THE EUROPEAN UNION COMMON FISHERIES POLICY TOWARDS THE BLACK SEA AND GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF FAILURE IN THE COOPERATION INITIATIVES FOR BLACK SEA FISHERIES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACs	Advisory Counsils
AIS	Automatic Identification System
BISAC	Black Sea Advisory Council
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSEP	Black Sea Environmental Programme
BSC	Black Sea Commission
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
ERS	electronic recording and reporting system
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMS	fisheries management system
GFCM	General Fisheries Council for Mediterranean Fisheries
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated
LBDFCLR	The Legally Binding Document on Fisheries and Conservation On the Protection of Living Resources
MSs	Member States
MSY	maksimum sustainable yield
PWGAM	Permanent Working Group on Assessment Methods
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee

SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SoMFi	State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries
SGSABS	Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TACs	total allowable catches
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VDS	Vessel Detection System
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WB	World Bank
WGBS	Working Group for Black Sea

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to analyze the setbacks before the cooperation of the Black Sea riparian states for the sake of its fisheries resources of the Black Sea. In this regard, this study looks at the impact of EU involvement to the cooperation process, that was more hindered with the EU memberships of two riparian states Bulgaria and Romania. And It also attempts to shed a light into perplexed situation in the region that is shaped with geopolitical concerns of the interested states in a much broader concept.

In this context, this study utilizes geopolitical theory which is believed to have a strong explanatory power for multidimensional regional situations as such. The geopolitical theory, which is based on scientific findings and analyzes on political developments, is an important key in examining the conditions specific to Black Sea fisheries.

INTRODUCTION

The Black Sea (BS) is a semi enclosed area, fisheries resources of which is shared by 6 riparian states as Turkey, Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania. Although the exclusive fishing rights of those states are preserved within their EEZs; the sustainability of the migrating and straddling species within the BS, are subject to conservation rules set by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In this framework, according to The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi 2018) report of the General Fisheries Council for Mediterranean Fisheries (GFCM), a legally binding Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) responsible for both Mediterranean and the Black Sea fisheries, BS fisheries is at risk. As same report highlights, approximately %80 of the stocks, particularly the turbot, are under overexploitation and the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Acknowledged by the scientists in related fields, it is a common phenomenon that, this problem can solely be solved with a resolute common fisheries management system (FMS) applied by the all riparians. However, this ideal could not be make possible until today, despite all efforts of the last three decades.

The Black Sea has undergone dramatic and probably irreversible environmental changes since the 1960s, which required a sound regional cooperation. And early 1990s have marked a turning point in both environmental and political aspects. Hypoxia events were at their most extreme, and new species and overfishing brought dramatic changes to the ecosystem. At the same time the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Warsaw Pact had disintegrated and new Black Sea states emerged, opening the way for a regional cooperation on the Black Sea environment. In this regard, establishment of a regional cooperation for the BS fisheries was launched under the auspices of Bucharest Convention and advanced by some other initiatives. However, none of those resulted in success due to multiple reasons.

Adding already complicated situation, The European Union (EU) has been involved in the BS fisheries upon the membership of Bulgaria and Romania as of 2008. While the

EU was providing with most practical tools under its Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), it also remained inconclusive due to the fact that other riparians were not obliged with EU requirements. Therefore, getting alarmed by the deteriorating status of the BS fisheries, the EU has sought for a solution under its regionalization policy through the GFCM. However, lacking the memberships of all riparian states, the GFCM was also incompetent in taking stock of the BS fisheries. Furthering their initiatives via Bucharest and Sofia Declarations by the EU as well as the BlackSeaForFish project by the GFCM, both organizations kept their firmed stand for a common and exhaustive FMS for the BS fisheries. However, the future of the BlackSeaForFish, still under development, remains doubtful due to previous failures.

In this context, the need for understanding why no common action was made possible for the BS fisheries, becomes vital in order to provide with a permanent settlement for the sake of BS resources. And when dived into deep BS with the light of geopolitics, it is seen that more 'significant' issues like military and energy security lay in depths, to be fathomed. What is more, it is also witnessed that, those policies do not only revolve around the riparian states, but also include some others, with their interests around the region. However, the most outstanding of those are Russia, mostly for its security and energy concerns stemming from its location, the EU, through its riparian-Member States (MSs) Bulgaria and Romania and particularly for energy securities, and Turkey, apart from its own security, constituting a pathway in between Russia and the EU beyond military and energy securities, as a country that has strategic relations with both parts.

In this perspective, this study revisits the geopolitical approach which fits best into sui generis environment of BS before regional cooperation for the fisheries. Although there are many other states involved in the BS geopolitics, the relations across 6 riparians are covered due to the main concern of this study is limited with the fisheries policy basically. Structured on 5 main parts, this dissertation consists of a literature review of the geopolitical approach as a theory; the overall and current status of the BS as a sea basin and current FMS applied amongst the riparian states, the EU CFP as a model for the BS fisheries, a detailed history of cooperation initiatives and a geopolitical analysis for understanding the reasons why the BS became 'a sea of troubles'.

While all those being done, Saul Bernard Cohen's contemporary perception and concepts as well as analysts as means of geopolitical analysis and the most recent reports of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)/EU, the GFCM and the FAO will be benefited to frame a realistic and actual point of view. And in the conclusion part, having the findings before a regional cooperation explained, possible ways to overcome those setbacks will be handled with suggestions.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Geopolitics as a theoretical approach in foreign policy analysis

Inception of the concept and its theoretical development

Geopolitics is a science, which produces various data by using geography. It is also a discipline that studies the relations and interactions between states. However, it differs from international relations with its broader context which includes interactions between spaces (territories), civilizations, peoples, and economics. Rooted in Aristotle, Strabo, Bodin, Montesquieu, Kant, and Hegel, geopolitical thinking was developed in the 19th century by Humboldt, Guyot, Buckle, and Ritter. And those were Friedrich Ratzel, Halford John Mackinder, Rudolf Kjellén, Isaiah Bowman, and Alfred T. Mahan who regarded as the founding fathers of the modern geopolitics.

The concept of geopolitics consists of ‘geo’ (solid) and ‘politeia' (politics) and explains the relationship between politics and geography at the local or international level. Geopolitics is used to express the concepts of political (world) politics and territorial politics. However, the word ‘geopolitics’ does not yet have a universally accepted definition. While the Oxford dictionary, describes it a ‘politics, especially international relations, as influenced by geographical factors.’ (Oxford dictionary, 2019) Cambridge dictionary broadens the definition with ‘the study of the way a country's size, position, etc. influence its power and its relationships with other countries’ (Cambridge dictionary, 2019). When Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922) coined geopolitics in 1899, he had aimed to explain the relationship between diplomacy and military service. As a product of its times, the definition of geopolitics has evolved in time (Cohen, 2014, p.15).

