The protection of the sea as a cooperation area case in the Baltic Sea region

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Abstract: This article investigates how the geopolitical interests of states in the Baltic Sea region have determined the emergence and the development of environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea since the late 1970s. It is shown that the Nordic and the Baltic countries have played a key role in this process and that other actors such as the European Union and the United States, also influence environmental cooperation because their geopolitical interests contribute to shape the cooperative links in the region. The United Nations with its legislation and its policies reinforces cooperation in the field. It is also argued that the case of environment around the Baltic Sea is one of the rare successful attempts to establish closer links among states in a particular issue area during the Cold War in Europe.

Keywords: Baltic Sea region, environmental cooperation, EU, geopolitics, UN, U.S.

The Baltic Sea region is a successful case of regional cooperation. Although tensions have always been present among some of the states,¹ profitable political and economic links have been created among them. In this context, cooperation in the field of environment is interesting because it is a rare attempt to institutionalize cooperation already during the Cold War when the East–West divide made the relations among the states in the region quite difficult.

This article aims at investigating how the geopolitical interests of states in the region have determined the emergence and the development of environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. In so doing, the geopolitical changes that have occurred in the relations among the regional

states since the late 1960s, when environmental cooperation began emerging, are taken into consideration through a historical sequence of events. At the same time, the involvement of other actors such as the European Union (EU), the United States, and the United Nations (UN) is analyzed by showing how they affect environmental cooperation in the region.

The discussion is based on the following three elements. Firstly, the Baltic Sea region is here defined as constituted by the nine countries affected from the environmental problems of the Baltic Sea: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. Secondly, geopolitics is the interplay between power politics and territoriality. Power politics refers to the interaction between the forces operating at the international level and those operating at the state level. Territoriality refers to the geographical settings that can be Maritime or Continental (following Saul Bernard Cohen's division) (Cohen, 2008) and more specifically to the geographical constraints that influence power politics. The Maritime setting is exposed to the sea, either from coastal reaches or from inland areas with access to the sea. The Continental setting is instead characterized by vast distances from the sea. This study obviously takes into consideration the Maritime setting. Thirdly, the historical legacy of the regional actors or established patterns of interaction is intended as the history of the connections among the states in the Baltic Sea region as defined in this study. It is strictly linked to the notion of geopolitics and plays a role in determining the features of regional cooperation because it has an impact on the relations among the regional actors.

The article is divided into two sections. The first section is a historical analysis of the origins and the development of the environmental cooperation in the region from a geopolitical point of view. The second section discusses the involvement of the European Union (EU) and of the United States in the environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea by showing how their various schemes overlap and how they pursue their geopolitical aims in the region. The influence of the UN legislation and policies is also discussed.

The origins of environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region

Environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea began in the form of bilateral cooperative efforts in the late 1960s. The division of the world in two blocs represented an obstacle to the development of cooperation involving all the states in the region at that time. However, the confrontation between the superpowers (e.g., the Soviet Union and the United States)

made clear some limits to the politics of threats and deterrence so that they searched for ways to overcome the arms race and achieve a certain level of peaceful coexistence and international stability. Thus, they worked toward arms control and limited cooperation. It is in this context that environmental policy emerged as a field of international cooperation in the late 1960s (McNeill & Unger, 2010). This inevitably had an impact also on the Baltic Sea region where the states began cooperating in the environmental field on a bilateral basis. In 1968, Finland and the Soviet Union agreed on scientific and technological cooperation relating to the Gulf of Finland, while some years later Sweden and the Soviet Union engaged in similar cooperative efforts in the Baltic Sea. Also, Finland and Sweden have traditionally worked together on environmental issues without signing any agreements (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

However, it was only in 1970s that the possibilities to involve all the states of the Baltic Sea region in cooperative arrangements emerged. This happened mainly for two reasons. While until the 1950s the Baltic Sea was considered “healthy,” the problem of pollution of the sea had become real in the region since the 1960s. Additionally, on the occasion of European Nature Conservation Year (1970) concerns about the environment were raised at the international level, especially in the West, where governments wanted to give an image of having a responsible environmental agenda. Environmental policy had been marginalized for a long time, but in those years it became a way to respond to public pressure and to build up cooperation, as well as to have a good international reputation. Therefore, cooperation in the field was seen positively from both East and West. In this context, only the two non-allied countries, Finland and Sweden, were the ones in the position of leading intergovernmental negotiation on cooperation without provoking political conflicts (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007). Thus, Sweden took the initiative by proposing an agreement between the states around the Baltic Sea to protect it from oil discharges from ships. However, no agreement was signed because of the so-called German question, which was a geopolitical obstacle to the creation of cooperative links in the field. Sweden, along with the West, had not recognized the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Thus, the latter could not be included in the agreement. At the same time, its inclusion was a condition for the Soviet Union to sign any convention or agreement on international environmental protection.² Since Finland had not recognized either state, it was in a better position to conduct the negotiations. For this reason, the initiative shifted from the Swedes to the Finns (Hassler, 2004; Joas, Jahn, & Kern, 2008; Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007) who took it as an opportunity to present themselves as peace-makers in the region and as active players on the international scene. In doing this,

Finland could also strengthen its policy of non-alliance (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

The circumstances for holding the Diplomatic Conference on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area in Helsinki became favorable when the “German question” was solved in 1972. That year the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) signed the Basic Treaty in which the latter recognized the former as an independent state. The resolution of this issue removed a very difficult obstacle to international cooperation in the field of environmental protection (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

Consequently, the conference was held in Helsinki between 18 and 22 March 1974; after that, the text was approved by the participants. In this regard, it is interesting to stress an element that shows the importance of geopolitics for the success or the failure of environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The participating states did not agree on the inclusion of the territorial waters in the geographical coverage of the Convention. While Sweden and Finland considered their inclusion of utmost importance in the prevention of pollution, the Soviet Union insisted that issue should not to be included in the Convention. In the end, the security considerations of the Soviet Union, which was a superpower, prevailed over environmental considerations and the Soviet coast remained closed for outsiders (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007). At the same time, the Convention contained an important principle, namely the “awareness of the significance of intergovernmental cooperation in the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea as an integral part of the peaceful cooperation and mutual understanding between the nations of Europe” (Helsinki Convention, 1974; Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007). This principle was essential to develop a functioning cooperation between the states in the region through the establishment of peaceful relations between them. Another relevant aspect is that the Convention was the first of its kind in the world because it involved all the states of the region and included all sources of pollution, both from land and ships, and covered the entire sea area in question (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

