (and presumably Turkey, at some point in the future), such that the Black Sea will become the *border* of the European Union.⁸⁶ This geographical change for the EU entails, in our view, the necessity to *elevate* that area in the hierarchy of EU priorities. The relative growth of interest can also be seen in the ENP documents, where, although not much attention is paid to the subject, the OCEMN is always named as one of the regional subjects with whom reciprocal relations of cooperation should be established. It would thus be a good idea to return to the indications of the Commission from 1997, which have been substantially ignored until now, and recognize that this cooperation truly needs to be developed.

4. Potential for cooperation between the European Union and regional organizations in the context of the ENP

The analysis of the limited relations currently existing between the EU and the organizations of ENP countries with whom relationships of cooperation appear possible, has allowed us to note that within the EU there is a cautious growth of interest for OCEMN and GUUAM⁸⁷ even though, until now, there has been no definition of an overall coherent strategic approach. On this subject, we should realistically say that the development of more fruitful relations depends above all on how much those organizations are able to concretely develop.

⁸² Commission Communication of 11/14/1997: *Regional cooperation in the Black Sea; State of play, perspectives for EU action encouraging further development*, COM (97) 597, Brussels, Commission of the EC.

⁸³ Cfr. European Council of Luxembourg in December 1997, sub 67 (http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/press_data/it/ec/00400.17.htm).

⁸⁴ At the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation – European Union* conference, organized by the *BSTDB* in Salonika in September 2001, Commissioner A. Diamantopoulou stated that the Commission “... *has no orders from the European Council for an economic cooperation with the Black Sea*”; cfr. Also RAM M.H., *op.cit.*, p.15.

⁸⁵ Based on the Commission Communication and the 1997 Foreign Affairs Ministry Conclusions, the EU can offer assistance for BSEC projects through financial assistance programs (Phare e TACIS). Black Sea cooperation is particularly noted in the *Council Regulation N. 99/2000* of 12/29/1999, in GUCE, L 12 from 1/18/2000 and also in *TACIS Regional Cooperation. Strategic Consideration 2002-2006 and Indicative Programme 2002-2003*, of 12/27/2001. An additional area of cooperation is that of the environment, through collaboration between the Commission and the ICBSS.

⁸⁶ Cfr. The very meaningful study of AYDIN M., *op.cit.*, which reminds us of Bulgaria and Romania's membership in NATO, Moldova and Georgia's participation in the *Partnership for Peace* and their strengthened cooperation with NATO.

⁸⁷ In the Commission Communication of 5/12/2004 p.23 the GUUAM is ignored, while the OCEMN and other organizations are mentioned. (Council of Europe, Central European Initiative, etc.).

In defining a policy for the EU in this field, the first thing to be done, in the short term, is to establish clear institutional relations with these organizations.⁸⁸ In this manner, it would be possible to carefully observe the development of the initiatives, especially of a technical-functional character, which are underway in the various forms of cooperation considered eligible.

As for the Eastern European organizations, the option we suggest is based on the consideration that the GUUAM countries,⁸⁹ like the OCEMN countries, are also members of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and thus demonstrate a political and juridical⁹⁰ participation in *shared European values*. As we have noted, all of these countries *unilaterally* describe themselves as *potential candidates for membership*.⁹¹ In this perspective, the EU is viewed as a historical example of economic cooperation which has led to the positive resolution of centuries-old political problems.⁹² The position of the Arab States in the Mediterranean is different, where the perspective for membership does not seem possible, and realistically, the goal is an intermediate position between association and *membership*.⁹³

In the medium term, the European Union should define a systematic and coherent strategy, in particular towards the OCEMN and GUUAM, recognizing their complementarity in the context of a *Wider Europe*.⁹⁴ To not define a systematic approach of this type would mean to relinquish an important strategic tool for the strengthening of stability and security in an area where there are significant conflicts and tensions. Indeed, the definition of a strategy of collective cooperation with two regional organizations, as a substitute for the current irregular cooperation, could represent a systematic and balanced link (no longer individual and bilateral) with Eastern European States that intend to contribute both singly and through organizations to the definition of Europe's new structure.

A systematic policy would only strengthen the position of the EU, that has no hegemonic aims, as opposed to players such as Russia and the United States that *influence* the single States in the area. In the perspective of the coming shift of the EU's borders to the Black Sea, a stronger relationship could be useful for both sides, as it can help states which *aspire to be part of Europe* resolve their internal problems (*rule of law, democracy, human rights, protection of minorities, security, etc.*) as well as

⁸⁸ A first important clarification at the institutional level, could be that of defining the competent body (Council or Commission) and establishing official relations through the acquisition, according to the particular situation of *observer* or *guest status*.

⁸⁹ As we said, Uzbekistan does not actively participate the cooperation in the framework of the GUUAM, that currently includes Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, all ENP States.

⁹⁰ Regarding the role of the ENP in strengthening democracy and the rule of law, cfr. CREMONA M., *op.cit.*

⁹¹ Along these lines, AYDIN M., *op.cit.*, p.16 correctly notes that all of the OCEMN countries, except for Russia, consider the Black Sea cooperation as subsidiary to future possible membership in the EU..

⁹² In this field RAM M.H., *op.cit.*, pp.7-8 observes that "*Many of the countries in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), for example, see subregional economic cooperation as a means of building peace and stability, even if political disputes currently remain unresolved, citing the EU's history as evidence that this approach can succeed.*"

⁹³ For a draft of the Maghreb countries' response to the ENP, cfr. the brief intervention of the UMA Secretary General, BOULARES H., *La nouvelle politique européenne de voisinage vue du Maghreb*, Communication du 17.9.2004 at l'Institut des Relations Internationales.

⁹⁴ On the advisability of defining a coherent Euro-Atlantic strategy towards the Black Sea area, cfr. ASMUS R.D. a. JACKSON B.P., *The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom*, in *Policy Review*, June 2004, (http://www.policyreview.org/juin04/asmus_print.html).

problems which are bilateral in character (*territorial, ethnic, etc.*). Furthermore, and possibly above all, this could provide the chance to develop that *culture of cooperation* that is indispensable for joining the EU, in a distant future: *almost a sort of long graduation exam*. The European Union could aid this growth by providing *incentives* for the rational use of the *joint* financial resources of both these organizations and the Union itself, through the coordination of all possible tools. Such *joint* initiatives concentrated on projects of a technical-functional nature of pan-European interest (transportation, energy, environment) would allow for the emergence of a concrete (and not merely stated) commitment from the ENP States in the form of regional cooperation. Such an approach could allow for modifying the approach between Europe and those States over time, based on the actual political and financial results obtained.

The possibilities for cooperation between the EU and the organizations of the Arab-Mediterranean world appear more complex. The current fragile nature of these organizations makes the EU's caution towards initiatives such as the UMA, which seems to be characterized by the lack of political will at the highest levels, fully understandable. The same can be said of the recent *Agadir agreement* initiative. If, in time, the conditions develop, the strengthening of the EU's cooperation with those organizations will necessarily be realized in the context of the privileged double relationship constituted by the Euro-Mediterranean Policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy.