We are trying to evaluate, in the next pages, what are the trends in NATO regarding the Wider Black Sea Region, according the documents adopted at the Bucharest summit, 2-4 April 2008. As a methodology, we use the comparative study with the similar documents adopted in Riga, in 2006, to see the evolutions, as well as an analysis on the whole Bucharest declaration in the subjects that have a direct impact on the region. In this respect, we did identify 6 themes directly linked with the Wider Black Sea Region and two subjects indirectly linked with the same geopolitical regional complex. So, we have direct mentioning of the Wider Black Sea Region, to the energy security, the relations NATO-Russia and NATO-Ukraine and Georgia MAP perspectives, to the frozen conflicts in the Black Sea Region, Georgia and Moldova, and to the way that NATO perceives the CFE Treaty and the actual situation of the withdrew of Russia from this treaty. Indirectly, the region is interested in two issues, the relation between NATO and EU as well as the general concerns of NATO towards terrorism and non-proliferation.

Table 1. Comparative approaches to themes linked with the Wider Black Sea Region in the final Declaration of Riga and Bucharest NATO summits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Bucharest Summit Declaration</th>
<th>Riga Summit Declaration (2006)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Black Sea Region</td>
<td>36. We reaffirm the continued importance of the Black Sea region for Euro Atlantic security. In this regard, we welcome the progress in consolidation of regional ownership, through effective use of existing initiatives and mechanisms. The Alliance will continue to support, as appropriate, these efforts guided by regional priorities and based on transparency, complementarity and inclusiveness, in order to develop dialogue and cooperation among the Black Sea states and with the Alliance.</td>
<td>14. (...) We commend the initiatives to strengthen cooperation, security and stability in the Black Sea region and will continue to support the regional efforts to this end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Energy security</td>
<td>48. We have noted a report “NATO’s Role in Energy Security”, prepared in response to the...</td>
<td>45. As underscored in NATO’s Strategic Concept, Alliance...</td>
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</table>
tasking of the Riga Summit. Allies have identified principles which will govern NATO’s approach in this field, and outlined options and recommendations for further activities. Based on these principles, NATO will engage in the following fields: information and intelligence fusion and sharing; projecting stability; advancing international and regional cooperation; supporting consequence management; and supporting the protection of critical energy infrastructure. The Alliance will continue to consult on the most immediate risks in the field of energy security. We will ensure that NATO’s endeavours add value and are fully coordinated and embedded within those of the international community, which features a number of organisations that are specialised in energy security. We have tasked the Council in Permanent Session to prepare a consolidated report on the progress achieved in the area of energy security for our consideration at the 2009 Summit.

3. NATO-Russia

28. We recall that the NATO-Russia partnership was conceived as a strategic element in fostering security in the Euro-Atlantic area, based on core principles, values and commitments, including democracy, civil liberties and political pluralism. Looking back at a history of more than a decade, we have developed a political dialogue as well as concrete projects in a broad range of international security issues where we have common goals and interests. While we are concerned by recent Russian statements and actions on key security issues of mutual concern, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), we stand ready to continue working with Russia as equal partners in areas of common concern, as envisaged by the Rome Declaration and the Founding Act. We should continue our common efforts in the fight against terrorism and in the area of non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their means of delivery. We urge Russia to engage actively in important cooperative offers that have been extended. We believe that United States-Russia bilateral discussions on missile defence and CFE, among other issues, can make an important contribution in this field.

40. The NATO-Russia partnership remains a strategic element in fostering security in the Euro-Atlantic area. As we look towards the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Founding Act and the 5th anniversary of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in May 2007, we welcome progress made in intensifying political dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO and Russia, and believe that the cooperative agenda set forth in the May 2002 Rome Declaration has not yet achieved its full potential. Much work remains to be done to this end, and we call on Russia to join us in enhancing our cooperation on key security issues, including the fight against terrorism. We look forward to Russia’s early ratification of the PfP Status of Forces Agreement, which would facilitate the further intensification of our practical cooperation, in particular military-to-military projects. We
| 4. | NATO-Ukraine, Georgia MAP and ID |