It is worth noting that the Convention, which entered into force in 1980, only contained non-binding provisions because of the Cold War tensions in international politics. This caused delays in the ratification process. Additionally, another problem concerned Denmark and the FRG. As they were members of the European Community (EC), Denmark and the FRG could not sign any convention with respect to matters already covered by the EC legislation independently. In 1976, in fact, the EC had issued an agreement concerning sea pollution. For this reason, the EC should have the privilege to join the Helsinki Convention. Since the Soviet

Union denied this privilege because it did not want to recognize the EC as a subject of international law, Denmark and the FGR signed the Convention independently (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

The Convention established the Baltic Marine Environmental Protection Commission, known as the Helsinki Commission or HELCOM. Its permanent committees and working groups operate on a one country, one vote principle and decisions must be unanimous. Its Secretariat, located in Helsinki, administers the many meetings and activities under the auspices of the agreements among the member states, such as treaties, resolutions, recommendations and declarations.

HELCOM's activities are of a highly scientific and technological nature. As Stacy VanDeveer argues, "this allows HELCOM to take advantage of the authority and legitimacy gained by the perception that it existed apart from, or above, the normative environment of international politics and the ideological clash between East and West" (Räsänen & Lakkonen, 2007).

In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War had an enormous impact on the relations among the states. A superpower disappeared from the map of Europe while some other states appeared on it as they regained independence after several decades of Russian domination. Consequently, the European geopolitical asset was completely redefined. In the case of the Baltic Sea region, the end of the Cold War meant, for some states—namely the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)³—the possibility to not only reaffirm their statehood but also reformulate their relations with the other states in the region. In this context, the establishment of close relations with the Nordic states (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) was particularly important for the Baltic States since it meant the opportunity to drive further away from their Soviet past and to integrate with Western institutions, in particular the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This happened especially through the huge investments⁴ that the Nordic states made in the Baltic ones with the aim not only to facilitate their modernization and democratization but also to re-establish the historical links between them. Among the Nordic states, Sweden and Denmark were the largest donors of bilateral assistance, while Finland concentrated much of its efforts on Estonia. They (plus Norway and Iceland) have provided help through a number of programs in the framework of the Nordic Council (NC)⁵ and of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have pressed for an integrated EU policy towards the Baltic Sea region, with some success. Indeed, the EU programs were important tools through which the Nordic states managed to contribute to multilateral assistance to the Baltic States. Additionally, the Nordic states have established themselves as important

trade partners with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Already in 1995, they were the largest exporters and importers in the case of Estonia and the largest importers of Latvian goods (Archer, 1999).

Environmental cooperation is generally seen in this perspective, but for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, it also was a possibility to assert their sovereignty and independence regained in 1991. For this reason, signing the Helsinki Convention in 1992 had a geopolitical meaning for them.

That year the Convention was revised because the historical and geopolitical circumstances in which it had been adopted had completely changed. Consequently, this time the European Union also signed the Convention.⁶ At the same time, the geopolitical changes of 1991 allowed the signatories to expand the scope of the treaty in the 1992 version (e.g., it included the coastal waters) and to strengthen their collaborative environmental policy (VanDeveer, 2011).

For several decades, HELCOM has addressed threats to the marine environment on a sector-by-sector basis. In the 2000s, it adopted a more holistic approach to the protection of the Baltic Sea environment through a common vision of the application of the ecosystem approach to managing human activities together with the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR). In 2007, this culminated in the adoption of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) setting objectives and programs aiming to substantially cut pollution by 2021 (Reckermann M. et al, 2012). It provides wider and more efficient actions to combat the continuing deterioration of the marine environment resulting from human activities. Moreover, the plan is a concrete basis for HELCOM work as it incorporates the latest scientific knowledge and innovative management approaches into strategic policy implementation, and stimulating goal-oriented multilateral cooperation around the Baltic Sea region (HELCOM, 2015). Its goals are the following: Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication; Baltic Sea life undisturbed by hazardous substances; favorable status of Baltic Sea biodiversity; maritime activities in the Baltic Sea carried out in an environmentally friendly way (HELCOM, 2015). The BSAP involves all major stakeholders in the region. This ensures that the plan is effectively implemented in practice (HELCOM, 2015). A special fund was set up to implement the BSAP, which is managed by the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) (HELCOM, 2015a).

Nevertheless, HELCOM is not the only cooperative network existing in the region. The CBSS, which was established in 1992, is the other important organization guiding cooperation in several sectors around the sea. Environment is one of them.⁷ The CBSS founding declaration of 1992 clearly stresses that cleaning up the Baltic Sea is a joint responsibility and

that cooperation in this sector creates better possibilities for jointly solving the environmental problems (CBSS, 1992).

The CBSS, where decisions are taken by consensus, does not have a general budget or project fund. The common activities are funded by its members who are also responsible for seeking and coordinating financing from other sources. Since 1998, the CBSS member states have financed jointly the Permanent International Secretariat of the CBSS (CBSS, 2015a).

Like HELCOM, the CBSS is the product of geopolitics. This is evident in the Declaration of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States on 5–6 March 1992.⁸ It states:

The Ministers agreed that the recent dramatic changes in Europe herald a new era of European relations where the confrontation and division of the past is replaced by partnership and cooperation. An enhanced and strengthened Baltic cooperation is a natural and logical consequence of these events. The Ministers therefore welcomed the revival of close co-operation among the Baltic Sea States and the strengthening of the ties between them. A number of new and important initiatives taken over the past two years is a clear sign of the willingness to recreate a genuine democratic community around the Baltic Sea. (CBSS, 1992)

It was, in fact, in the new international context that the idea of creating a “New Hansa”⁹ emerged in a high-level seminar held in Kotka in Finland in 1990. As Fabrizio Tassinari argues, the idea was to promote the social and cultural interaction around the Baltic Sea without being tied to any of the great powers of the region, just as the first “old” Hansa did in the thirteenth century (Joenniemi & Wæver, 1992; Tassinari, 2001).

