

**The Role of Turkey in the Energy Security Environment of
the European Union***

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Abstract

The study intends to analyze the issue of European energy security from a historical perspective and also from the point of view of international relations, as well as the geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic role of Turkey in shaping the European energy security complex besides the EU. Emphasizing that Turkey has the role of an “energy hub” between Central Asia–Caucasus and the EU, our research focuses on the special importance of interconnected oil and gas network projects, such as the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC Pipeline) or the Nabucco gas pipeline and the Turkey–Greece–Italy Interconnector.

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The debate over the contribution of Turkey to the energy security of the EU is well presented in a series of studies written by: Manja Vidic, Katinka Barysch, Yusuf İşik, Brent Sasley, Frederick Starr and Savante E. Cornell, as well as in different documents of the European Commission at the level of some discussion fora or in dialogues between the political decision makers. Trying to examine in a critical manner the multitude of sources which discuss this issue, the present paper intends to draw the attention of the Romanian academic circles to the investigation of a new subject which has become a serious provocation for the EU: energy security. As far as methodology is concerned, the study insists on descriptive analysis and the clear and coherent investigation of some concepts such as: energy security, energy security complex (term borrowed from a Finnish researcher, Mikko Palonkorpi). Suggesting at the same time in an indirect manner that researchers should pay greater attention to Turkey’s role in the energy

security of the EU, this study may also be a starting point to open to new, more thorough and wider interpretations in some of these documents.

In a European Union with 27 states, which is gradually becoming one of the greatest energy consumers as compared to the internal production of the member states, the security of energy resources and routes and the creation of a common energy policy must be discussed. At the present moment, the European Union is in a more than unpleasant situation due to her dependency on Russian gas, and is trying to reduce this subjection through a pragmatic conception, wishing to diversify the resources and to ensure her future energy suppliers, as well as the gas, oil and electricity transport by means of some more protected lines.

The change of attitude towards energy problems has become necessary for the European Union as a result of the “gas conflict” between Russia and Ukraine in 2006, when the Russian gas supply to the Ukrainian territory was stopped, indirectly some of the EU countries being affected by this incident. Since then mass-media and the political and academic circles have given special importance in their discussions to a vaguely defined concept, often limited only to its economic aspects: *energy security*.¹ In economic terms energy security has been classified as the energy consumers’ attempt to protect themselves more efficiently in case of some eventual dysfunctions resulting from accidents, terrorism, insufficient investments in infrastructure or disequilibria on the energy market. At the same time, energy security has in view to ensure the acquisition of sufficient energy to maintain reasonable gas and oil prices. Paying much attention to the danger of dependency on a single supplier (Russia), it also makes one realize the possibility that energy can be used as a political weapon by the states that control the resources and the transport lines. Consequently, analyzing energy security from several perspectives, we shall be able to discern which its economic or political aspects are and how decision makers try to combine the two aspects according to their states’ interests and necessities.

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¹ On the definitions of energy security see Mikko Palonkorpi, “Energy Security and the Regional Security Complex Theory”, (Draft), 1–2, <http://www.sam.sdu.dk/politics/nisa/papers/palonkorpi.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2008).



*The window of a boyar's mansion,
Piața Romană, Bucharest
(Photograph by Bianca Petcu)*

Nevertheless, EU member states have so far failed to launch an efficient coordination and a comprehensive energy security, due to the general intergovernmental perspective applied in the energy domain of some states (France, Great Britain, Germany), which placed higher their national strategies, making them independent of one another. But, with the amplitude of globalization, the attitude of Russia, who had begun to use energy for political blackmail, and the wish of the EU to become a regional power, tending at the same time toward a global status, the necessity arose to ensure energy security, and the states which at the beginning had opposed it realized in the end the danger, becoming the supporters of this measure. The need to create a common direction in the energy field is evident if we analyze the statistics offered by the European Commission which show the dependency of the EU on energy import, which is today 50% of the energy consumption and which will reach the alarming number of 65% in 2030; or the almost complete subjection of the EU to Russian gas import, expected to increase from 57% to 84% until 2030, and for oil from 82% to 93%.¹