|   |   |

| 23. | NATO welcomes Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. Both nations have made valuable contributions to Alliance operations. We welcome the democratic reforms in Ukraine and Georgia and look forward to free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia in May. MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership. Today we make clear that we support these countries’ applications for MAP. Therefore we will now begin a period of intensive engagement with both at a high political level to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications. We have asked Foreign Ministers to make a first assessment of value Russia’s contribution to Operation Active Endeavour, and our practical cooperation in countering narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan and Central Asia. We are prepared to strengthen and deepen cooperation within the NRC by making its existing structures more effective, and to continue working together as equal partners in areas of common concern and interest where our cooperation can provide added value, as envisaged by the Rome Declaration. |
| 37. | We reaffirm that the Alliance will continue with Georgia and Ukraine its Intensified Dialogues which cover the full range of political, military, financial, and security issues relating to those countries’ aspirations to membership, without prejudice to any eventual Alliance decision. |
| 38. | We reaffirm the importance of the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership, which has its 10th anniversary next year and welcome the progress that has been made in the framework of our Intensified Dialogue. We appreciate Ukraine’s substantial contributions to our common |
progress at their December 2008 meeting. Foreign Ministers have the authority to decide on the MAP applications of Ukraine and Georgia.

| 5. Frozen conflicts | 43. We are concerned with the persistence of regional conflicts in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova. Our nations support the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We will continue to support efforts towards a peaceful settlement of these regional conflicts, taking into account these principles. |
| 6. CFE | 42. We fully endorse the statement of the North Atlantic Council of 28 March 2008 and reaffirm the Alliance’s commitment to the CFE Treaty Regime, as expressed in the Alliance’s position contained in paragraph 42 of the 2006 Riga Summit Declaration, the final statement by Allies at the CFE Extraordinary Conference in Vienna and Alliance statements reflecting subsequent developments. We place the highest value on the CFE Treaty regime with all its elements and underscore the strategic importance of the CFE Treaty, including its flank regime, as a cornerstone of European security, including through participation in NATO-led operations and efforts to promote regional cooperation. We encourage Ukraine to continue to contribute to regional security. We are determined to continue to assist, through practical cooperation, in the implementation of far-reaching reform efforts, notably in the fields of national security, defence, reform of the defence-industrial sector and fighting corruption. |

40. We encourage Russia to continue to contribute to the security cooperation between the countries in the region. We support the positive developments in the security dialogues that have been initiated by Russia in its relations with Georgia and Ukraine. We will continue to provide appropriate support, for example, through practical cooperation and in the context of regional cooperation initiatives.

42. We reaffirm our commitment to the CFE Treaty as a cornerstone of European security and to the early entry into force of the Adapted Treaty, which would permit accession by new States Parties. The 3rd Review Conference underscored the vital importance we attach to the CFE Treaty and we are determined to maintain our constructive approach to conventional arms control. Fulfilment of the
cornerstone of Euro Atlantic Security. We are deeply concerned that the Russian Federation has continued its unilateral "suspension" of its legal obligations under the CFE Treaty. This action does not contribute to our common objective of preserving the long-term viability of the CFE regime and we urge the Russian Federation to resume its implementation. The current situation, where NATO CFE Allies implement the Treaty while Russia does not, cannot last indefinitely. We have offered a set of constructive and forward looking proposals for parallel actions on key issues, including steps by NATO Allies on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty and by the Russian Federation on outstanding commitments related to Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We believe these proposals address all of Russia’s stated concerns. We encourage Russian authorities to work cooperatively with us and other concerned CFE States Parties to reach agreement on the basis of the parallel actions package so that together we can preserve the benefits of this landmark regime.

remaining Istanbul commitments on the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova will create the conditions for Allies and other States Parties to move forward on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty. We welcome the important agreement signed by Russia and Georgia on 31 March 2006 on the withdrawal of Russian forces, and the progress made since then. We note with regret the continued lack of progress on withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Republic of Moldova and we call upon Russia to resume and complete its withdrawal as soon as possible.