The significance of the Kotka seminar was enormous because it paved the way to the construction of a Europe without dividing lines about which Gorbachev had spoken some years before.¹⁰ Since then, a number of conferences, meetings and seminars followed. All of them stressed the need and the importance of revitalizing cooperation around the Baltic Sea (Joenniemi, 1993). It was, however, during the Copenhagen meeting in 1991 that the CBSS was established on the initiative of former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany. Like HELCOM, participating in the establishment of the CBSS was a great occasion for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania not only to leave behind their past and their legacy as former Soviet Republics but also to strengthen their historical relations with the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden).

The involvement of Russia in the establishment of the CBSS was considered of utmost importance by the states in the region because it is a great power and a key player in the region. Poland particularly stressed this element as it was strictly related to its national security (Spero, 2004).

On its side, Russia expressed its interest in the cooperation in the region in order to establish close and mutual links with the other states around the Baltic Sea (Platzöder & Verlaan, 1996). The former Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin stated that “the Baltic Sea region has considerably increased the chances of producing to the rest of Europe a unique twenty-first century-oriented development model based on the logic of good neighbourhood. We view the cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region as an important single element of the process of building a new, democratic and stable Europe without division lines” (Holtom & Tassinari, 2002, p.11). Therefore, given the circumstances, it was also in the geopolitical interests of Russia to pursue good neighborliness in the region at that time. This is why, in 1992, Yeltsin signed a presidential document on the relationship between Russia and the Nordic countries which stressed the importance of the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. In particular, the document contained sections on cooperation in the field of environment, politics and economics (Platzöder & Verlaan, 1996).

However, in spite of their interests in cooperative links, the participating states established the CBSS with some hesitations. For instance, Russia accepted to participate only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was a favorable condition for the Nordic states. The latter were reluctant to include Russia in a regional cooperative effort because of its preponderant size. The breakdown of the Soviet Union and the inclusion of Russia and of all the independent states in the region was a reassurance for them (Cottey, 1999). The Nordic countries also supported the involvement of the EU in the region. This was essentially due to the fact that they considered the EU important not only for the prospects that a central role of the EU and especially of the Commission could offer in the relations between them and the EU, but also for the resources the Commission administers (Catellani, 2003). Security concerns were considered important, too, as the activities of the Commission were considered valuable to the aim of creating stability in the region. This was true especially because Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland did not belong to any institution at that time (Herolf, 2010). At the same time, its participation in the establishment of an important regional organization was seen by the EU as the possibility to increase its geopolitical and economic influence in the region. Its interests in the European stability coincided with the interests of the regional states in the stability around the Baltic Sea. Since then the EU has enormously increased its presence in the region. All the states surrounding the Baltic Sea are EU members with the exception of Russia. This is another reason why being a full-fledged member of both HELCOM and the CBSS is important for the EU. In fact, its policies also affect the big neighbor especially since 2004, when the sixth enlargement brought also Estonia,

Latvia and Lithuania into the EU. This means that they can't ignore the EU policies and legislation whereas they have to implement them through their national legislation. This gives power to the EU that consequently exerts an enormous influence on the developments in the environmental field (but not only) within the region. Additionally, the fact that the "harmonization" of national environmental policy with the EU policy was a precondition for obtaining the EU membership had an enormous impact on the three Baltic states' environmental policy agendas (VanDeveer, 2011) as well as on the region as a whole.

More recently, the Ukraine crisis of 2014, due to the Russian annexation of Crimea, has jeopardized the stability of the region while also affecting regional cooperation. The crisis has raised hard security concerns among some states causing the militarization of the region not only by increasing the funds for military spending but also with a major involvement of NATO in the region. In fact, the three Baltic States have appealed to the United States and NATO for stronger hard security guarantees and greater military protection from a potentially expansionist Russia (Makarychev, 2014) while Sweden and Finland have begun discussions about the possibility of joining the Alliance (Bernhard, 2014). At the same time, cooperation has also been affected by the Ukraine crisis. The clearest example is the cancellation of the CBSS Summit that was to be held on 3–4 June 2014 in Turku, Finland. This summit, which was the largest gathering of Baltic Sea actors held until then with one thousand participants, had been organized by the European Commission, the Baltic Development Forum, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland as the holder of the Presidency of the CBSS, and the City of Turku. Preparations began to hold the summit at the level of Ministers of the Environment, but the summit was cancelled owing to the situation in Ukraine. The main theme of the forum should have been "Growing together for a prosperous, inclusive and connected Baltic Sea Region" with a focus on the economic situation in the Baltic Sea region and its growth zones and investments, the next steps to save the sea, prospects in the marine and maritime industry, smart cities, the health economy and the green economy. Other key themes should have been how to improve the governance and implementation of the EU's Baltic Sea Strategy, the future of Baltic Sea cooperation, promotion of gender equality and cultural dialogue as the creator of prerequisites for growth (CBSS, 2015c).

To sum up, environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea is an excellent example of a successful case of cooperation in the field across the Cold War's East–West divide. In this context, the Helsinki Convention is particularly important because it paved the way to political cooperation among the regional states in a historical period when geopolitical issues divided

the Baltic Sea region. In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War had a positive impact on environmental cooperation as new organizations such as the CBSS have been established and new opportunities have arisen.