The plans of the European Union to adopt a firm attitude regarding energy security in order to ensure her internal and external safety coincide with Turkey's projects to become one of the most important players on the world energy market. At the same time, Turkey's efforts to join the European Community depend mostly on her ability in negotiating her accession, using as a main argument the communication and help offered in the energy sector. Turkey has the advantage of representing an international actor with an essential role in defining the three key words which designate the main difficulties the EU is confronted with: energy diversification, energy sources and

¹ For an analysis of the different energy branches in the EU and the predictability of evolution in this field see: European Commission, "An Energy Policy for Europe. Communication from the Commission to the European Council and the European Parliament", January 10, 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/doc/01_energy_policy_for_europe_en.pdf (accessed January 29, 2008); or European Commission, "European Energy and Transport. Trends to 2030 – update 2005", May 22, 2006, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/figures/trends_2030_update_2005/energy_transport_trends_2030_update_2005_en.pdf (accessed January 29, 2008). Further documents attesting the main difficulties in the protection of European energy security and in sketching of a common EU energy policy can be accessed on the site of the European Commission at the Energy section (Energy for a Changing World), http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/documents_en.htm (accessed January 30, 2008).

transport routes.¹ Furthermore, Turkey will surely have the possibility to profit by her geopolitical and geostrategic situation, becoming an *energy corridor*, which will transport oil and gas toward the EU from the Caucasus region and Central Asia.

Turkey, being situated between Europe and the Middle East, Central Europe–Asia, and the Caucasus, will make possible for the EU to avoid energy transmission through Russian territory, and to obtain a degree of energy independence so necessary in the conditions of the new challenges. The equation is simple and self-evident: the European Union has a well-ordered energy market, Central Asia and the countries of the Caucasus region have the supremacy of resources and wish to enter the liberalized EU market, and Turkey, trying to profit by its situation between the EU and Central Asia–Caucasus, plays the part of transit country, moderating demand and supply.² Turkey's position between the great energy suppliers and the EU market offers a substantial contribution to Europe's energy security, and, at the same time, due to her different status as compared to the other states which aspire to accession, Turkey has some additional advantages: she has a large population, almost 72 million inhabitants, a large territory of 780,580 km², economically is rapidly increasing, and she is the most laicized and democratic Muslim country.³ When Turkey's accession to the EU is argued for, the following motives are emphasized beyond the aspects related to mentality, culture, and civilization: a young and dynamic economy which can offer support to an ageing European economic market, a geographic position on which the stability of the Middle East and of other neighbouring regions depends, the proximity of states which harbour over 70% of the world's oil and gas reserve.⁴

¹ The Ankara Forum on Energy and Security, Round Table Discussion, "European Energy Security and Turkey", March 23, 2007, 3, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/eng/admin/dosyabul/upload/23March07%20NOTES.pdf> (accessed January 29, 2008).

² Manja Vidic, "Op-ed: Turkey as an Energy Artery for Europe", http://www.iss-lj.si/pdf/2007-12-Op-ed_Finance.pdf (accessed January 29, 2008).

³ For further information on Turkey (geographic position, population, governmental form, economic development, etc.) see the Central Intelligence Agency site. The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> (accessed January 30, 2008).

⁴ Katinka Barysch, "Turkey's Role in European Energy Security", December 2007, 1, http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkey_energy_12dec07.pdf (accessed January 30, 2008).