Once introduced into the literature by Kjellen in the late 19th century, the development of the geopolitical approach has gone through 5 stages: the race for imperial hegemony, German *geopolitik*, geopolitics in the US, the cold war-state-centered versus universalistic approaches and post-Cold War era geopolitics (Cohen, 2014). At its first

stage, geopolitics was utilized for an explanation of the states' race for imperial hegemony. While Kjellen described geopolitics as a 'theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon' (Kjellen, 1919), German ethnographer and geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) formed the basis of geopolitics in scientific terms. Ratzel defined the state as an organism consisting of a cell and argued that it desires to develop and spread and that it will accomplish this by invading primitive and small states (Ratzel, 1896). Thereby, Ratzel who also employs 'dynamic borders' argued that as long as the fights continue, the borders of the territories may change (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001, pp. 54-55). Kjellen, who largely agrees with Ratzel, also contributed to 'states differ from living organisms as they are directed by human beings' suggestion. Thus, Kjellen made a linkage between the fates of the states and the behaviors of the individuals.

Mahan contributed to the geopolitics with a maritime geopolitical perspective in 1890 (Hunt, 2018). Mahan, one of the leading theorists of the first stage, drew attention to the 19th century hegemony of England that the control of the seas especially the strategic waterways, was the precondition of being a great state. Furthermore, Mahan attributed the absolute superiority of England and America to their advantageous position in maritime trade with the ease of access to the ocean. These states have made less defense spending than land-based and more vulnerable ones, and have been able to direct their potential to trade. Besides, coastal length and having important ports also contributed to the relative power of countries. In sum, Mahan linked the great power status of a state to its possibilities.

Another deterministic theorist Mackinder emphasized the relationship between geography and technology. Because the naval power was the determinant of the 18th century hegemony, the land took over the flag with the development of the railway in the 19th century. Regions such as Eurasia and Siberia, where transportation is inconvenient, could be crossed by Russia and thus accessible to India and Far East Russia. Mackinder explained his analysis of history with the struggle between land forces and naval forces and divided it into stages. According to Mackinder, the naval power which holds the upper hand in the modern period states that England declined as

a result of the technological developments of the European powers in the 20th century and that the naval power superiority in the modern era would switch to land power in parallel with the technological developments (Mackinder, 1996, pp. 175-194).

Mackinder included the concept of the heartland in his analysis and identified Eastern Europe and Siberia as pivot areas. Therefore, the heartland of Germany, Turkey, India and China inner formed by the crescent and the UK, is surrounded by a second zone consisting of outer crescent covering Japan and South Africa (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001, p.54). In this context, according to Mackinder, heartland, which seized Eastern Europe, dominates the World Island, which conquers heartland and the entire world if it seizes the island. Mackinder does not deny the influence of naval power in this connection, arguing that the seizure of the heartland will dominate the naval power (Mackinder 1943, 1962). Mackinder, according to whom the main struggle of the 20th century would take place between Germany and Russia upon seizing the control in the region close to heartland and Eurasia. Because these countries have become both familiar with preventing the spread of Germany and balancing the USSR (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001).

The second stage was defined with German *geopolitik* that served for Hitler's Lebensraum (living space) policy. Building upon views of Ratzel, Kjellen, and Mackinder, geopolitics was deemed as a marriage between geography and a living organism (Haushofer, 1928, p.21) by Haushofer and other contributors like Otto Mull, Erich Obst, and Richard Henning. According to those names, this relationship would produce a sort of 'expansionist determinism' based on geography as well as ideology (Hunt, 2018).

While German *geopolitik* was shaped under the effect of Darwinist and determinist approaches of the first stage theories, Nicholas J. Spykman, George Renner and Alexander De Seversky from US geopolitics did not adopt a deterministic approach. Spykman, an IR scholar, introduced the concept of 'rimland' as an alternative to Mackinder's heartland. According to Spykman, the geopolitical planning of the security policy of a country is determined by the geographic events (Spykman, 1942, p.2). In

this regard, with the development of industry and technology, the rimland surrounding Eurasia may be strategically more important than heartland. In the Western Hemisphere, which consists of Europe and Continental America, and the New World, there was US superiority. The New Earth was surrounded by the Old World, which includes the Atlantic, Pacific, and the Indian Ocean. The Old World was relatively superior to the New World, but the Old World was also surrounded by the New World, that is, the US would be tested by the threat posed by a hegemonic power in the Old World.

Spykman connected the hegemonic power gained by the US in the 20th century to the balance of power that has emerged as a result of the new power centers in the Far East affecting and balancing the rule of Europe. Accordingly, it was to the advantage of the US that any power alone did not prevail in Transatlantic and Transpacific. Spykman argued that the US should be more intrusive by abandoning the isolationist policy, focusing on maintaining the balance of power provided in the Far East, Asia, and Europe, a strategic source of raw materials (Spykman, 1942). There were also other theoreticians like Renner and de Seversky who were affected by the air age. While Renner suggested an air-age argument; de Seversky contributed by his map regarding the air supremacy (Renner, 1942, de Seversky, 1950).

3rd stage of the modern geopolitics was shaped by the beginning of the Cold War, which revived the interest of historians, political scientists, and particularly statesmen. Representing the Cold War period, William C. Bullitt, George Kennan, Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Alexander Haig were influenced by Mackinder's heartland and Spykman's rimland theories to a large extent. They also introduced their theories and concepts like 'containment' (Kennan), 'domino' (Bullitt), 'balance-of-power linkages' (Kissinger), and 'linchpin states' (Brzezinski).

In his 'The Grand Chessboard', Brzezinski regarded the 'Eurasian' basin as the center of global power and built his theory on the struggle between land and sea powers there. In line with his Eurasian geostrategy, Brzezinski prescribed the US to gain dominance over three parts of the 'Eurasian chessboard': the West, or Europe; the South, or the Middle East and Central Asia; and the East, or China and Japan to keep its global

hegemony. Accordingly, Brzezinski advised pulling Ukraine and the Black Sea into the Western side with sound ties with Central Asia and the Caucasus regions and linchpin states there (the Eurasian Balkans) to contain Russian power (Brzezinski, 1997).

The 4th stage of the geopolitics was defined with the reengagement of geographers as of the 1960s. More universalistic/holistic theories were developed as that are with views of the world and the dynamic nature of geographical space. Out of those approaches 'polycentric international power system' of Samuel B. Cohen; 'unitary economically based world system' of Peter Taylor; and 'environmentally and socially ordered geopolitics' of Yves Lacoste were the most outstanding ones.

In 1963, Cohen came up with a hierarchical approach, consisting of 'geostrategic realm', 'geopolitical region', 'shatterbelt' (a region torn by internal conflicts whose fragmentation is increased by the intervention of external major powers), 'national state', and 'subnational unit' concepts within a system that evolved through forces of a dynamic equilibrium (Cohen, 2014, p.30). The polycentric discourse of Cohen was formed against the heartland theory of world domination, consisting of superpowers. For Cohen, a polycentric and polyarchic international geopolitical system was growing on a hierarchical combination of great and regional powers. In this framework, Cohen employed 'heartlandic' Russia for a series of countries in Russia's near abroad; namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (Cohen, 2014. p. 92).

With further advancement in Cohen's theory, a comparative developmental approach was added by some other theoreticians. According to those, 'the expanded geopolitical theory posited that the structural components of the global system, evolve from stages of atomization and undifferentiation with relatively few parts to specialized integration with many parts at different 'geoterritorial' scales'. Thereby, 'an equilibrium is maintained by moving from one stage to another through responses to short-term disturbances'. And it occurs as regionalism, which is the primary shaper of geopolitical relations, rather than globalism, a view reinforced by the current focus of great powers, especially the United States (US) on regional trade pacts (Cohen, 2014).