### 7. NATO-EU

14. NATO EU relations cover a wide range of issues of common interest relating to security, defence and crisis management, including the fight against terrorism, the development of coherent and mutually reinforcing military capabilities, and civil emergency planning. Our successful cooperation in the Western Balkans, including through the Berlin Plus arrangements, is contributing to peace and security in the region. In the light of shared common values and strategic interests, NATO and the EU are working side by side in key crisis management operations and will continue to do so. We recognise the value that a stronger and more capable European defence brings, providing capabilities to address the common challenges both NATO and the EU face. We therefore support mutually reinforcing efforts to this end. Success in these and future cooperative endeavours calls for enhanced commitment to ensure effective methods of working together. We are therefore determined to improve the NATO EU strategic partnership as agreed by our two organisations, to achieve closer cooperation

41. NATO and the EU share common values and strategic interests. NATO EU relations cover a wide range of issues of common interest relating to security, defence and crisis management, including the fight against terrorism, the development of coherent and mutually reinforcing military capabilities, and civil emergency planning. Our successful cooperation in the Western Balkans, including through the Berlin Plus arrangements regarding EU operation Althea, is contributing to peace and security. We will strive for improvements in the NATO EU strategic partnership as agreed by our two organisations, to achieve closer cooperation and greater efficiency, and avoid unnecessary duplication, in a spirit of transparency and respecting the autonomy of the two
and greater efficiency, and to avoid unnecessary duplication in a spirit of transparency, and respecting the autonomy of the two organisations. A stronger EU will further contribute to our common security.

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<th>8.</th>
<th>Terrorism and non-proliferation</th>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>We condemn in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism, whatever their motivation or manifestation. Our nations remain determined to fight this scourge, individually and collectively, as long as necessary and in accordance with international law and UN principles. Terrorists are using a variety of conventional weapons and tactics, including asymmetric tactics, and may seek to use Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) to threaten international peace and security. We attach great importance to the protection of our populations, territories, infrastructure and forces against the consequences of terrorist attacks. We will continue to develop and contribute to policies to prevent and counter proliferation, with a view to preventing terrorist access to, and use of, WMD. We will also continue to support our programme of work to develop advanced capabilities to help defend against terrorist attacks, including through the continuing development of new technologies. We remain committed to strengthening the Alliance’s ability to share information and intelligence on terrorism, especially in support of NATO operations. Our Alliance provides an essential transatlantic dimension to the response against terrorism and our nations will continue to contribute to the full implementation of UNSCR 1373 and related UNSCRs, in particular UNSCR 1540, and to the wider efforts of the international community in this regard. Dialogue and cooperation with other international organisations, as appropriate, and with our partners are essential, and we welcome efforts towards revitalising the implementation of the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism. We reiterate our commitment to Operation Active Endeavour, our maritime operation in the Mediterranean, which continues to make a significant contribution to the fight against terrorism.</td>
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| 20. | We strongly condemn terrorism, whatever its motivations or manifestations, and will fight it together as long as necessary, in accordance with international law and UN principles. The Alliance continues to provide an essential transatlantic dimension to the response against terrorism. Operation Active Endeavour, our maritime operation in the Mediterranean, continues to make an important contribution to the fight against terrorism and we welcome the support of partner countries which has further enhanced its effectiveness. We remain committed to our dialogue and cooperation with our partners and other international organisations to fight terrorism, and reiterate our determination to protect our populations, territories, infrastructure and forces against the consequences of terrorist attacks. We commend NATO’s Defence Against Terrorism initiatives, including development of cutting-edge technologies to counter terrorist threats, such as defending Allied forces in Afghanistan from Improvised Explosive Devices. We call upon Allies to continue to develop and fully implement their national capabilities in this important area, and to strengthen the Alliance’s ability to share information and intelligence on terrorism, especially in support of NATO operations. |
1. The Black Sea Region

The Black Sea Region is an important priority of the host country of the Bucharest summit, and for this purpose, the attention for this region in the final declaration is an important step forward. Formally, from an end of the 14-th paragraph of the Riga summit Declaration, with very general provisions and only a statement of support of the processes of cooperation, security and stability in the Black Sea Region – a legitimate one because of the proximity of the region for 3 NATO member countries – the Alliance moved to a full paragraph, 36, stating, for the first time, „the continued importance of the Black Sea region for Euro Atlantic security“. Such a strong statement enebles the Alliance to pay more attention to the region, to include in its agenda more often the issues related to the region and to even act, once the security of the region is declining and, as a consequence, the Alliance’s security is threaten.