However, her gas and oil reserves satisfy only to a small degree the internal energy demand, and gas imports on several occasions have been required, 60% of this being supplied by a single supplier, Gazprom. Therefore Turkey will evidently not neglect to maintain good relations with Russia, but, on the other hand, it will try, together with other powers such as the EU, to find solutions to the incisive Russian energy policy. For the time being Turkey is not short of resources, since the long-term contracts she signed with Russia, Iran, and other suppliers grant her greater quantities than she needs. Nevertheless, the problem is present in the discussions related to the infrastructure for supplying with resources and the re-distribution of the surplus toward the European Union.¹ Turkey's infrastructure is not as developed as the EU's, and Botaş, the state-owned company has not the necessary funds for energy investments, which could make the transport to industry and households dynamic. Besides, Turkey is only partially aligned to the *acquis communautaire* of the energy sector, and she has neglected some dispositions using as an argument that she is not a member of the European Union, having only the status of official candidate. The EU's wish to establish permanent communication with Turkey in the energy sector has been hindered by the circumspection of Turkish officials, who consider that Botaş pipelines should not be used by foreign companies.

EU legislation allows each member to obtain the permission to use other states' energy pipelines, but even if Turkey has implemented some parts of the *acquis*, her alignment with EU rules for electricity and gas is limited. It is rather difficult for Turkey to accept and respect the objectives outlined by the EU on her internal energy market, which refer to: the stabilization of a financially viable, stable, transparent and competitive energy market, permanently ensuring the energy supply at a high quality and at a high level with low costs.² The European Union has made great efforts to persuade Turkey to join the Energy Community, which is based on the Energy Community Treaty (ECT) signed on

¹ Barysch, "Turkey's Role...", 2.

² Further details on Turkey's objectives in adopting the energy *acquis* of the EU (the security of supplies, internal energy market, regenerable energy, energy efficiency, nuclear energy) are to be found in European Commission's "Screening Report Turkey. Chapter 15 – Energy", March 22, 2007, http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/tarama/tarama_files/15/screening_report_15_tr_inter_net_en.pdf (accessed January 31, 2008).

October 25, 2005 in Athens.¹ These actions show that the EU is aware of Turkey's value in the energy security sector, therefore she intends to attract her to the wider European energy market, organized and based on rules meant to prevent eventual disequilibria. Though having only observer status at present, Turkey would have more benefits if she decided to become a member of the Energy Community since this would open an investment climate in her energy sector. By this she would gain access to EU expertise, and would cooperate in the energy projects regarding the Caucasus and Central Asia.² Nevertheless, there has been a change in the legal frame for Turkey's internal energy market, this meaning the alignment of the legislation with the *acquis* of the Energy Community.³

Even if her energy market does not function perfectly, the regulations are not as efficient as they should be, and her cross-border energy trade is controlled by restrictions, it should be mentioned that the technical preparation to connect Turkey's energy network to Europe has fast advanced, the privatization of electricity producers has been completely implemented, and transparency has been preserved at a high level. If beforehand cross-border electricity trade was neglected by Turkey, at present under the influence of the EU some improvements can be observed in the electricity lines between, for example, Turkey and Iran, or Greece–Turkey, Georgia–Turkey, Bulgaria–Turkey, Azerbaijan–Turkey, Syria–Turkey, Iraq–Turkey. This entire cross-border electricity network gives the EU the possibility through Turkey to avoid isolation, electric energy circling without restrictions between the Balkans and Iran, and, of course, between Europe and the states of the Caucasus.⁴

Maybe Turkey's greatest contribution to the energy security of the EU consists of her pretension to become a crucial point for the energy coming from the area of the Caspian Sea toward Europe through the interconnected oil and gas networks based on projects of cross-national energy pipelines, some of them already realized, others in progress. In this sense, Turkey's need of oil estimated to reach approximately 22

¹ The Energy Community Treaty can be consulted on the site of the Energy Community, section Key Legislation, <http://www.energy-community.org/> (accessed January 31, 2008).

² Barysch, "Turkey's Role...", 6.

³ Yusuf Işık, "Turkey's Energy Prospects in the EU-Turkey Context. EU-Turkey Working Papers", October 9, 2004, http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1163 (accessed January 30, 2008).