Multilevel governance around the Baltic Sea

The previous section has discussed the establishment of regional institutions dealing with the protection of the sea, but environmental cooperation is part of a much wider network that involves several actors in the governance of the Baltic Sea region. The most important one is the EU, which, as argued above, is a full-fledged member of both the HELCOM and the CBSS through the European Commission. The Baltic Sea region is one of the several regions in which the EU acts as catalyst to increase cooperation among states but also with the aim of widening and deepening its geopolitical influence. The opportunity to pursue this goal has arisen especially after the end of the Cold War. In fact, the EU has not only acquired the membership of regional organizations but has also launched several regional initiatives. The ones taken into consideration here are the Baltic Sea Region Initiative (BSRI), the Northern Dimension (ND) initiative and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The three initiatives have four elements in common. Firstly, they have been pushed by the Nordic countries. The stability and the prosperity of the region, which is the ultimate aim of the three initiatives, were in the interest of the Nordic states. For instance, Finland, Sweden and Denmark began pushing the European Commission for a stronger engagement in the Baltic Sea cooperation even before becoming EU members¹¹ with a report in 1994. The Commission was seen as valuable for the region both for its financial support and for security reasons as its activities were considered useful to this aim. The report emphasized the need of a political and economic development in the region because of “a widespread perception that there exists a security vacuum in this part of Europe” (Herolf, 2010). In fact, the Soviet Union had collapsed only some years before and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania belonged to neither the EU nor NATO, yet. At the same time, since this was in the interests of the EU, too, the three initiatives received warm support from the EU institutions. Secondly, the three initiatives reflect the ambition of the EU to act in the region with a multilateral approach. Multilateralism¹² was incorporated in the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003, in which the EU declares that its stability and the prosperity depend on an effective and multilateral system (European Commission, 2003; Herolf, 2010). If the EU has succeeded in putting its “effective multilateralism” into practice will not be discussed in this arti-

cle. However, it is necessary to stress that the EU regional initiatives taken into consideration here are based on a multilateral approach.¹³ Thirdly, the three initiatives do not involve the EU as such, but the European Commission (Herolf, 2010). Fourthly, all of them include environment in their areas of cooperation.

The BSRI was presented by the European Commission at the Visby meeting in 1996. This event was dominated by the Swedish initiative, the so-called Visby Charter of Prime Minister Göran Persson, then President-in-Office of the CBSS. The strong role played by Sweden was stressed by the European Commission's BSRI document, which states that "the recommendations of the initiative are closely linked to the preparation by the Swedish Presidency of the CBSS of the 'Visby Charter' with a view to promoting action programs for contacts, economic cooperation and environmental cooperation" (Herolf, 2010).

The ND¹⁴ was launched in 1997 by the former Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen. The driving forces behind it must be found in the Finnish desire of multilateralising its historical relations with Russia but also in the Swedish and Danish interests in terms of Baltic Sea regional cooperation. The role of the EU in the ND was the same as in the BSRI in relation to the authority given to the CBSS where the European Commission had a weaker role than the member states. The reason was that the EU aimed at promoting regional cooperation in all parts of Europe but not be part of it themselves (Herolf, 2010). For the EU it was important that the CBSS contributed to the goals of the ND, as Commissioner Chris Patten said in an interview with the newspaper *Baltinfo* (Patten, 2000). The ND contributes to face the challenges through the NDEP. The latter provides an international framework promoting cooperation between partner governments, the European Commission, donors and international financial institutions (IFIs), in particular the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB), the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), and the World Bank. Moreover, it is very interesting to note that the NDEP cooperates with HELCOM in the Baltic Sea region to implement environmental projects, but not with the CBSS, which is a partner of the Northern Dimension (ND) (Baltic Sea Forum, 2013).

The EUSBSR, like the NDEP, also stresses the importance of the cooperation with HELCOM to reach its objectives in the environmental field. It was launched in 2009 on the invitation of the Council of the European Union and after the Intergroup of the European Parliament composed of the eight littoral EU states published a report in 2006 calling for a strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Indeed, the EUSBSR defines its nature and its objectives in the following terms: "this strategy is the first macro-regional strat-

egy in Europe. It aims at reinforcing cooperation within this large region in order to face several challenges by working together as well as promoting a more balanced development in the area. The Strategy also contributes to major EU policies and reinforces the integration within the area" (European Union, 2015). The environmental pillar of the strategy aims at making the region an 'environmentally sustainable place' (Kaljurand et al., 2012) by providing an integrating framework to improve the environmental condition of the sea, transport bottlenecks and energy interconnections.

The EUSBSR differs from the other two initiatives because it does not formally include Russia since it is an internal EU strategy. In spite of this, Russia is mentioned as a potential collaborator in areas like environmental protection, water quality and innovation (European Commission, 2015). The involvement of Russia in the other two initiatives is fundamental both for the EU as a whole and for the states in the region. Since Russia is a key player in the region, its involvement is essential to promote security and stability. In particular, the EU and Russia are strategic partners with common environmental interests in the region. They cooperate not only through the EU–Russia Environmental Dialogue in the framework of the EU–Russia Partnership for Modernization (P4M) of 2010¹⁵ but also through the ND and HELCOM. At the multilateral level, they cooperate in the framework of the CBSS.

Environmental cooperation between the EU and Russia in the Baltic Sea region is strictly linked to energy issues, which also affect the bilateral relations between the regional states and the big neighbor. A good example is the Nord Stream project,¹⁶ which is the most important gas pipeline in the region. Its route, which is 1200 km long, goes from Vyborg in Russia to Greifswald in Germany, and it is among the longest offshore pipelines of the world. The twin pipeline passes through the exclusive economic zones of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany and the territorial waters of Russia and Germany.¹⁷

The Nord Stream project is functional to the EU needs of energy. The EU acknowledges this in its Green Paper of 2006 stating that Europe has entered into a new energy era and that its import dependency is rising (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). In 2000, the EU gave the Nord Stream pipeline the priority project status under the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E) guidelines whose objective is to help increase competitiveness in the energy market and increase the security of supply. This status was confirmed in 2006 by the former Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs who spoke in favor of the project. He said:

I see this pipeline as very positive for the supply security of Europe. The more possibilities we have for the transport of gas, the better. The more

pipelines we have, the securer is the supply. The question is only that in the course of construction all the relevant environmental factors will be respected, but that too I see positively. (European Parliament Directorate General for Internal Policies, 2007)

At the same time, the European Parliament (EP) recognizes that the project will increase the leverage of Russia on the EU. In a briefing paper of 2008 entitled *Security Implications of the Nord Stream Project*, the EP states that,

on international spot markets for oil, this issue would be handled by the price mechanism related to supply and demand, but when it comes to regional gas trade, there are risks of Russia attaching a political premium to its energy supplies in the same way as it has done before against the Eastern EU and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russia has the ability to do this today, but the Nord Stream project will, to some extent, increase Russian ability to tamper with gas flows and apply an arbitrary price policy without affecting the most important customers in Moscow's view, for example Germany. (European Parliament Policy Department for External Policies, 2008)