The most important debate related to the Black Sea Region is if there is a direct concern and responsibility of NATO or if there is just the “regional business”. Some 4 years ago, there was a strong debate on the fact that once NATO reached the shores of the Black Sea, as an alliance, therefore the Montreux Convention – that stipulates that only the military vessels from the littoral countries can enter the Black Sea through the straits – is to be read in the sense that all the NATO countries are linked to this possibility. This is also linked to the perspective of American military bases on the shores of the Black Sea, near Constanta in Romania and Burgas, in Bulgaria, and that those bases should be defended from the part of the open sea by suitable war ships, specially American or from NATO countries. In this respect, Turkey and Russia are the big defenders of Montreux provisions, so that Turkey even notified its right to veto any decision to change Montreux rules or to try to find another way of reading the text. In this respect, the final declaration is reinforcing this idea through the formula “regional ownership”, the support for “existing mechanisms and institutions” and refers to the region in the terms of support for the regional priorities based on “transparency, complementarity and inclusiveness”. This means that the region is
seen as a part of the dialogue of NATO to partner countries and not a region where NATO wants to play a direct role, as an Alliance, and that the political recommendation of the Alliance is that the country in the region should cooperate inclusively, therefore avoiding the idea of isolating Russia. Some nuances are still remaining in the declaration that could enable, in time, if this is the case, to come back on the provision.

These statements are clearly blocking the idea of an extended Active Endeavour Operation in the Black Sea and are putting the burden of the security in the Black Sea of the existing BlackSeaFor and on the operation BlackSeaHarmony lead by Turkey, with an indirect support for the exchange of information Centre in Burgas. The Alliance didn’t find appropriate to try to solve the concerns of some Black Sea littoral countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Ukraine that a Russia-Turkey condominium on the Black Sea does not fulfil the need for security of those countries.

2. Energy Security
The subject was launched in Riga, and takes shape in Bucharest, although the evaluation is let to be finalised in the 2009 Summit. The Bucharest final declaration finds the important risks where the Alliance as a whole could be involved, the most important provision, in our opinion, the support for the critical energy infrastructure. In the discussions, this proved to be an important step forward since the participants explained that the reference is to both land and maritime infrastructure. This idea comes back to the need to have suitable capabilities of the Alliance in order to protect the Black Sea Pipeline system in the bed of the sea, meaning, for the moment, the Blue Stream Turkey-Russia pipeline and in the future any other system that will be built. This could include the White Stream pipeline from Georgian ports to Crimea and Constanta, which could be a substantial boost to maritime security involving Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, as NATO allies, but also Georgia and Ukraine as partners and future MAP countries. This provision could equilibrate, in some respect, even in the
form of a promises, the general statement in the paragraph reserved to Black Sea Region.

3. **NATO-Russia**
This relation is much more developed in the Bucharest Declaration, with an important raised tone in some fields. In paragraph 28, it is stated that the security enhanced with Russia partnership as a strategic element is “based on core principles, values and commitments, including democracy, civil liberties and political pluralism”. In the same paragraph, the Alliance „urges“ Russia (and no longer „call on Russia“- Riga paragraph 40) to cooperate in the numerous fields. In the same paragraph a long mention is made to the concern of „Russia’s statements and actions“ regarding the CFE Treaty. In what concerns the NATO Russia Council – NRC, „the potential is not realised“ , the „Open Door Principle“ is reaffirmed, and a special mention is reserved to „the principle of independence of decision making and actions“ with direct reference to missile defense, that „far from posing threats, are intended to better address the security challenges“ and „offer opportunities to deepen levels of cooperation and stability“ between Russia and the Alliance. The same article is introducing a special emphasis in the bilateral discussions Russia-US on CFE and Missile Defense.

