

EU's Eastern Maritime Facade. Present And Future

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ABSTRACT. The maritime facade is the contact zone between maritime and continental world. It is a static and a dynamic image too, of the land seen from the sea, once at a natural habitat, however strong anthropic in many places. It connects the sea, and its resources, with the hinterland resources. The maritime facade is an economic space, in particular, characterized by numerous ports, as economic and social strong, dynamic and active engines. The purpose of the paper is to analyze the main present geographic - economical features of the western coast of the Black Sea belonging to Romania and Bulgaria, considered the European Union eastern maritime facade - compared with the European Atlantic facade, and to find the main geographical, economical, political, and social advantages for a sustainable development of this area.

Keywords. maritime facade; Black Sea; ports economy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The maritime facade can be defined as a large area of coast, the area of contact between maritime and continental world. It is a static and dynamic image of the mainland seen from the sea, a natural habitat, but strong anthropic in many places, narrower or wider, depending on the geography of the place. The maritime facade relates the sea with its resources, with hinterland with its resources. The maritime facade is an economic area characterized, in particular, by numerous ports as strong, dynamic and active economic and social engines.

The maritime facade rests, geographically, on the shore, but also on the mainland of avant-shore, and comprises (Figure 1):

- the coastline (littoral);
- the hinterland: the territory gravitates towards an economic center.

The hinterland is the region behind of a port, from where are coming the exported goods or the where ar goods are dispatched. The economic link hinterland - ports depends on the freight flows levels between them. Specifically, the ports contribute decisively to: the development of trade, by the export and import transit; the indirect support of the production, by importing the raw materials; the development of transport infrastructure by sure links between ports and hinterland; the development of shipbuilding industry in ports or near them; providing a large number of jobs; increasing living standards of local and regional communities.

From the point of view of a maritime facade, the littoral area was formed through a process of "littoralization", i.e. by demographic concentration in ports, or assemblies of ports, and coastal cities, interlinked, and, with the hinterland too, through auto, rail, air, and water communication lines. The close links, and directly between sea and inland transportation provides links between ports, and inland, and between ports' economy and economy, and hence, the commercial success of the ports. These terrestrial transportation lines form some regional and continental networks with access to the sea, creating a great need for seaborne trade.

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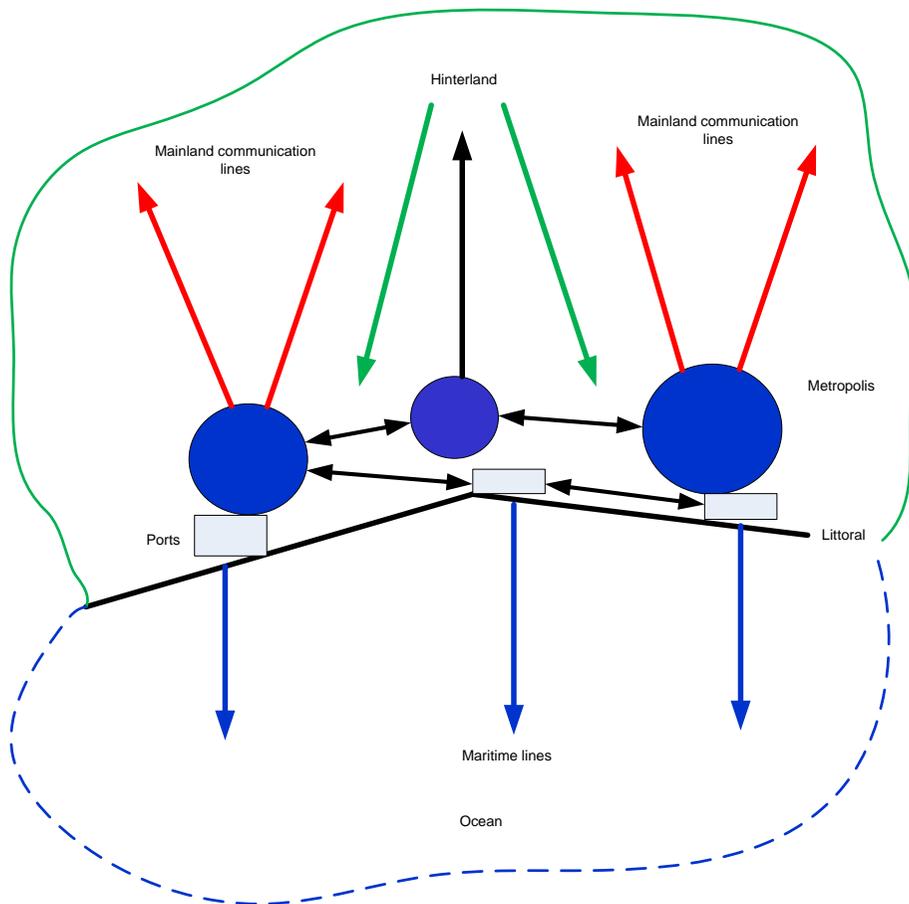


Figure. 1. Maritime facade

II. METHODS

For this study of Europe's maritime facades official information from the European Union statistics were used, and from EU countries situated on the European's Atlantic Ocean coast, and from the EU countries situated on the western Black Sea's coast statistics data.

Europe, as a part of the Eurasian continent, is surrounded by four major maritime regions: the Arctic Ocean, including the North Atlantic, and the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Black Sea (Figure 2).

The human activities are often concentrated in the coastal regions, which are least able to sustain such activities, and where their negative effects are most visible. The biggest threats to the European coastal areas are: water pollution and eutrophication, biodiversity loss, urban development, landscape deterioration and coastal erosion.