In particular, the EP underlines that the project would raise the sensitivity of some states to the energy issue. It stresses that states with strained relations with Russia have to stand back in their imports of energy. This is the case of the Baltic States and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). According to the EP, this decreases the bargaining position of the EU members Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, but also Belarus and Ukraine vis-à-vis Russia (European Parliament Policy Department for External Policies, 2008). This is true since Russia uses its energy power as a tool of its foreign policy for geopolitical aims. Examples of this is the Russian suspension of gas delivery to the Latvian port of Ventspils in 2003, the cut off of oil supplies to Lithuania between 1998 and 2000, and to Estonia in 1993.¹⁸ Therefore, it is comprehensible that Russia considers Nord Stream as vital for its geopolitical and economic interests. Recently, Russia has planned to strengthen the capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline. On June 18, 2015 Gazprom, E.ON, Shell and OMV signed the Memorandum of Intent stipulating the joint construction of two additional strings of the Nord Stream II gas pipeline.¹⁹ Since this project allows Russia to provide energy to the EU by bypassing Ukraine, which is an important transit country for gas to the EU,²⁰ the geopolitical value of Nord Stream would consequently increase. This issue has become even more sensitive because of the Ukraine crisis, which has provoked the worst crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War (Sakwa, 2015) and has made the energy relations between the EU and Russia more complicated. In particular, the EU sanc-

tions imposed on Russia²¹ have negatively affected the EU–Russia Energy Dialogue, which was established in 2000 to better define the energy partnership between them.²² Furthermore, in April 2015, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared in a letter to the European leaders that the EU member states risked a gas supply crisis if Russia did not receive energy prepayments from Ukraine. Therefore, in order to face the possibility of energy disruptions, the EU is trying to diversify its gas-supply routes to reduce the dependence on Russia of some of its member states, in particular those in the Baltic and in the Central and Eastern Europe. To this aim, the EU supports the construction of interconnectors to enable reverse flows of gas between member states as well as the building of alternative transit routes and terminals for liquefied natural gas (LNG) (European Council on Foreign relations, 2012).

Additionally, another critical aspect of the EU–Russia energy relations concerns environment. In fact, the EU environmental policy is detrimental to the energy security of Russia. The EU tries to enhance its energy security by increasing energy efficiency and the share of renewables in its energy mix. In so doing, the EU is proposing curbing fossil-fuel consumption, including that of gas. As Russia is the largest supplier of gas to the EU,²³ such a reduction would limit the volume of Russia's gas export to the EU (Sharples, 2013).

In this context, it is worth noting that the Nord Stream project has raised many environmental concerns in the regional countries, which were accompanied by geopolitical worries. Estonians, for instance, decided not to participate in the project not only for ecological aspects, but also for security and military considerations (Värk & Martin, 2011). According to Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, Estonia had no reason to join the Nord Stream project in order to receive gas because this would not solve the problem of having a monopoly gas supplier. There would even be the risk of a Russian installation on the Estonian territory since Russians had made its Baltic Sea military fleet available to station in the Baltic Sea to protect the construction of the pipeline. This would pose a military risk. At the same time, the pipeline could also be beneficial for the country as it could impose transit fees or a “lease” allowing Gazprom to use the Estonian territory (Kaljurand et al., 2012).

Like Estonia, also Latvia and Lithuania have always been skeptical of the Nord Stream project. Their concerns pertain to loss of money and counter-leverage, environmental worries and the fact that the project does not benefit them in any way. These concerns were also due to increased vulnerability as the three Baltic countries have been affected by the heavy-handed energy policy of Russia (Larsson, 2007), as argued above. The former Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis even called the project a

Russo-German pact and argued that cooperation between Russia and Germany has always caused problems to the countries between them (Solum Whist, 2008). Similarly, the Polish Minister of Defence Radoslaw Sikorski compared the Nord Stream to the Molotov-Ribbentrop of 1939, which divided Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union. The former Head of Poland's Security Service Zbigniew Siemiatkowski referred to the project in the following words: "Russia's new imperialism-yesterday tanks, today oil" (Monaghan, 2007).

The case of Finland is particularly interesting. While it officially supports the Nord Stream and only raised concerns about the environment, concerns about the Russian military presence in the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea were raised within the government. Its energy dependence on Russia and the history of its relations with both Russia and Germany were good reasons not to oppose the project (Solum Whist, 2008). Therefore, geopolitics prevailed on environmental concerns.

It can be argued that the states that benefit the most from the project are only Germany and Russia. Germany has strong interests in the project because E.ON Ruhrgas and BASF/Wintershall are two German owned companies with the second largest holdings in the Nord Stream project. Additionally, among all the EU member states, the Nord Stream benefits Germany the most as the bulk of the gas is earmarked for the German market (Solum Whist, 2008). In the case of Russia, the benefit comes essentially from the fact that the other regional states as well as the EU as a whole will become more dependent on its gas. Consequently, Russia will have a geopolitical and economic benefit from the Nord Stream project.

This intricate geopolitical picture is complicated by the presence of the United States, which exerts its influence around the Baltic Sea through its involvement in the environmental cooperation in the region. In this context, the Baltic Defence Environmental Cooperation (BALTDEC), also known as "Riga initiative," is the most illuminating example. The idea of such initiative stems from the successful Baltic/Swedish/U.S. defense environmental training program which began in 1999 and was concluded in 2003. The interest of Sweden and the United States in the program was to help the three Baltic States become stable democracies and assist them in their aspirations for the EU and NATO membership. Therefore, it is clear that the environmental cooperative framework was a pretext for geopolitical aims.