There is a second paragraph appreciating the cooperation with Russia that proved to develop, after Riga summit. Article 29 elaborates on the second part of article 40 from the Riga summit, “noting” the ratification of the PIP Status of Forces Agreement by Russia, that occur between the two summits, and presented a wide range of issues where Russia cooperates/or is ready to do so/ with NATO – Afghanistan, narcotics, Cooperative Airspace Initiative, Active Endeavour, etc.

4. **MAP for Ukraine and Georgia**
Here is the most important decision of the Alliance, the strongest and the most difficult to obtain. We have to recall that the program on this very day was postponed, with the EAPC format developing during a working dinner. The delegations were very involved emotionally in this matter. At a moment, all the
members of the delegations were asked to leave the conference room, where only the heads of delegations remained to discuss the final arrangement. After a clear opposition of Germany, first, but supported by other NATO allies, including France, the MAP for Georgia and Ukraine was postponed, instead a stronger declaration being offered to both countries. The Alliance agreed to grant the two countries the perspective of becoming NATO members, a commitment without precedent. Paragraph 23 is the strong equivalent of the EU Thessaloniki Declaration on the perspectives of the Western Balkans to join the European Union. All the other technical details are strongly formulated, in clear and concrete words. Ukraine and Georgia could join MAP before the next summit, in December, at the Minister of Foreign Affair meeting, if the technical conditions and due reforms are met.

The news of the guarantee of a future membership that would replace the admission into MAP for Georgia and Ukraine was delivered in a press conference after the NAC reunion by Germany and France chiefs of delegations, President Nicolas Sarkozy and Chancellor Angela Merkel. This has a double meaning, in terms of symbols: first, to let the most reticent countries leaders to explain why the two countries didn’t obtain the MAP and that this decision didn’t represent a result of some “veto” of a “non-NATO country” (Russia) and to let the same leaders take the dividends of the announcement of the guarantee offered as a premiere, to both countries that they will enter NATO.

The Declaration underlined a strong commitment and a strong resolution of the Alliance to defend its decisions, in spite of Russia’s observations, reserves, or even opposed position. We can state this taking in consideration this paragraph, the declarations of both NATO leaders that made the announcement, the provisions of paragraph 18 that “only NATO” decides of the next new members, together with other statements of the General Secretary as well as the points mentioned in the paragraph related to the relation with Russia and the
“Chairman’s statement Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of Heads of State and Government held in Bucharest”.

5. Frozen conflicts
The ideas linked with the frozen conflicts are a perfect mach with the Riga summit declaration, no step forward. The support for “the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova are reaffirmed, in the same way it was in Riga Declaration. The only nuance between the two summit declarations was the change of the accent from the “regret” to “the concern” of the persistence of regional conflicts.

6. CFE Treaty
There is a very important part of the concern of the Alliance, and is directly linked with the countries from the region, since the CFE Treaty is related to those countries, as well as the subjects linked to flanks. The formulation at the Bucharest Declaration are stronger and more resolute: “we fully endorse”, “we are deeply concerned”, “unilateral suspension”. The Alliance is interested in this agreements, on the other hand, “we have offered constructive and forward looking proposals” that “address all of Russia’s concerns” so that “we encourage” Russian authorities to “work cooperatively” to reach agreement based on “parallel actions package” offered.

Even though the themes proved to be an important one, in the forefront, paragraph 42 is less resourceful in what concerns the concrete acts expected from Russia, meaning “withdrawal of Russian forces” and “fulfillment of Istanbul commitments on the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova”. The very thorough provisions from the paragraph 42 of the Riga Declaration, in this respect, were changes into a very “soft” formulation, “on ratification (…) by the Russian Federation on outstanding commitments related to Georgia and the Republic of Moldova”.

This way of addressing the issue is indirectly linked to the diplomatic approach of the question once Moscow makes an important move like the “unilateral suspension” of the CFE revised Treaty and the important goal of having Russia back on track in this respect is more important than “teasing” it with strong declaration on the withdrew of its military from Transnistria and Abhazia separatist regions.