⁴ Vidic, "Op-ed: Turkey...".

million tonnes imported in a year until 2010,¹ and her ambition to become an energy hub collecting and then supplying energy toward the EU, has made her to decide for the support of the *Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline*.² Another cause for intensely supporting the construction of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline was the permanent pressure exerted by Russia on some countries energetically dependant on her, threatening them to increase fuel prices or even to cut off energy supplies. In addition the Europeans wished, supported by the Americans, to realize the first pipeline which does not cross the territory of Russia when transporting oil from the basin of the Caspian Sea to the countries of the European Union. From the perspective of Turkey's and the EU's energy security the oil pipeline starting from the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, crossing then the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, and arriving at the Turkish Mediterranean port Ceyhan represents the Main Export Pipeline (MEP) for oil.³

Hence, the construction of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline began on March 9, 1993 when an agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and Turkey for the exploitation of oil deposits in the area of the Caspian Sea. In 1997 a work team was created and the exploitation of the Chirag-1 oil field was begun. The project was supported further on by signing a document in London on August 1, 2002, a month later taking place the official ceremony launching the construction of the pipeline. On May 25, 2005 the oil network was officially inaugurated at the Sangachal Terminal.

¹ Brent Sasley, "Turkey's Energy Politics", in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirisci (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 217, in the Questia – The Online Library of Books and Journals, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?jsessionid=LbvNBw4Q9kfmwPNTTyZf4hMJ1rvzWWFyy2p2znw1bNMnzTRLw58k!2307961?a=o&d=107378571> (accessed January 30, 2008).

² The pipeline is 1,768 km long (443 km in Azerbaijan, 249 km in Georgia and 1076 km in Turkey), its diameter is 1.06 m in Azerbaijan, 1.16 m in Georgia, and in Turkey it reaches 86 cm. Its projected nominal working capacity is 1 million barrels per day or 50 million tonnes per year. Further technical information on the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline can be obtained from the on-line encyclopaedia Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan_pipeline (accessed February 1, 2008).

³ Sasley, "Turkey's Energy Politics in the Post-Cold War Era", *Middle East Review Of International Affairs* 2, no. 4 (November 1998), 33, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1998/issue4/sasley.pdf>

For Turkey, having old political, economic and military relations with Russia, the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline meant a shift in her foreign policy toward an “eastern vocation”¹, even if the Turkish government is little disposed to recognize this. But Turkey’s eastern orientation does not represent an alternative to her “western vocation”; it constitutes both the possibility to ensure her energy security related to Russia, and the establishment of closer relationships with the European Union due to her role within this energy project. The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline evidently shows that there is a dispute for the Southern Caucasus between several players with different geostrategic and geoeconomic interests, the European Union wishing to activate successfully, through the Turkish corridor, the European Policy Neighbourhood, which would bring her more resources and energy transport routes.

Turkey has an important role in the energy security of the EU not only through the oil pipelines projects such as the BTC, but also due to the newly constructed or future gas pipelines. The construction of such a gas pipeline to connect the Caucasus to Europe and avoid Russia was begun in July 2005 and inaugurated on December 18, 2007. It bears the name of *South European Gas Ring* or the *Turkey–Greece–Italy Interconnector*. The gas transported by the South European Gas Ring is extracted from the Shah Deniz field in Azerbaijan, the route of the pipeline crossing the territory of Turkey, reaching Greece, where it follows the course of Marița River, and from here it is to be extended toward Italy through an underground pipeline which is to cross the Adriatic Sea. The future extension is being constructed, its termination being scheduled for 2012. The European Union has financed the project with approximately 130 million euros. The capacity of the pipeline is approximately 700 thousand cubic meters per day, or 250 million cubic meters per year. However, the pipeline has a symbolic value, since it contributes to the improvement of the Greek–Turkish relationships, the