The idea of a defense environmental conference was first proposed by the Latvian Ministry of Defense in 2000. In his speech at the conference held in Riga in 2001, he stressed his appreciation for the participation in the initiative of all the Baltic Sea region states and raised a number of areas of cooperation in which cooperation could be possible.²⁴

Given the success of the initiative, the second annual Baltic Environmental/Military Cooperation Conference was held in Riga in 2002. More than 60 participants from 14 countries²⁵ took part in the event as well as representatives from NATO Headquarters. At the conference, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy to Latvia Tracy Jacobson noted that no other geographic region's militaries were discussing environmental cooperation in that way. During the conference, the participants agreed that strengthening military environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region was necessary to prevent duplication of effort, ensure optimum use of scarce environmental resources (personnel and funds) and to provide for information exchange. The next meeting, which was held in Vilnius in 2003, stressed that future work should take into account the lessons learned from other defense environmental cooperation such as the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation (AMEC). During the meeting held in Tallinn two years later, the structure of the BALTDEC was decided and the key objectives formulated.²⁶ Since then, many projects and seminars have been successfully implemented and have earned BALTDEC international recognition. Also, what is interesting about BALTDEC are its geopolitical implications. While the United States has built new security alliances, the states in the region can work for improving stability around the Baltic Sea (Pocock & Smits, 2005). The involvement of Russia in BALTDEC is another element with geopolitical implications since the United States extends its influence on a region where Russia is one of the most powerful states.

In addition to the EU and the United States, the United Nations, which are one of the most influential organizations on the international scene, are involved in environmental policies around the Baltic Sea. Its Environmental Programme (UNEP), established in 1972, promotes the "wise use and sustainable development of the global environment" (UNEP, 2015). Its work encompasses the assessment of global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends, the development of international and national environmental instruments, and the strengthening of the institutions for the wise management of the environment (UNEP, 2015). In the context of the UNEP, the UN have developed the Regional Seas Programme with the aim of fighting against the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment and through the engagement of neighboring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment (UNEP, 2015a). It was launched in 1974 in the wake of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, which had an impact on the creation of HELCOM. The Regional Seas programmes function through an Action

Plan. In most cases the Action Plan is underpinned with a strong legal framework in the form of a regional Convention and associated Protocols on specific problems. The Baltic Sea is one of the five-partner programs.²⁷

The protection of the sea is part of the seventh goal of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely to ensure environmental sustainability that is considered essential to achieve all the other goals. They are: (a) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (b) to achieve universal primary education; (c) to promote gender equality and empower women; (d) to reduce child mortality; (e) to improve maternal health; (f) to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and (g) to develop a global partnership for development (UN Millennium Project, 2005). As it is widely known, the UN launched the MDGs with a willingness to “form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest” (UN, 2013). As for the protection of the sea in particular, the seventh goal is necessary to ensure the access to natural resources that are essential for the life of people. Indeed, the 2013 Fact Sheet document of the UN stresses the fact that many species of birds, mammals and others are heading for extinction at a fast pace, although more land and marine areas are under protection. Significant progress has been made in increasing the coverage of protected areas dedicated to safeguarding and maintaining biological diversity and natural resources. In spite of this, several species are moving towards extinction at an ever-faster pace, and reduced biodiversity will have serious consequences for the ecosystem services upon which all people depend (UN, 2013a).

Finally, it is worth noting that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which was signed in 1982 and entered into force in 1994, is the most comprehensive and important multilateral agreement in the framework of the United Nations (Schernewski & Scheibe, 2007). UNCLOS is an international regime that imposes to the states the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). It “provides a regulatory framework for the use of the world’s seas and oceans, *inter alia*, to ensure the conservation and equitable usage of resources and the marine environment and to ensure the protection and preservation of the living resources of the sea. UNCLOS also addresses such other matters as sovereignty, rights of usage in maritime zones, and navigational rights.” Therefore, UNCLOS establishes a comprehensive legal regime covering all aspects of the seas and of the oceans by forcing states to adopt all necessary measures to reduce pollution and to protect the environment. Indeed, according to Art.194(1), “states shall take, individually or jointly as appropriate, all measures consistent with this Convention that are necessary to prevent,

reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from any source, using for this purpose the best practicable means at their disposal and in accordance with their capabilities, and they shall endeavour to harmonize their policies in this connection" (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). Very meaningfully, the EU has also joined the Convention.²⁸

In sum, environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea involves various actors in the protection of the sea. The EU is particularly committed to the field in the framework of initiatives coming from the Baltic and the Nordic states, but also through the membership of regional organizations such as the CBSS. The United States, like the EU, has geopolitical interests in the region on which it manages to exert its influence even through the BALTDEC scheme. The UN is another important player in environmental protection in the region, although its schemes are not created ad hoc for the Baltic Sea region, but are applied more generally to its members.

Conclusion

Environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea is a rare attempt to establish closer links among states in a particular issue area during the Cold War in Europe. The success of this case is essentially due to two elements. The first one is the strong interest of the Nordic and of the Baltic states in re-establishing their close historical links, in promoting the stability of the region and in helping the modernization and the democratization processes in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The involvement of Russia in regional cooperation was a relevant geopolitical element, too. Environment, which is not a politically sensitive issue, was a good opportunity to pursue these aims. In spite of some geopolitical obstacles such as the "German question," HELCOM was established in 1974. It is the most important environmental organization in the region but not the only one since the CBSS also promotes cooperation in the field. The second element is the geopolitical interests of actors such as the EU and the United States. Both actors are interested in exerting their influence on the region and are welcomed by the Nordic and the Baltic States. The EU is very committed to the protection of the Baltic Sea through three broad initiatives (the BSRI, the ND, and the EUSBSR), which have geopolitical connotations both because they aim at deepening the political and economic influence of the EU in the region and because they involve Russia (although the EUSBSR not formally). In this context, the Nord Stream project is a good example of how geopolitics affects the relations among states and how other issue areas such as energy, which is politically very sensitive, are strictly linked to environmental cooperation in the region.

The United States participates in environmental cooperation through BALTDEC by increasing its involvement in the regional geopolitics especially because it is a military/environmental organization. Also in this case, the presence of Russia is a relevant geopolitical element for U.S. goals in the region.

Furthermore, this article has also discussed the involvement of the UN in the environmental field, stressing that this international organization acts at the global level and does not have geopolitical aims in the Baltic Sea region.

All in all, the protection of the Baltic Sea is a relevant case showing how the geopolitical interests of states and the intervention of other actors can determine the development of a functioning cooperative scheme.