And the last stage was shaped by the post-Cold War developments, fundamentally following the nation-centered/political and the universalistic/geographical streams of the previous stage. ‘The west against the rest’ of Samuel Huntington and ‘geopolitics of anarchy’ by Robert Kaplan that underlined a North-South division are the most famous ones of this period, which continues its advancement with new theories. Apart from those, there were also Russian analysts like Alexander Dugin, who brought about the ‘Eurasia’ concept, which he incepted into Russian politics, after the collapse of the USSR.

Still being developed by geopolitical analysts across the world, Mackinder’s heartland and Spykman’s rimland concepts keep their influence on states’ strategical calculations. However, both concepts are statistically nonapplicable and merely related to historic policies.

1.2. Importance of geography in world politics

The connection between foreign policy and location has given rise to geopolitics as a field of study. The use of geography in international policy analysis gained momentum with the emergence of the so-called ‘Eurasia’. Looking through the spatial lenses of the geopolitics (Dugin, 2017), Dugin has merged the dualism of land and sea and applied it into politics. And it became a natural phenomenon that states with different climates and geographies have different potential powers (from ground forms to underground wealth) and those reflect on their political structure and foreign policy behaviors (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001, pp. 53-76).

In this context, when a country's geographical location is mentioned, a wide range of circumstances are covered: the climate zone it is located in, its access to the sea and oceans as well as the main transportation routes and the distance to the important intersection points, the distance to the major power centers in the world politics and the distance to the important conflict regions. The difference between a state's liaison with the land and the sea gives direction to the country's character, economic and political interests, accordingly, affecting its security means. The threats that threaten the country,

occur within the geography that leads to conflicts and even wars over the resources. State policies that do not take political geography into account are highly likely to fail which was witnessed through the rise and fall of the states. However, it is also a fact that geographic location constitutes an independent and constant variable whereas geopolitical location has a dependent and changeable structure (Iscan, 2004). Thereby, geopolitics emerges as a combination of time, space and power (Ilhan, 2003, p.22) interlinked with each other.

And power, which defines the limits of a state's foreign behaviors, covers military power, political infrastructure, economic situation, geographical position and size, population, and also the technological and scientific level of advancement. Because geopolitical theorists came to the forefront with their importance to power; it can be said that geopolitics is dominated by realist understanding. According to Mahan, who described the elements of the naval power in his seminal work 'The Impact of the Navy on History', geography, topographic characteristics, country size, population, military power, national character and the character of government are the most important components of the power (Mahan, 1904, pp. 29-89). And first three of those directly falls under the geographical characters.

2. THE BLACK SEA AS A SEA BASIN

2.1. Overall Status of the Stocks

The Black Sea, which shares the 34th major fishing area of FAO with the Mediterranean Sea, is defined as the largest geographical sub-area (GSA 29) in Annex II of Decision 33/2009/2 of the GFCM and the EU Regulation (EC) No 1343/2011, respectively**.** Shared by 6, surrounded by 21; The Black Sea is mainly under the effect of Central and Eastern European countries through the Danube River (Zaitsev & Mamaev, 1997).

As one of the most fragile ones of the world (Griffin, 1993), the ecosystem of the Black Sea has changed to a great extent since the early '70s. And total effect of over-exploitation of fish stocks, the increased pollution and eutrophication of the basin, population outbursts of alien planktonic carnivorous and strong decadal-scale climatic fluctuations was responsible for this change (Prodanov *et al*., 1997, Gucu, 2002; Daskalov, 2007; Kideys, 2007; Oguz and Gilbert, 2007). Then later on in the 1990s, 2 developments occurred with irreversible effects on its current situation. Those were the depletion of top predators and increase in biomass of *Mnemiopsis leidyi* with a decrease in plankton-fed fish like anchovies. Furthermore, due to its semi-closed situation connected with the Turkish Straits (The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles) and the Mediterranean Sea, it also became subject to threats like environmental pollution, climate change, invasive species, and increasing maritime activities in parallel to the developments in the region (Oğuz, 2014).

While the most important commercial fisheries of the Black Sea fall within the definition of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, only 9 out of 235 species (185 marine, 50 freshwater) are tackled under the stock assessments. And these species consist of anchovy, sprat, horse mackerel, whiting, red mullet, turbot, rapana whelk,

picked dogfish, and thornback ray; first 6 of which are the most valuable commercial species in addition to bonito, bluefish, and shad (Sampson *et al.* 2013, STECF, 2017).

As the most recent studies of FAO and GFCM put forward, the Black Sea is under a big threat with its 78 percentage overfished stocks today (FAO, 2018 a,b). By the late 1980s, riparians of the BS have claimed exclusive rights in 200 nautical miles from their coastline which enables them to carry out fisheries activities in their EEZs. According to this report, while total landings in those fishing zones have varied considerably since 1990, they were generally in an increasing trend. In 2016, the total reported landings in the Black Sea were 390.000 tonnes, done by more than 9500 vessels and the volume of discards was estimated at around 45.000 tonnes (around 10–15 percent of total catch) (STECF 2017, Sofia Declaration, 2018). And those stocks are mostly fished by Turkish fishermen (Zengin *et al*. 2018). Even though the data for annual estimations in the Black Sea is not accurate in terms of market and catch numbers, it is a common phenomenon that turbot and sturgeon in the western part of the Black Sea and anchovy, that contributes for the major part of fisheries production in the region, especially for Turkey are exposed to IUU fishing (STECF, 2017).

Alarming status of the turbot and IUU fishing

Outside of biologically safe limits (GFCM, 2018, STECF, 2017), the turbot is fished by 1099 vessels (around 33.000 GT), mostly by Turkey and Russia. Carried out by both stationary and mobile fishing gears (gillnets and bottom trawls), the main fishing grounds of turbot in the Black Sea cover the shelf area up to 140 m depth along the entire Black Sea coast. While bottom-set gillnets are the only authorized gears to fish for turbot in GSA 29 of the FAO, the turbot gillnet fishery is associated with high rates of incidental catches of demersal sharks (e.g. piked dogfish) and dolphins and also subject to by-catch of otter trawls, long lines, and purse seiners fishery.

What is more, it is widely acknowledged by the scientists that the turbot is under a big pressure of IUU fisheries (Zengin *et al.* 2018). As the most recent STECF report shows, there were 1441 tonnes of turbot landings in 2016, while only 661 of those catches were legal. And total catches were shared by Georgia with 1, Bulgaria with 29, Romania with

42, Ukraine with 140, Turkey 221 and Russia (with Crimea) 227 tonnes. Calling riparian states to conduct specialized studies, the STECF stresses the need for accurate data for the rates of the IUU fisheries on turbot. The same report shows that 2007 has recorded the highest number of IUU with 2259, whereas no data was reached for the years 1989-2002 (STECF, 2017).