¹ Savante E. Cornell et al., “Geostrategic Implications of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline” in *The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*, ed. S. Frederick Starr and Savante E. Cornell (Stockholm: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program – A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Centre, 2005), 17, in Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/BTC.pdf> (accessed February 2, 2008).

two countries having disputes in the Aegean Sea, and, at the same time, opening the first gas route unconnected to Russia.¹

Moreover, Ankara has previously announced that Turkey wishes to become a regional centre for the routes of the energy pipelines which come or will come from the direction of Central Asia toward the European Union. Nevertheless, she cannot ignore the continuous increase in internal consumption, and the fact that she relies on a single state to grant a third of the necessary energy, mainly because this means Russian or Iranian import.²

Europe searched for various means to have access to energy from Central Asia and Caucasus, without depending on Russian supply, and Turkey, out of ambition to become a great power, deemed right to get involved in the energy security projects of the EU such as the *Nabucco*.³ Thus five companies, BOTAŞ from Turkey, Bulgargaz from Bulgaria, Transgaz from Romania, MOL from Hungary and OMV from Erdgas, Austria signed on October 11, 2002 in Vienna an Agreement of cooperation regarding the establishment of a “Consortium” in order to make a “Study of Feasibility” regarding the creation of a completely new gas transportation route from the region of the Caspian Sea and the Middle East by constructing a pipeline on the territory of five states. This would start from the borderline of Turkey with Georgia and Iran, and would finally arrive to Baumgarten in Austria (important centre for the collection of Russian gas, which is later transported toward Western Europe).⁴ Recently, the German company RWE has joined the Nabucco Consortium as sixth partner, and the wish of Gaz de France to join the construction of the gas pipeline has been opposed by Turkey, since

¹ Admin, comment on “Prima conductă care evită Rusia: Europa se va aproviziona cu gaze din zona Caspicii” (The First Pipeline which Avoids Russia: Europe Will Have Gas Supplies from the Caspian Region), SocialDailyNews.com, comment posted November 16, 2007, <http://www.socialdailynews.com/ro/2007/11/prima-conducta-ce-evita-rusia-europa-se-va-aproviziona-cu-gaze-din-zona-caspicii/> (accessed February 3, 2008).

² Ibid.

³ The pipeline will be 3,300 km long and will transport approximately 31 milliard cubic meter natural gas per year, being able to function in 2012, if a final decision is made this year.

⁴ Information on the companies participating in the construction of the Nabucco Pipeline, its route and its financial consequences can be found on the Nabucco Gas Pipeline Project webpage: <http://www.nabucco-pipeline.com> (accessed February 4, 2008).

France does not support her accession to the EU giving the following reasons: the genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians killed by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, the precarious economy and the numerous Muslim population difficult to assimilate.¹

The Nabucco Project will become the main alternative to Russian gas only if the European Union knows how to attract Turkey into a *regional energy security complex* (RESC),² negotiating not only bilaterally as Romania and France have done (regarding the issue of Gaz de France possibly joining the construction of Nabucco), but also through a coordination between all EU states, including at the same time privileged partners such as Turkey as well.

The European energy security complex consists of the interaction of two or more states (Turkey–EU) situated in a restricted geographic area, their preoccupations to ensure energy security binding them closely enough to one another so that their interests cannot be

¹ Mădălin Necsutu, “Turcia respinge participarea Franței la Nabucco” (Turkey Refuses the Participation of France in Nabucco), *Ziua* (The Day), February 7, 2008, 4152, <http://www.ziua.ro/news.php?data=2008-02-07&id=3248>.