7. EU-NATO relations
This is not a part directly linked with the Black Sea Region, but we can not avoid talking about the indirect influence on this, since the countries from the region are EU countries, under the negotiations for EU accession or in the ENP Action Plans. All maybe except Russia, for the moment being, are claiming a future EU accession.

Paragraph 14 from the Bucharest Declaration is a proof of the rising importance of NATO-EU cooperation, and the formulations are underlining more than the formal place of the issue into the Declaration. Paragraph 41 from the Riga Declaration has been developed with the strong statement that NATO “recognise the value that a stronger and more capable European defence brings, providing capabilities to address the common challenges both NATO and the EU face”, and therefore “support mutually reinforcing efforts to this end. Success in these and future cooperative endeavours calls for enhanced commitment to ensure effective methods of working together”. Even the nuance plays in this direction since the strategic partnership NATO-EU passed from “we will strive from improvements” to “we are therefore determined to improve”, a more engaging statement.

It is the first time that NATO recognize the added value of EU capabilities in the field of crisis management and commits to support the increase of capabilities, as well as the interoperability between the two organizations, in this respect. This commitment was enforced by President Bush statements in this respect,
statements that are even stronger. This perspective and the announced France decision to join NATO military bodies in its full capacity are the last trends to bridge the transatlantic gap. By the way, the long part reserved to describe and assess the transatlantic gap in Riga Conference – paragraphs 2, 29 and others – are not reshaped in any way in the Bucharest summit Declaration. Such an outcome is appeasing the Wider Black Sea Region concerns about a kind of rivalry between EU and NATO.

8. Terrorism and non/counter-proliferation
Paragraph 15 from the Bucharest Declaration is an expanded version of the paragraph 20 of the Riga Declaration. If we had to add the provisions regarding the Missile Defense, included in the Bucharest Declaration, we can see that NATO pays a lot of concern to these threats. From the first time, it is mentioned the possibility that terrorists would use WMD. At the same time, a new part refers to the support “of work to develop advanced capabilities to help defend against terrorist attacks, including through the continuing development of new technologies”.

This part is important for two reasons, first, because of the fact that the Black Sea is a door for the entrance of the possible terrorists and traffic of WMD, and because the whole Wider Black Sea Region is the border of NATO and takes the biggest part of the burden to block these threats to arrive further inside the territory of the Alliance. Second, the members states are concern to take the best policies and techniques to tackle this type of threats, and this concern is also the one of the future NATO members from the region, Ukraine and Georgia. In this respect, Missile Defense, container control, maritime security and survey of the routes of transit East-West are of the first importance for these countries, and for NATO as a whole.

Conclusions
The analysis of these papers and other documents and statements of the organization, in the international context where the NATO Bucharest summit took place, is enabling us to assess that the NATO relation to the Black Sea Area and to the Wider Black Sea Region – a security regional complex including all three Caucasian countries and the Republic of Moldova, aside the purely littoral countries – could be describe under the recommendations of Beethoven in a part of his Concert for piano and orchestra, “allegro ma non troppo e molto majestuoso”.

The Black Sea Area rise more and more attention from the part of the Alliance, with steps forward in the majority of the issues, with a limited speed, less important than the one expected by the countries in the region (especially Romania, Ukraine, Georgia), and with extreme cautious and diplomacy in the matters linked to direct concrete issues that are interesting Russia – like the withdrew of troops from Georgia and Republic of Moldova. On the other hand, the steady little achievements and steps forward are proving that the alliance is referring only to its own interests and don’t give any type of veto to Russia.

Moreover, some precedents have been created at the Bucharest summit that are proving the next developments of the Alliance, both in the territorial sense, in the deepening of the cooperation between member countries, between the Alliance and other bodies – EU, UN -, and underlines the steps forward even in the direct cooperation with Russia to different operations and programs of the Alliance. This perspective and commitments are fully assumed and supported by the countries in the Wider Black Sea Region, members or aspirant to join NATO.

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