In addition to the turbot, sturgeons are also given as endangered species in the Black Sea and the same problems with the turbot are most likely the cause of the collapse of the stocks for them. Besides, illegal rapana dredging also poses a threat to the benthic ecosystem of the BS fisheries.

Fisheries Management in the Black Sea

Fisheries management systems of the BS countries vary from methods of stock estimation and assessment to the technical measures. For the conservation measures, it is seen that only 3 species (sprat, anchovy, and turbot) are under the TAC application out of 9 commercial species. For the sprat, while Bulgaria and Romania apply EU TACs, Turkey adopts a closed season and area application for its spawning period; for the anchovy, Georgia is the only country that applies a quota system traditionally and a minimum catch size for 7 cm, whereas Turkey applies 9; and for the turbot, technical measures multiply in a wide range as put in Table No:1.

	Bulgaria	**Georgia**	**Romania**	**Russia**	**Turkey**	**Ukraine**
TAC	43.2 t determined	annual TAC	43.2 t determined	-	-	annual TAC
Minimum Landing Size	45 cm	35 cm	45 cm	40 cm	45 cm	35 cm
Minimum Mesh Size	400 mm for the gillnets	18 mm (from knot to	400 mm for the gillnets	400 mm for the bottom-	320-400 mm for the bottom-	180-200 mm (from knot to

	Bulgaria	Georgia	Romania	Russia	Turkey	Ukraine
		knot) for the gillnets		set gillnet	set gill-nets and 40 mm for the bottom trawls	knot) for the gillnets
Temporal and Spatial Restrictions	spawning period 15 April-15 June	from 1 May to 1 July	spawning period 15 April-15 June	42 – 61 days for the spawning period in the coastal 12-mile zone and EEZ for the bottom gill-nets: May 1 to June 30 in the sea to east of the meridian 36 ° 35'00 "E and from April 25 to June 5 in the sea to east of the meridian 36 ° 35'00 "E.	spawning period: 15 April-15 June For bottom trawls:15 April-15 September For gill-nets: 15 April-15 June	spawning period in the coastal 12-mile zone within the month of May and 1-31 May for the EEZ

	Bulgaria	Georgia	Romania	Russia	Turkey	Ukraine
Gear Restrictions	Bottom trawls and dredges		Bottom trawls, dredges and monofilament gill-nets	for the gill-nets to the east of the meridian 36° 35'00" E if the length of one net is above 75 m and their set are 750 m		for the gill-nets 1 November-31 January and bottom trawls

Table 1 Conservation measures for the turbot (FAO,2018,a)

And in terms of fight with the IUU fishing, there are some legislation and regulations in practice by the riparian countries. However, existence of different legislations and enforcement schemes and non existence of sound studies on IUU fisheries constitute the most important problems in the region.

For the most important 2 problems of the BS fisheries as 'the over exploitation of turbot' and 'IUU fishing', GFCM provides with the most efficient measures through its recommendations in the region since 2013 (Table No:2).

Year	GFCM Recommendation
2013	GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries exploiting turbot and for the conservation of

Year	GFCM Recommendation
	cetaceans in the Black Sea
2015	GFCM/39/2015/3 on the establishment of a set of measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in turbot fisheries in the Black Sea
2016	GFCM/40/2016/6 on the scientific monitoring, management and control of turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29)
2017	GFCM/41/2017/4 on a multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (GSA 29)

Table 2 GFCM Recommendations for the Black Sea Fisheries (FAO, 2018a)

By GFCM, a number of measures were formed for the fisheries management, while gathering data and developing a full management plan. Particularly, with the last recommendation, transitional precautionary management measures were aimed to reduce the risk of stock biomass level dropping below biologically sustainable levels while developing the full plan. Hence, all vessels fishing for turbot are required to have a special valid fishing authorization, and each riparian country to ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for recording each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and recording catches and fishing effort both logbooks and remote sensing, as well as through catch and effort sampling surveys. A total allowable catch is set at 644 tonnes for 2018–2019, and each authorized vessel shall not exceed a maximum number of 180 fishing days per year (FAO 2018a).

3. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE EU: THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY (CFP)

At the EU level, managerial measures for fisheries and aquaculture are defined as the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The CFP governs EU fisheries in its Member States' (MSs) waters, international waters and also non-European waters via fishing agreements all around the world. The main purpose of CFP is to protect the natural habitat and ensure the sustainability of fish stocks, in an area where the Union brings basic regulations. Thus, there is not much jurisdiction left to the MSs in this area.

The CFP is based on the right of equal access to all EU waters and fishing areas and fair competition for all MSs' fishermen. On the other hand, fish stocks are renewable but finite resources and they are mostly overfished. In this regard, the measures for providing with sustainability for the fisheries were first formed in 1970 under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). And those rules were towards regulation of the single market on the basis of equal access to resources. However; the establishment of a comprehensive policy, aimed at creating sustainable conditions in economic, environmental and social terms that will order fishery activities in the Community (by then) waters and protect the interests of the MSs in the national arena dates back to 1983. Updated once in every decade, the latest version of the CFP is in effect since January 1, 2014.

3.1.1 Tools of EU FMS as a Model for the BS Fisheries

FMS of the EU works in line with its maximum sustainable yield (MSY) target, landing obligation, regionalization policy and more extensive stakeholder consultation vision. The FMS appears in form of input controls, output controls and a combination of both control mechanisms. Input controls cover the rules on access to available waters or areas for the vessels; fishing effort controls on limitation of fishing activities conducted

by the ships in parallel to their capacity and technical measures which regulates the appropriate place, time and tools of the fishing activities. Output controls are composed of total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas. And combined controls consist of multi annual plans which brings at least 2 management tools together. Here, some of those tools will be elaborated in parallel to their existence or applicability in BS fisheries.

Technical measures

Technical measures are numerous rules that determine how, where and when fishermen can fish. They are established for all European marine basins, but differ significantly from one to another according to regional conditions. Those measures may include: minimum landing and conservations sizes, specifications for the design and use of gears in fishing, minimum mesh sizes, selective gear requirement for reducing unwanted catches, areas and seasons closed to fisheries, restrictions on unwanted or non-targeted catches and measures for minimizing the effects of fisheries on the marine ecosystem and the environment in general. Even though BS riparians apply some of those, they are not parallel and consistent in practice (Europa, 2016 a).

The total allowable catch amounts (TACs) and quotas

TACs are the most classical examples of limitation under output controls while fishing effort measures correspond with the input limitations. Fishing capacity of a vessel represents the tonnage of a boat in groston (GT) and its power in kilowatts (kW). This capacity is also determined by the EC according to the quantity and size of the fishing gear on board. Fishing activity is measured by the number of days spent by the ship in water. There are currently 2 methods used by the EU to measure fishing efforts: the number of days in GT or in kW.

TACs and quotas are generally used for commercial species, which are thought to be under pressure. The TACs are identified for specific stocks and marine areas, the concepts of sub-region, territory, and division adopted by the International Governmental Exploration Council (ICES), an intergovernmental organization, and where necessary, the major fisheries areas and sections adopted by FAO concepts are also applied. In general, the process for the identification of TACs begins with the

provision of scientific advice submitted by the ICES to the Commission, taking into account both recommendations of the Commission following the provision of the Scientific, Technical, and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) of the Union, in the light of this recommendation. It is complemented by the adoption of the proposal by the Council. The Council determines the TACs and quotas in each December for the upcoming year. Quotas for the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea are generally agreed in October and November. For the stocks that are shared and managed jointly with non-EU countries, TACs are decided with related countries. Since 2008 TACs is applied for the turbot and the sprat in BS (Europa, 2016b).