² It must be mentioned that energy security complex is an abstract analytic concept which cannot be understood without relating it to other security sectors. The works on Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) – Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Londra: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), Barry Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama: O agendă pentru studii de securitate internațională în epoca de după Războiul Rece* (Peoples, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War Era) (Chișinău: Cartier, 2000), Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) – analyze security in five main sectors: military, political, economic, social and environmental. According to Buzan “military security regards the double interaction of state capacities, armed offensive and defensive, and the perception of other states’ intentions by a state. Political security refers to the organizational stability of states, their governmental systems and the ideologies which legitimate them. Economic security regards the access to resources, finances and markets necessary to maintain an acceptable level of well-being and state power. Social security is preoccupied with the capacity to maintain, within the limits of some acceptable evolution the traditional elements of language, culture, and identity, as well as cultural and religious customs. Environmental security refers to the preservation of local and planetary biosphere as an essential support on which all human actions depend...” Energy is not considered a separate security sector by Buzan, but rather as incorporated into the economic security sector.

considered separately in a realistic manner.¹ The energy interactions on which the European energy security complex is based include transactions such as energy production (export), acquisition (import) and energy transit² by means of the three major projects supported by Turkey and the EU presented above, but also of other smaller projects. For Turkey and the European Union the threats originate firstly from their energy dependency mainly on Russia, these being more intense since they are situated close to her geographically.³ On the other hand, the complex interdependence determined by the existence of numerous gas and oil pipelines, as well as electricity networks interconnect from afar the European Union with the Caucasus and the Middle East through Turkish territory, establishing some energy security complexes and subcomplexes (the Extended Middle East complex, the Caucasus and Central Asia subcomplexes). Turkey is in fact an energy buffer state (isolator) situated between two main security complexes: Europe and the Middle East.⁴ Turkey's geostrategic position determines her to have regional energy interests in both security complexes, being transformed from the "torn country"⁵ of the 1920s into a regional power which is fighting for her interests on several fronts (security complexes): South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Russia and the European Union.

In the EU–Turkey energy security complex the powerful energy dependency caused by a few factors, such as the balance of energy trade, the internal level of energy resources in the EU and Turkey, and the possibility of diversifying energy must be considered. Based on the yearly fluctuation of energy dependency, the EU–Turkey security complex is dynamic, being influenced also by other factors, such as the

¹ The definition of regional security complex taken from Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama ...*, 196.

² Palonkorpi "Energy Security...", 3.

³ Buzan and Waever (*Regions and Powers...*, 45) state that the impact of *geographic proximity* on security interactions can be best observed in the military, political, social and environmental sectors, security interaction being less consistent in the economic sector. We can contradict Buzan and Weaver since they have not included energy in the economic sector. Becoming a sixth security sector, energy cannot be analyzed separately from the other sectors (military, political, social and first of all environmental).

⁴ Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama ...*, 202.

⁵ Samuel Huntington, *Ciocnirea civilizațiilor și refacerea ordinii mondiale* (The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order) (București: Antet, 1998), 218.

historical models of *amity and enmity*.¹ Taking as a starting point the models of amity and enmity from a constructivist perspective, we shall be able to describe how Turkey and the EU perceive their energy dependency separately or together. Each case of energy dependency may be interpreted in different ways: as mutual beneficial interdependence (*positive dependency*), or as unequal and threatening energy subordination (*negative dependency*).² The creation of the EU–Turkey energy security complex relies on both factors, since, on the one hand, *positive dependency* shows that Turkey’s internal energy policies are in accordance with the rules of the European market, giving mutual help, while, on the other hand, *negative dependency* indicates that Turkey and the EU depend on Russian energy, this fact becoming a stimulus to consider Russia a threat and to try to find together some viable solutions.

Therefore, we have had the possibility to observe during this study that Turkey cannot be ignored, especially because of her key position between the European Union, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East; the majority of oil and gas pipelines crossing her territory. Furthermore, the EU must be aware, when postponing Turkey’s accession, of the losses and benefits such an event might cause. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: without a skilful negotiation with Turkey, the European Union will hardly succeed in realizing her plans to create an energy security complex, and the more difficult it will be for her to conceive an energy security supercomplex around Russia and Turkey.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi

¹ For an explanation of the models of amity and enmity see Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama...*, 196–199.

² Palonkorpi “Energy Security...”, 5.