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NOTES

1. The reference here is in particular to the relations between Russia and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. More recently, the Ukrainian crisis has negatively affected the relations among the states in the region and, consequently, cooperation among them.
2. The 'German question' was also the cause of the failure of the first UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. Since the Eastern bloc countries did not want the GDR to participate in the conference, they did not send their representatives to Sweden. This added weight to the Finnish initiative. (Räsänen and Laakkonen, 2007, p. 232).
3. The term 'Baltic' can refer to the countries on the Baltic Sea shores like in Swedish (Baltikum) or just to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that are often called the Baltic States. Here the second meaning is applied in order to make a clear distinction between the Baltic and the Nordic countries. However, it is worth noting that the three states refused the 'Baltic' tag when they regained the independence in 1991 because it was part of their Soviet past. As Mikko Lagerspetz puts it, "for the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, it has become important to stress their difference both from Russia and from other parts of the previous Soviet Union, and—perhaps increasingly—also from each other." (2003, p. 53).

4. Since the Baltic States were very poor in the period immediately after they regained the independence, the Nordic states prepared many studies and proposals to decide how to efficiently assist them in the economic and financial fields. At the beginning of 1992 they presented a comprehensive programme, the Baltic Investment Programme, containing substantial resources for technical assistance and financing. Based directly on the resources of the programme more than € 125 million was invested directly by the Nordic resources based on already established and operating international financial institutions. The main ones were the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB-of which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are members since 2005), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, plus the Nordic Project Fund (Nopef). In the context of the NIB, the amounts spent were for Estonia € 2.1 million, for Latvia € 2.8 million for Lithuania € 2.8 million and € 0.8 million were for costs not specifically allocated to one of the countries. The Baltic Special Investment Fund with the EBRD got € 30 million from Baltic Investment Programme (BIP, 1992–1995) I and € 11.5 million from BIP II (1995–1998), 7.5 million from BIP III (1998–2003). As for Nopef, at the beginning of the 1990s its funding did not make it possible to launch a credible effort to foster cooperation between Nordic and Baltic companies. Therefore it was decided to include Nopef in the Baltic Investment Programme. In BIP I Nopef received € 5.0 million. On the basis on an evaluation of Nopef's work with the programme it was decided in BIP II to allocate further € 5 million. (Katznelson, 2013, p. 15–32).
5. The Nordic Council is the official inter-parliamentary body in the Nordic region. It was established in 1952 to strengthen and deepen cooperation among the Nordic states. It has 87 elected members from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. See Norden's website at <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council>.
6. The members of HELCOM are: Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden, see HELCOM's website at <http://helcom.fi/about-us>.
7. The five priority areas of cooperation in the CBSS are: environment, economic development, energy, education & culture, civil security & human dimension (CBSS, 2015).
8. The members of the CBSS are: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the European Commission, (CBSS, 2015b).
9. The term refers to the Hanseatic League that united about one hundred towns from London to Novgorod with the aim of linking the raw materials suppliers in Eastern Europe to the markets in the west (Gerner & Karlsson, 1993).
10. Gorbachev's idea of a 'Common European Home' was to build a new European architecture that should be based on four levels: collective security, a peaceful resolution of conflicts, a pan-European economic and trade cooperation, and a real European cultural community. However, the expression 'Common European Home' had been previously used in 1972 by the then Soviet Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko in a meeting with the French President George Pompidou to convince him of the necessity of

supporting the proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The concept of 'Common European Home' was part of the 'New Political Thinking', later known just as the 'New Thinking', which Gorbachev set out during his speech at the United Nations in 1988. It was founded on some key propositions affirming the importance that international relations should be based on the primacy of human interests, security and interdependence (Rey, 2004; Holloway, 1989).

11. Finland and Sweden became EU members in 1995, while Denmark in 1973.
12. This study applies the following definition of 'multilateralism' because it reflects the functioning of environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region where norms and principles regulating it are defined through regional and international institutions and are equally applied to all states: "multilateralism is three or more actors engaging in voluntary and (essentially) institutionalised international cooperation governed by norms and principles, with rules that apply (by and large) equally to all states" (Bouchard & Peterson, 2010).
13. The multilateral approach of the EU to its external relations is part of a very contentious scholarly debate. The fact the EU has achieved effective multilateralism has been very much criticized by scholars. Louise van Schaik and Barend Ter Har, for instance, provide an interesting analysis of this approach arguing that its main problem is inconsistency. The result is a weak and fragmented multilateralism. According to them, the EU has been successful, although only partially, in the field of classic security, which is a field where feelings of national sovereignty are usually strongest. By contrast, "in other fields the support of the EU for effective multilateralism has, for the most part, been fragmented and weak. The experts who represented EU countries in international talks on issues such as the environment, health, food, water, education and transport, often seemed hardly aware of the existence of a European strategy to strengthen an effective multilateral system. And the diplomats who were aware of this strategy usually rather concentrated on the promotion of their national priorities" (Van Schaik & Har, 2013; Wissenbach, 2007).
14. The ND was a EU policy when it was created, but since 2006 it is a joint policy between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. The aims of the ND are: 1) promoting dialogue and concrete cooperation; 2) strengthening stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation; 3) promoting economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe (European Action External Service, 2015).
15. The P4M was established by the Rostov Summit as "a flexible framework for promoting reform, enhancing growth and raising competitiveness. P4M will be implemented through the environmental and other sectoral dialogues." Its priority actions planned within the environment field are: 1) development of a shared environmental information system; 2) exchange of experience on integrated permitting based on best available techniques, including cleaner production and reduction of the power intensity of production; 3) development of joint actions to combat illegal and unsustainable logging of timber

(in particular through a voluntary timber certification scheme); 4) creation of unified standards for environmental impact assessments for transboundary projects. (European Commission, 2015a).

16. The Nord Stream pipeline is owned and operated by Nord Stream AG, which is an international consortium of five major companies established in 2005 for the planning, the construction and the operation of a natural gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea. The five shareholders of the Nord Stream consortium are OAO Gazprom, Wintershall Holding GmbH (a BASF subsidiary), E.ON SE, N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie and GDF SUEZ. The first pipeline began pumping gas in 2011 while the second one was inaugurated in 2012 (Nord Stream AG, 2015).
17. The exclusive economic zones kilometres per country are the following: Russia 96, Finland 369, Sweden 482, Denmark 149, Germany 33. The territorial water kilometres crossed by the Nord Stream project are the Russian (22) and the German ones (45) only (Friedrich & Neumüller, 2007).
18. In 2003 Russia suspended its gas delivery to the Latvian port of Ventspils. The official reason was that the tariffs of the port were much higher than the ones at Russian Primorsk port. However, the embargo coincided with the refusal of Latvia to sell its transit oil company Ventspils Nafta to the Russian oil company Transneft. Many considered this case as the proof of the Russian willingness to punish Latvia for its insubordination.