Landing obligation

In order to achieve high long-term productivity (MSY) for all stocks in fisheries, the CFP targets at minimisation of the by catches (unintentionally captured species during a fishing operation) that lead to a huge loss in non-targeted species (FAO, 2018). As discard rates for the unwanted catches, alive or dead, were above %23 of 1 year's total catch in general; the EU took a precautionary measure named as the landing obligation against this waste thereby ensuring a more selective fisheries and data of the catches. According to this application, all catches should be kept on board, disembarked and calculated within quotas. However, there are some exceptions such as its non application for the sprat in Black Sea. Besides, none of the other riparians (whose total catch is more than %80) apply such an obligation in the Black Sea at all (Europa, 2016c).

Multi-year/annual management plans

In EU fisheries, nearly all major stocks and fishing are managed according to the multi-year plans. These plans include the fishing management target expressed in terms of fishing deaths and/ or targeted fish size. Some plans also provide a detailed and tailor made road map to reach the target whereas some include fishing effort restrictions as an additional tool to TACs and specific control rules. The multi-year plans under the CFP include the goal of fishing with MSY and a deadline for achieving this goal. They can cover measures for the implementation of the landing obligation and safeguards for remedial action as well as technical measures. Currently, there is only one multi-year

plan in BS fisheries, which is for the turbot under recommendation of the GFCM (Europa, 2016d).

Scientific recommendation

Fisheries management in the EU is based on data and scientific recommendations. It is one of the CFP's best policy-making principles to obtain the best available scientific advice to define management measures. Such measures include identifying fishing opportunities and monitoring their efficiency in achieving policy objectives. While new fishing rules and regulations are proposed, the EC receives scientific advice from a number of organizations such as the STECF, the ICES and The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the GFCM The Commission's Joint Research Centre complements the advisory bodies' work by supporting the coordination and management of the STECF and the implementation of the data collection regulations.

In this context, it is seen that there is no common scientific advisory body like STECF, ICES or GFCM for the BS fisheries to which all riparians contribute with their data. While most countries provide with their experts and information to STECF and GFCM, it is still not satisfactory due to the fact that their estimation and assessment methods differ (Europa, 2016e).

The control and enforcement system

The control and enforcement system covers catching activities in general. They include primary conditions for vessels directly; such as rules for access to resources and some fisheries restrictions, the number of days spent at sea as well as licensing for ship operators or owners and the establishment of the primary rules, logbook, reporting, inter-ship transfer. And also, secondary rules like sanctions for fish buyers and penalties imposed on MSs. To makes sure of an effective monitoring and control of fishing fleets the EU fisheries control system operates a series of technologies: electronic recording and reporting system (ERS), Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), Vessel Detection System (VDS) and Automatic Identification System (AIS).

The rules of control system are decided at EU level; however, it is implemented by the MSs' own national authorities and supervisors. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) organizes unified control campaigns where different EU MSs' forces come together to promote closer cooperation and exchange of best practices. The Commission has 25 inspectors to control EU inspectors, but they do not have the role of controlling individual fishing activities.

Tackling the IUU is one of the most outstanding strands of the CFP control policy. The current rules on the sanction system are contained in the Control Regulation (EU) No 1224/2009 which is currently under reform process. With this Regulation, the enforcement system has been brought into line with the illegal fishing measures on EU Regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (Europa, 2016f).

Regionalisation and stakeholder involvement

Fisheries policy relating to the conservation of fisheries is under the exclusive competency of the EU while all other fisheries management is under shared competence amongst the MSs (Eurlex, 2009). The exclusive competency in fisheries conservation means that decisions in this area can only be made at the EU level, and do not involve the national governments of the MSs (Muirhead, 2013). On the other hand, the CFP also gives MSs the chance to play an active role in designing fisheries conservation measures. In this regard, the regionalization policy has put into effect in 2009, in order to overcome the lack of stakeholder involvement in decision making process.

The CFP adopted regionalization policy for a number of instruments and measures under its fisheries management policy: multi annual plans, discard plans, establishment of fish stock recovery areas and conservation measures necessary for compliance with obligations under EU environmental legislation. Thereby, application of the regionalization gave the EU MSs the right to agree on submitting joint recommendations for achieving the objectives of the above-mentioned plans or measures (Europa, 2016g).

On the other hand, there were existing entities called as Advisory Councils (ACs) since 2002. And with the introduction of the regionalization policy, the role of those councils was increased in decision making. Being the youngest of 10 Acs in 28-member structure of the EU, Black Sea Advisory Council (BISAC) was established in 2015 with memberships of Romania and Bulgaria. However, its efficiency is quite restricted due to the fact that the BS is represented with only 2 riparian states.

4. COOPERATION INITIATIVES TOWARDS A COMMON FMS IN THE BLACK SEA

4.1. Prior to the EU involvement

Although there were some bilateral fisheries agreements between the BS riparian states (Georgia-Turkey and Georgia-Ukraine); the Varna Convention (1959) amongst Bulgaria, Romania and the USSR was the only agreement that could be referred as a regional fisheries regulation. In the 1970's – 80's, the Black Sea coastal countries had belonged to 2 groups between Varna Commission amongst Bulgaria, Romania and the USSR, and GFCM amongst Bulgaria (1969), Romania (1971) and Turkey (1954) (Russia as an observer occasionally) (Aybak, 2001, p.138). Excluded Turkey, Varna was ambitious and successful, particularly for dissemination of information amongst the signatories (Reynolds, 1987, p.2). However, due to the increase in fishing activities of Turkey, geopolitical shifts like the disband of the USSR and emergence of new states and some political changes in Romania and Bulgaria, the Varna Convention was made obsolete by early 1990s.

By 1990s, the The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) and the The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) were the foremost organizations in terms of the regional cooperation prior to the EU involvement. The Bucharest Convention, which is the first body that gathered all riparians under the umbrella of a regional environmental cooperation, widened its scope with a set of protocols which also included fisheries. A common policy/regulatory framework was developed with Odessa Declaration (resulted in the establishment of the

Black Sea Environmental Programme (BSEP) in 1993). The Black Sea Commission (BSC) within the Convention was formed in 1995 and a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was adopted by the Commission at a Ministerial Conference immediately. And the process was further elaborated via the Sofia Declaration with Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (2002), Bucharest Declaration (2007) and the (second) Sofia Declaration (2009) respectively. While initiatives for these agreements were taken by the BS states primarily, international assistance from funding bodies such as UN, the World Bank (WB) and the EU as well as individual governments in Europe, was also of key importance in putting those into effect. Nevertheless, none of these additional protocols were conclusive as they were non-binding and short of addressing fisheries directly (Gilek & Kern, 2016).