The sea areas surface belonging to the EU's Member States is higher than the EU's total land area. The coastline of the EU is 68,000 km - three times longer than that of the US, and close to two times longer than that of Russia, including, in addition, Iceland, Norway and Turkey as members of the European Economic Area (EEA), this length is 185,000 kilometers.



Figure. 2. EU's maritime facades

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

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The geographic potential of EU's Atlantic basin states (2015) is given by territory, population and shore length (Table 1):

Table 1 EU's Atlantic basin states geographic potential

Country	Surface (km ²)/place in worldwide hierarchy		Population (millions)/ place in worldwide hierarchy		Shore length (km)
Germany	348,762	63	81	19	2,389
Netherlands	33,893	135	17	67	451
Belgium	30,278	141	12	78	66.5
France	549,970	43	67	22	3,427
Total	962,903		177		6,333.5

The geographic potential of EU's Black Sea basin states (2015) is given by territory, population and shore length (Table 2):

Table 2 EU's Black Sea basin states potential

Country	Surface(km ²)/place in worldwide hierarchy		Population (millions) / place in worldwide hierarchy		Shore length (km)
Romania	238,391	83	21.6	59	225
Bulgaria	110,879	105	7.14	102	354
Total	349,270		28.74		579

The cargo traffic in the western European ports, in numbers, is 1018 million tons, disposed like this: Germany: 170 million tons; Netherlands: 520 million tons; Belgium: 228 million tons; France: 100 million tons. The total traffic of cargo from loading and unloading operations processed in EU's western ports is approximately 1018 million tons (Table 3):

Table 3 EU's western ports traffic, 2015

Country	Port	Cargo operations (million tons)	Total cargo traffic by country (million tons)
Germany	Hamburg	120	170
	Bremerhaven	50	
	Rotterdam	421	
	Amsterdam	99	
Belgium	Anvers	190	228
	Zeebrugge	38	
France	Dunkerque	37	100
	Le Havre	63	
Total			1,018

The cargo traffic in Black Sea's ports, in numbers, is 229 million tons, disposed like this: Romania: 50.6 million tons; Bulgaria: 42 million tons; Turkey: 17 million tons; Georgia: 11 million tons; Russia: 66 million tons; Ukraine: 60 million tons. The total capacity of cargo from loading and unloading operations processed in Black Sea ports is approximately 400 million tons. Number of ships which transit Bosphorus and Dardanele straits annually is over 26,663 (2015). The port traffic capacity in Black Sea is over 390 million tons: Romania – 123 million tons, Ukraine 80 million tons, Russian Federation 76 million tons, Bulgaria 62 million tons, Turkey 24 million tons and Georgia 16 million tons. (Table 4):

Table 4 Traffic capacity and cargo traffic in Black Sea's western ports, 2015

Country	Port	Cargo operations (million tons)	Total cargo traffic by country (million tons)
Romania	Constanta	36	50.6
	Galati	9.1	
	Tulcea	2.5	
	Mangalia	0.2	
	Midia	0.3	
Bulgaria	Sulina	0.3	42
	Burgas	25	
	Varna	17	
Total			92.6

In the Black Sea region throughout history some "roads" had formed which facilitated economical and cultural trades, known today as maritime commercial routes, and can assure the development of the EU's Black Sea facade:

- "Petroleum road" between Asia and Caspian Sea in Novorossiysk, Poti, Batumi and Constanta ports;
- "Coal road" from Samsun port;

- “*Mediterranean road*” from Bosphorus and Istanbul port to Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic;
- roads from Ukraine and Russia through Sevastopol, Sea of Azov and Novorossiysk;
- roads from Balkan Peninsula through Varna and Burgas ports;
- roads which connects Constanta and Mangalia ports with fluvial and maritime Danube;

Related to this Pontic roads we can tell that they assure connection with seas and oceans all over the world through the Mediterranean basin.

The maritime transport nowadays is made on some well-planned routes for all the oceans and seas of the world. In the Black Sea these routes appeared on principal commercial trade routes, nevertheless old or new:

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

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Black Sea started to play an important role in our geopolitical calculations only when threat coming from that direction started to grow bigger and bigger. Truthfully, even during the ancient greeks period, Europe didn't pay too much attention to the Black Sea, although we can search in history for some exceptions like Crimean War. If we considered Black Sea like a *Cinderella*, the worldwide and European geopolitics had resembled it like an ugly duckling. But during the past years, the Black Sea area was brought into the spotlight by European organizations, Transatlantic organizations and the global powers, considering it's geographical position, it's current threats and not to forget the advantages offered like economical, political and military co-operations. Thus has resulted in more serious debates for finding solutions in this area to maintain stability. This zone situated between two very big potentially conflictual spaces (Balkans and Caucasus) and the eastern Mediterranean Sea basin (marked by Middle East conflicts and growth of the Islamic terrorism) has great importance, which is :

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

The Comparative study between The Western Europe and Eastern Europe maritime facades, shows the following:

- The western Eu maritime facade is bigger than ten times that the UE's Eastern maritime facade;
- On the Western EU's facade are four major economies: Germany, France, Netherlands, Belgium and also four big maritime powers;
- On the Estern EU's facade are two important economies: Romania and Bulgaria UE's members for only few years;

- The total EU's Western coast length is 6333,5 km;
- The total EU's Eastern coast length is 579 km;
- On the EU's Western facade there are eight major European ports, with a total traffic of 1,018 million tons;
- On the EU's Western facade there are three important European ports with a total traffic of 92.6 million tons.

The EU's Black Sea facade is very important for the EU's geopolitical, economic and military long- term strategy. Now this maritime area is in a development process, but must be strong supported by EU to enhance their economic position.

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