Lithuania experienced a similar situation. Between 1998 and 2000 Transneft cut off oil supplies in order to stop the Lithuanians from selling their port, pipeline and refinery to the American company Williams International. Later, in 2006 the deliveries of crude oil from the Druzhba pipeline to the Mažeikiai Nafta refinery were interrupted. The refinery is the biggest commercial actor and taxpayer in the country. Thus, the economic consequences of the cut-off were very significant. Russia also cut off gas supplies to Estonia in 1993 when Estonia implemented a new law on citizenship. According to this law, Estonian citizenship is granted only to those whose families had been living in the country before the annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940 while the other should have lived in the country for two years and pass a test language. The result was that about 600 000 became stateless. The law infuriated Moscow that called it 'a form of ethnic apartheid'. Nevertheless, among the three Baltic States, Estonia is the least dependent on Russian energy and the relations with it are strategically less important for Russia (Solum Whist, 2008).

19. The capacity of the pipeline is supposed to be 55 billion cubic meters (Gazprom News, 2015).
20. In 2013, more than 86 billion cubic meters of the gas exported from Russia to the EU (about half of the total) passed through Ukraine's pipeline network (NATO, 2014).
21. In response to the Ukraine crisis, the EU has imposed a number of restrictive measures, such as diplomatic and economic measures (Council of the EU, 2015; see also European Union, 2015a).
22. The Energy Dialogue was both the first real EU strategic energy policy Dia-

logue established with an external energy partner and the first sectoral Dialogue with Russia. It provides the overall structure for energy cooperation between the EU and Russia going forward. In particular, the EU and Russia seek to “improve investment opportunities in the energy sector, ensure secure and adequate infrastructure, facilitate an increase in the use of environmentally friendly technologies and energy resources, promote energy efficiency and energy savings on the way to a low-carbon economy, exchange information on legislative initiatives” (European Union, 2011; see also European Union, 2015b).

23. With a share of 35%, Russia is by far the EU’s largest supplier of crude oil and is also a key supplier of natural gas (30%) and solid fuel (26%) imports in the EU (European Commission, 2013).
24. The Latvian Ministry of Defense especially focused on the following ones: “the formulation of joint environmental protection provisions and regulations for the Baltic States military sectors, formulation of military base environmental management plans, civil-military cooperation in the resolution of issues, environmental education and training of military personnel, and research of polluted areas” (Pocock & Smits, 2005).
25. These fourteen countries are: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, the U.K., and the United States (Pocock & Smits, 2005).
26. The structure of the BALTDEC consists of the Informal Secretariat with delegates or point of contact representing each country. The key objectives include: “establish a foundation for active defense environmental co-operation in the Baltic Sea region; structure the foundation as a forum sharing experiences on common issues, promoting bilateral and multi-lateral defense environmental agreements and work in the Baltic Sea region; regional co-ordination in order to promote efficient use of resources and to avoid duplication of efforts; promote defense environmental projects that can be used as models in other countries in the region; promote development of environmental knowledge and skill among military personnel at all levels, creating environmentally friendly and aware Armed Forces in the region without jeopardising their main military function; promote defense sector transparency and ensure close relationship and mutual understanding between military and civilian sectors in defense environmental work in the region; promote peace and stability in the Baltic Sea region through continuous cooperation between military and civilian experts and organisations of different countries; promote cooperation with existing environmental organizations in the region and within the European Union and NATO; share views and experiences on regional cooperation in this field and encourage other regions to develop regional and trans-regional cooperation.” (Pocock & Smits, 2005).
27. The other four partner programmes are: Antarctic, Arctic, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and North-East Atlantic (UNEP, 2015a).
28. The European Community deposited its instrument of ratification of UNCLOS on 1 April 1998.

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La protection de la mer : un cas de coopération régionale dans la région de la mer Baltique

Tiziana Melchiorre

L'article analyse la naissance et le développement de la coopération dans le domaine de l'environnement sous l'influence des intérêts géopolitiques des États dans la région de la Mer Baltique à partir des années 1970. Les pays nordiques et le pays baltes ont joué un rôle fondamental dans ce processus ainsi que l'UE et les États-Unis dont les intérêts géopolitiques contribuent à former la coopération régionale. Les Nations Unies renforcent la coopération dans ce domaine grâce à leur législation et à leurs politiques. Ce cas de coopération dans le domaine de l'environnement constitue une des rares tentatives réussies pour établir des liens étroits entre les États durant la période de la Guerre Froide en Europe.

Mots clés : coopération environnementale, États-Unis, géopolitique, Nations Unies, Région de la mer Baltique, Union européenne

**La protección del mar como caso de cooperación regional
en la región del Mar Báltico**

Tiziana Melchiorre

Resumen: Este artículo investiga cómo los intereses geopolíticos de los estados de la región del Mar Báltico han determinado la aparición y el desarrollo de la cooperación medioambiental en torno al Mar Báltico desde finales de la década de los setenta. El artículo muestra que tanto los países nórdicos como los países bálticos han jugado un papel clave en este proceso, así como otros actores, entre ellos la Unión Europea y los Estados Unidos, los cuales han influido también en esta cooperación ambiental debido a que sus intereses geopolíticos contribuyeron a dar forma a los vínculos de cooperación en la región. Las Naciones Unidas, a través de su legislación y sus políticas, refuerzan la cooperación en este campo. También se argumenta que el caso de la cooperación medioambiental en el Mar Báltico es uno de los pocos intentos exitosos para establecer relaciones más estrechas entre los estados en un área particular durante la Guerra Fría en Europa.

Palabras clave: cooperación medioambiental, EE.UU., geopolítica, ONU, región del Mar Báltico, UE

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