Beside efforts of The BSC, there was another attempt known as The Legally Binding Document. 'The Legally Binding Document on Fisheries and Conservation on the Protection of Living Resources' (LBDFCLR) was launched jointly by Turkey and Russia in 1993. While it was aimed at filling the gap of a legally binding regional arrangement; no deal was made until 2005, despite the intervention of the BSEC. Later on, the BSC has taken over the responsibility and approved a new text in the same year. However, the rejection of EU as a member to the BSC by Russia has ended the LBDFCLR initiative completely with a reaction by the EU.

4.2. With the EU involvement

EU Fisheries Management towards the Black Sea: a regionalization initiative

The Black Sea region was put under effect of the EU policies through Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007 for the first time. Shaped upon memberships of Bulgaria and Romania, fisheries was also covered under BSS with 3 main points: improving the dialogue amongst the Black Sea coastal countries; strengthening and controlling the sanctions against IUU fisheries and encouraging scientific cooperation (Europaeu, 2007).

Even though not clearly stated in related EU legislation (Regulation (EC) No 850/98 and Decision No 2008/292) the BS has been part of EU legislation on fisheries

(Churchill and Owen 2010). More importantly, The Black Sea has also become one of the EU's interests to implement CFP measures in the EEZ of its MSs. Thereby, 2 littoral states as Romania and Bulgaria had to adopt CFP rules; while Turkey, as a candidate country, was also expected to undertake measures in line with primary and secondary legislation of the EU due to its accession process started in 2005 (MFA, 2019). On this context, the STECF of EU made its first total allowable catches (TACs) recommendation for sprat and turbot in Bulgarian and Romanian waters. Although all riparians were invited to STECF meetings, Russia has showed no interest. And in December 2007, the EU adopted first Union legislation on fishing opportunities and conditions in the Black Sea by Regulation (EC) 1579/2007. Applied by only Bulgaria and Romania, those measures of the EU were far beyond meeting the minimum conservation standards for the BS fisheries.

First and foremost, Bulgaria (with 378 km border) and Romania (with 225 km border) with their fisheries activities (estimated 8506.8 tons production with 1894 vessels and 9553.18 with 155, respectively,) were posing a small area, compared to the shares of other littoral states (STECF, 2017). Thereby, the EU saw that the management of the migrating and shared stocks in the Black Sea was not able to be addressed without a common regional action. In this direction, the EU first tried to become a member of the BSC in line with its legislation. However, it was confronted by Russian Federation. Turkey also did not favor EU membership due to its relations with the Union in the context of their negotiation process.

In this perspective, the EU Commission furthered its initiatives with ‘EU Strategy for the Black Sea’ in 2011. With this strategy, a call was made to include the Black Sea region into the EU’s newly launched Integrated Maritime Policy (2011) and in particular, the CFP on an equal footing with the other European basins. It also envisaged making all necessary diplomatic efforts to persuade other riparians of the BS to comply as closely as possible with the principles of the CFP. Furthermore, the importance of creating a separate common stocks management body for the BS and of applying the mechanism of multi-year management plans were underlined (European Parliament, 2011a). In addition to the new strategy, the EU Parliament has also prepared

specific reports on the Black Sea fisheries. ‘Current and Future Management of Black Sea Fisheries’ (2011) and ‘Fisheries Restrictions and Jurisdictional Waters in the Mediterranean and Black Sea – ways for conflict resolution’ (2013) of those were mainly in favor of an independent RFMO for the BS fisheries, in which all riparian states as well as the EU would have a say. Compliance with EU and international law rules and the application of the provisions of the UNCLOS were also pointed out in these reports (European Parliament, 2011b, 2013).

Cooperation with the GFCM

GFCM, which describes itself as a body that serves for sustainable use and conservation of the marine resources at the biological, social, economic and environmental level in the Mediterranean and Black Sea was founded in 1952 K. Its involvement in BS fisheries as a RFMO was started late 2000s. In this framework, The first Permanent Working Group on Assessment Methods (PWGAM) was organized jointly with the BSEC and the SCSA's PWG, in close cooperation with the BSC. The PWGAM analyzed and compared different methodologies for stock assessment of both small and small pelagic species in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In 2007, the Commission of GFCM underlined the need of Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and asked for a project proposal from its Secretariat. Although it was not involved in the LBDFCLR, GFCM has positioned itself in a cooperation with the BSC to establish the Black Sea Cooperation Project (BlackSeaFish). However the project in question has failed due to its limited maneuver with lacking memberships of Georgia, Ukraine and Russia to the GFCM. And since 2008, the need to support the work carried out by the GFCM has increased significantly.

In pursuit of those developments, SAC/GFCM has also started stock assessment studies based on 2009 datasets of the STECF. While the EU has provided with its data through the Data Collection Framework of the EC, all riparians other than Russia were present with their independent experts in STECF and GFCM meetings, respectively. Nonetheless, the quality of data was found insufficient without contribution of Russia

and unclear with different types of estimation methods used by the riparians (GFCM, 2018). Thereby, the regional management of Black Sea fisheries remained weak until the establishment of a permanent working group in 2011, which also prompted the EU to insert GFCM into its RFMO initiative.

In the first meeting of the Working Group for Black Sea (WGBS) in 2012, it was decided to include ecosystem approach among the priority areas covering fisheries and aquaculture related to the region with approval of all 6 riparians that were present in the meeting. Thus, the first GFCM Black Sea Assessment report was concluded that turbot was out of biologically safe limits. Upon this, GFCM made its first recommendation in 2013. Same year, the first Joint GFCM-BSC Workshop on IUU Fishing in the BS was held with participation of all riparians. Harmonization of the data, coordination among controlling organs operating at regional level (e.g. coast guard, border guards and financial police) and training sessions with the cooperation of the EU's EFCA were amongst the most outstanding conclusions of the meeting which called for participation of all riparians.

Later in 2014, a subregional group on stock assessment in the BS (SGSABS) under WGBS was formed. This time Russia did not participate due to its conflictual position with Ukraine as well as the EU by then. In 2015, recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3 was taken by the GFCM. And as of 2016, discussions regarding the GFCM recommendations for turbot, were put under the responsibility of WGBS by the SAC. It was considered that the WGBS was established to specifically review activities and formulate advice on the assessment and management of BS fisheries and that it could count on the participation of all riparians. The WGBS also noted that information on the dimension and marking of turbot gillnets were not been made available ahead of the meeting to support the formulation of specific advice as requested by Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/3. Furthermore, the information provided by some countries on these issues during the meeting was incomplete and in this regard, the WGBS insisted on transmission of the information. Thereby, recommendations GFCM/40/2016/6 and GFCM/41/2017/4 were adopted by the GFCM.

Latest developments in BS FMS and new initiatives towards cooperation

Showing increasing concerns about the Black Sea stocks, the Commissions of both the EU and GFCM have, in several occasions, expressed the view that the recovery of Black Sea stocks should now be regarded with the highest priority. Upon this, GFCM and FAO organized a High Level Conference on enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, bringing together representatives of Black Sea EU Member States and riparian third countries, the BSC and international organisations in 2016. The Conference adopted the Bucharest Ministerial Declaration, which underlines the need for a collaborative approach to address Black Sea fisheries issues, including sustainability of marine resources, better data collection and improvement of the scientific advice, sustainable development of aquaculture and compliance and fight against IUU fishing (Europa, 2016).

In follow of ttheEU's attempts, a new initiative to support sustainable fisheries in the Black Sea named as the 'BlackSea4Fish' Project was endorsed by the GFCM in 2016. Underpinning strengthened coordination in the region, theBlackSea4Fish project includes technical assistance to be provided to select riparian countries. It also represents an opportunity to capitalize on the outcomes of the numerous projects undertaken in the BS region while building upon their results and enhancing a framework for interactions. Furthermore, issues such as stock identification, methodologies for stock assessment and joint/international surveys in the BS could be tackled by the project. Now that, as the 7th meeting of WGBS was conducted with all riparians in 2018, it is seen the WGBS has become the sole body which directly relates with BS fisheries and covers all riparians, particularly with its 'BlackSea4Fish' project.

And as the most recent development, a Ministerial Conference was organized by the EU to evaluate of the state of implementation of the Bucharest Declaration and to adopt a concrete action plan for fisheries and aquaculture. However, Russia and Ukraine did not attend this conference which finalized with signature of The Sofia Ministerial Declaration (2018). With this declaration, the EU explicitly urged all BS riparians to become contracting parties to the GFCM in fight with IUU fishing as well as complying with GFCM's mid term strategy for 2017-2020 fisheries and the BlackSea4Fish project.

It also has objectives to commit all BS riparian countries on the designed measures, provide ownership, enhance regional cooperation, create a culture of compliance and operationalize the political commitments given in the Bucharest Declaration (Europa, 2018).

5. THE BLACK SEA AS A REGION, A GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FAILURE IN COOPERATION INITIATIVES

Last 3 decades witnessed many developments that could prompt an overall regional cooperation for the BS fisheries. Particularly 1990s have marked a turning point in Black Sea region in both political and environmental aspects. First and foremost, the USSR was disbanded and new states had emerged. Furthermore, those new states were eager to develop good relations with Western Bloc countries like Turkey and institutions like NATO and the EU. Secondly, a progressive and decisive environmental agenda was adopted for the BS fisheries by international organizations, particularly those within the UN. Regional BS bodies have put their efforts on building a sound regional cooperation body for an overall FMS in the BS as well. And last but not least, the EU has added the BS into its environmental policies (Knudsen, 2015). However, despite such a fertile environment, 'the environment' of the BS and particularly the status of the fisheries were overshadowed behind other developments.

When all aspects are considered, it is observed that most of the BS politics remain unattainable, not only because of the riparian states but also third parties like the US and other EU countries. In this regard, while there are some geopoliticians like Friedman who render the region as an interplay amongst Turkey, Russia and the US, in terms of security geopolitics, I rather regard the EU as the third major actor in the region for both security and energy issues. Thereby, this section focuses on why a possible regional cooperation is blocked and how it can be unclogged for the sake of BS fisheries.

Although there is no direct correlation between geopolitical behaviors of the riparian states and the status of the stocks; it should be noted that sometimes politics may end up with side effects on other fields. On this connection, the high geopolitical tension in the BS region will be analyzed here to provide with a wider view for our understanding.

5.1.1. The Black Sea geopolitics

In the context of increasing tensions between today's major powers, especially between the West and Russia, the Black Sea has always been of particular strategic importance, representing a waterway connecting Europe, Russia and the Middle East; and potential of significant hydrocarbon reserves; gateway for gas pipelines that feed the European markets; military theatre in conflicts between Russia and NATO and political casino amongst all states with interest.

Although referred as a ‘contact zone’ in recent years, the Black Sea has always been a vulnerable and elusive region. Throughout the history, control of the Black Sea and the Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) that link it to other regions, have been of vital importance, particularly for Turkish (Ottoman Empire, Turkey) and Russian (Russia, the Soviet Union, Russian Federation respectively) states established in this geographical area. The Ukrainians and Russians from the north; Bulgarians and Turks from the south; and across the sea, Georgia and the Caucasus The where Russians, Turks and Iranians have battled for domination for centuries and made the region their political casino in line with their economic and security interests (Friedman, 2019). Ultimately, with the Montreux Agreement (1936) a balanced order has been established between the Black Sea coastal states (the USSR, Romania and Bulgaria) and non-coastal states (Sander, 1993).

Nevertheless, the tentative peaceful order in the region has changed during the Cold War with division of the region between Western and Eastern blocs. And by early 1990s, the BS has been transformed into a multi-stakeholder sea. Called as a ‘Russian lake’, the BS region was made Russia’s cornerstone in its security perception. With interests in the Mediterranean, reaching there through the Black Sea has become Russia’s priority in its foreign policy. Thereby, while Turkey with the control of the Bosphorus (Friedman, 2019) has always been important for Russia, the heartlandic periphery of the BS that covers Central Asia was also seen as its ‘near-abroad’ and a special zone of influence (Cohen, 2014). Now that, the shifting boundaries of the

heartlandic Russian realm as well as the geopolitical nature of this periphery have turned the tables for Russian security perception.

The EU and Russia have achieved being cooperative until the mid 2000s before Baltic states, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania joined NATO and the EU respectively. Russia has received these moves as a penetration to its traditional sphere of interest, particularly for the Black Sea riparians as Bulgaria and Romania. With Turkey (a member since 1952), three out of the six BS littoral states have become members of NATO, and 2 other states, Ukraine and Georgia, were in close partnership with the alliance with a potential view towards NATO membership. For NATO, which viewed the Black Sea "important for Euro-Atlantic security" (Bucharest Summit Declaration, 2008), engagement of Ukraine and Georgia was of great importance. Thereby, squeezing Russia into a very small section of the Black Sea's northeastern coast, would turn entire region into a 'shatterbelt' in Cohen's wording (Cohen, 2014). Naval exercises that NATO has held within the Black Sea, as well as placement of US bases in Bulgaria and Romania, have further added Russia's worries about a Western containment.

As a matter of fact, Romanian historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu was not exaggerating when he highlighted the significance of Crimea for the region geopolitics with his 'Whomever holds Crimea can rule the Black Sea. Whomever fails to hold it, cannot rule.' argument (Sebe, 2018, p.23). The greatest threat to Russia has always been the possible inclusion of Ukraine which constituted a buffer zone between Russia and NATO (Hamilton and Mangot, 2008, p.109). Relations between Ukraine of Russia have been uneasy since the break-up of the USSR, specific to Crimea. Crimea has become a bargaining chip between Russia and Ukraine since it was given by Premier Nikita Khrushchev of the USSR in 1954 in honor of the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's merger with Tsarist Russia. In 1997, Russia accepted Ukraine's existing national borders and recognized its sovereignty over the Crimea and Sevastopol. Ukraine has granted the status of autonomous region to Crimea and also accorded the right to base its Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol as concessions to Russia. Ukraine granted Crimea autonomous territory status and also granted the right to use the Black Sea fleet as a concession to

Russia in Sevastopol. In the same year, the Ukrainian-Russian Friendship Treaty shared the Soviet Black Sea Fleet between Russia (81 percent) and Ukraine (19 percent) and allowed Russia to lease Sevastopol base for 20 years, a term extended to 2042 in 2010 in exchange for the cancellation of most of Ukraine's debt and concessional energy prices. And in 2014, Russia re-annexed Crimea upon Ukraine's desire to join Western oriented institutions as NATO and the EU (Toucas, 2017).

Georgia, on the other hand, has attempted to reclaim South Ossetia in 2008. It had been emboldened to do so by the fact that Moscow had not reacted to Georgia's regaining of Adjara, a breakaway Black Sea territory in the southwestern part of Georgia. Adjara's port city of Batumi is a major oil pipeline terminal and refining center that is economically and strategically important to Georgia, unlike South Ossetia. Henceforth Moscow reacted quickly to Georgia's invasion of South Ossetia and recognized the 'independence' of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia and has since increased its control over Georgian territory and continues to integrate both regions administratively (Cohen, 2014, p. 192).

Energy security as a game changer

Russia and its heartlandic periphery/backyard -the Caucasus and Central Asia- have always been the most important external sources of natural gas and oil of the EU's (201.8 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2018) (Bechev, 2019). As they pass BS region to reach Europe, holding the control of these resources have become Russia's trump card against Europe. Furthermore, Russia used to benefit this opportunity to ensure a political influence in its 'backyard' for its security ends.

Until early 2000s, the EU's strategy towards Russia in its heartlandic periphery was to seek a partnership. However, gradually concerned about its energy security, the EU sought ways to bypass Russian oil and gas deliveries and infrastructures, that were smooth until then. Even during the Cold War, the USSR had avoided political interest from Western Europe's dependence on their natural gas, but this stable relationship began to change with tits collapse. EU memberships of former USSR states 2004 and

the conflict between Russia and Ukraine over Russian gas transport across Ukraine, resulted with mistrust of the EU to Russia (Lussac, 2010, p.621).

Russia, supplying a quarter of the EU gas consumption via Ukraine, has made energy a bargaining chip in its relations with Ukraine. On Ukraine's moves towards the EU and NATO, Russia increased gas prices in retaliation. Temporary cuts of natural gas to Europe through Ukraine in between 2006 and 2009, made the EU more willing to challenge Russia in its 'backyard'. Thereby, Azerbaijan, both as a gas producer and a transit state, was deemed as the most convenient partner for the EU, included in the BSS (Lussac. 2010p. 618). Moreover, Russia became more unease with the EU initiatives and the annexation of Crimea with the permanent cut off gas marked the last straw in escalated tension. When Ukraine had to replace Russian gas with the EU's the situation worsened with Russia's reduction in the volume of the transit through Ukraine in favor of some other pipelines in Central Europe, thereby effecting Ukraine's income (Mikulska, 2017).

On the other side, the EU has reacted to annexation of Crimea with sanctions on Russia. And Russia responded via its state owned Gazprom and Rosneft, in order to preserve its power not only in its backyard but also further afield. Thereby, natural gas that is shipped through pipelines, was made a practical geopolitical tool in BS policies. Ultimately, in parallel to energy security concerns, which drove the EU towards the Caucasus, the Caspian oil became the contest component between the EU and Russia. While Eastern Europeans support the import of natural gas from Azerbaijan through the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) they also oppose Nord Stream 2, which will add to the future of Russian gas. On the contrary, Western Europe that is less dependent on Russian gas is more interested in securing reliable supply. Germany, for example, continues to back the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which will bring natural gas from Russia to the north German coast. And with TurkStream, which bypasses Ukraine and traverses the Black Sea between Russia and Turkey, Russia is expected to deepen its influence in Europe's backyard (Bechev, 2019).

Ultimately, if Russia's position weakens because of the TANAP, Turkey's will uplift with its geostrategic position in which both TANAP and TurkStream go through, also creating Turkey a mediator position in between Russia and the EU. All in all, it can be said that the BS geopolitics is reshaped in parallel to regional energy politics.

6. CONCLUSION

Although there was a fruitful environment since the 1990s, all attempts towards regional cooperation for fisheries management in the BS have failed, particularly after the involvement of the EU. While the EU's fisheries management system was the most practical tool for the BS fisheries, due to the lack of cooperation amongst the riparian states, neither a common FMS nor a regional cooperation organization was made possible. And those were epitomized in reciprocal moves like the rejection of the EU membership to the Bucharest Convention by Russia; prevention of the 'Legally Binding Document' by the EU as well as failures in implementation of the 'BlackFish Project', not contributing to scientific studies under the STECF and the GFCM and not attending to the regional meetings of the WGBS of the GFCM and Bucharest and Sofia Declarations of the EU.

In this regard, this study employed the geopolitical approach to better understand how the failure of cooperation in the BS fisheries is interlinked with other policies that result from geographical locations that empower the states directly or indirectly. The heartland(ic) periphery/backyard, wider Black sea, near abroad, shatterbelt, rimland, geostrategic importance, naval and land power concepts by the geopolitics also provided with practical tools to understand the motives of the regional states and power balances amongst them. And thereby, some consequences reached as regards the deadlock in regional cooperation for the BS fisheries.

First and foremost, it is seen that the tough situation in cooperation attempts mostly stem from the character of the BS region rather than the Black 'Sea' itself. Extending from the Eastern Balkans to Caucasus and Central Asia region, The BS can not merely be reduced to a sea basin; it is rather a contact zone. The BSEC with 12 members and 18 policy areas and the EU with its Black Sea Synergy covering 14 areas are the embodiments of this concept both with their references to the region with 'wider'. In this regard, military and energy policies add the contact zone character of the BS, where geopolitical interests of Russia, Turkey, and the EU intersect. Especially Russia, perceiving threat from the West, seeks for limiting the EU influence in the region on any occasion (rejection of the EU membership to the Bucharest Convention or cutting off the gas through Ukraine) while the EU shows its reaction through mostly economic

retaliations (sanctions or bypassing Russia in its pipeline routes). And Turkey enjoys its location as a passage with the Straits and pipelines between Russia and the EU.

Therefore, while EU efforts seem to be the best chance to finally achieve regional management of Black Sea fisheries, paradoxically EU involvement poses the primary challenge to progress as Russia continues to resist EU-influence in the region. Thereby, overshadowed by more significant others, fisheries becomes a field in need of a top-down intervention like a legally binding convention or an RFMO.

In this context, in order to overcome the setbacks before a comprehensive FMS in the BS, this study suggests developing more dialogue amongst the riparian countries with turning a blind eye to geopolitics of the region; producing common regulations for the management of the stocks as well as raising the deterrence level of the control mechanisms in fight with the IUU fisheries and encouraging membership of Russia, Ukraine and Georgia to the GFCM as well as supporting their interest in implementation of the BlackSea4Fish project, which gathers most important policies required in the region. In this regard, it is believed that Turkey will be the key country with its geostrategic position both in geographical and political terms, also enjoying the resources most. Thereby, Turkey may take the lead and mediate between conflicting parties for the future of common resources. And last but not least, it is believed that raising the awareness level of all stakeholders in the sector, in terms of the sustainability of the resources should be a priority for a sound regional FMS for the future of the entire BS fisheries sector. Otherwise, the Black Sea will remain ‘black’.

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