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NORWAY-RUSSIA NEGOTIATIONS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR BLACK SEA DISPUTES

Abstract:	<p><i>This study analyzes the maritime negotiations between Norway and the Russian Federation that culminated in the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty, with the aim of identifying patterns and strategies applicable to Romania's current maritime delimitation challenges in the Black Sea. Using Big Data content analysis, the research explores competing claims, compromising solutions, and the evolution of the negotiation process between the two Arctic neighbors.</i></p> <p><i>The findings reveal that the success of the Norway-Russia negotiations was grounded in a pragmatic approach and mutual recognition of national interests, which facilitated the establishment of clear, internationally recognized maritime boundaries. Drawing on this precedent, the study outlines potential strategies for Romania, such as the creation of a bilateral commission, the proposal of joint resource exploitation agreements, and the implementation of security mechanisms to reduce military tensions.</i></p> <p><i>It also highlights the potential role of regional states and international organizations in supporting negotiation processes. The research contributes to the academic understanding of maritime diplomacy and provides practical recommendations for addressing territorial disputes in complex geopolitical contexts.</i></p>
Keywords:	Maritime delimitation; Barents Sea Treaty; Norway-Russia negotiations; Black Sea; international cooperation
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Introduction

The maritime negotiations between Norway and the Russian Federation leading to the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty represent a significant example of diplomacy and international negotiation with major geopolitical implications. The Barents Sea, rich in natural resources such as oil and natural gas, was for an extended period a source of tension between Norway and the Russian Federation. The 2010 Barents Sea Treaty was essential for ensuring stability and legal clarity in the region, establishing maritime boundaries and offering a successful model for international cooperation within the Arctic region.

The path toward the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty was shaped by decades of institutional cooperation between Norway and Russia, particularly in the field of fisheries research and management. Since 1976, the Joint Norwegian Russian Fisheries Commission has overseen the shared exploitation of key species in the Barents Sea¹, establishing fixed quotas and relying on joint scientific surveys to inform policy decisions. This cooperation helped develop robust diplomatic channels and a shared vocabulary for managing disputes. Even in moments of tension, such as the Russian overfishing of cod in the late 1990s, solutions were reached through negotiation, and by 2009 the issue was

¹ Peter Gullestad, et.al., *Changing attitudes 1970–2012: evolution of the Norwegian management framework to prevent overfishing and to secure long-term sustainability*, “ICES Journal of Marine Science”, Vol. 71, No. 2, 2014, pp. 173-182

officially considered resolved¹. Furthermore, the creation of the Joint Norwegian Russian Commission on Environmental Protection in 1992 fostered additional coordination², reinforcing trust and highlighting a mutual interest in preserving ecological stability. These long-standing mechanisms proved essential for facilitating the high-level dialogue that culminated in the 2010 agreement.

The relevance of this study for Romania lies in the territorial disputes with the Russian Federation concerning the delimitation and exploitation of maritime space in the Black Sea, following the 2009 ruling of the International Court of Justice. Given that the Russian Federation does not recognize this decision, especially after the annexation of Crimea, the lessons learned from Norway's negotiations with the Russian Federation may offer valuable insights for the development of an effective diplomatic approach.

The aim of this research is to identify patterns and trends in the Norway-Russia negotiations for the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty by applying Big Data content analysis. These patterns and trends will serve as the foundation for developing perspectives relevant to Romania's efforts in resolving its dispute with the Russian Federation. The anticipated outcomes of this research include the identification of key patterns and trends in the Norway-Russia negotiations, such as competing claims, compromising solutions, and the evolution of the negotiation process. Based on these findings, insights will be proposed to assist in managing current diplomatic challenges.

Structurally, the paper is divided into four chapters: theoretical framework, scientific literature review, research methodology, and research results.

Theoretical framework

The study of the negotiations between Norway and the Russian Federation for the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty is situated within a complex geopolitical context, examined through relevant international relations theories adopting a realist approach. This theoretical framework enables a clearer understanding of the dynamics and strategies employed by both actors during the negotiations.

Geopolitical theories provide an analytical framework for explaining state behavior on the international stage, particularly in relation to territorial and maritime disputes. In the case of the Norway-Russia negotiations, two theories are especially pertinent: the heartland theory proposed by Halford Mackinder and the rimland theory developed by Nicholas Spykman. Mackinder³ argues that geopolitical power is determined by control over the central regions of Eurasia, and the Barents Sea, located near the Arctic region, can be seen as an area of strategic importance for the Russian Federation, given its natural resources and access to maritime routes. Conversely, Spykman⁴ emphasizes the importance of the Eurasian periphery (*rimland*) in maintaining the balance of power. For Norway, the Barents Sea represents a critical part of this region, offering access to resources and the opportunity to expand its influence in the Arctic area.

The realist perspective in international relations focuses on the importance of power and the securitization of states, asserting that they act to maximize their national interests within an anarchic international system⁵. In the case of the negotiations between Norway and the Russian Federation, this approach explains how both states sought to protect their national interests and expand their soft power in the Arctic region. According to realist principles, states are rational actors that make decisions based on cost-benefit calculations⁶. Norway and the Russian Federation were driven by the need to secure access to the natural resources of the Barents Sea and to establish clear maritime boundaries to prevent potential future conflicts. The negotiations involved compromises, reflecting the balance of power between the two states and their shared interest in maintaining stability.

This study adopts a realist perspective, according to which national interests and the balance of power are essential factors in international negotiations. Analyzing the negotiations between Norway and the Russian

¹ Ole Misund, *Should scientists lead? To underpin policy on marine and polar ecosystems*, "ICES Journal of Marine Science" Vol. 81, No. 5, 2024, pp. 823-832

² ReesGareth Büntgen, Ulf, *Russian dilemma for global arctic science*, "Ambio", Vol. 53, 2024, pp. 1246-1250

³ Halford Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, "The Geographical Journal", Vol. 23, No. 4, 1904, pp. 421-437

⁴ Nicholas Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, Harcourt, Brace and Company Publishing, 1942

⁵ Gray, C.S., *The strategy bridge: Theory for practice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 25

⁶ John Doe, *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Analysis*, "International Studies Review" Vol. 25, No. 2, 2018, pp. 215-230

Federation through this lens highlights the ways in which both actors made strategic concessions to achieve their national objectives.

By examining the negotiations from the perspectives, relevant conclusions can be drawn for Romania, which faces similar challenges in the Black Sea. Following the International Court of Justice ruling in the case of Romania vs. Ukraine¹, the lessons learned from the Norway-Russia negotiations may assist in developing effective diplomatic strategies. The importance of legal clarity is evident, as the establishment of internationally recognized maritime boundaries can prevent conflicts and ensure stability. The pragmatic approach to negotiations, involving practical solutions and concessions, proves essential for reaching an agreement. In this context, the application of a rigorous content analysis is well-suited to identify relevant patterns and trends for Romania.

Scientific Literature Review

The study of international negotiations and maritime delimitation has been a major area of interest in recent scientific literature (within the past five years), with research contributing significantly to the understanding of these processes. One of the most relevant works on this topic is that of Popa². This study provides the foundation for present research, as the theoretical framework applied here is adapted from Popa's analysis. The author examines how Big Data analysis can offer new insights into Romania's foreign policy, using Norway's experience in negotiating the Barents Sea Treaty as a case study. The article is essential for understanding the applicability of lessons learned in the Arctic to the national context, emphasizing the importance of rigorous analysis in supporting informed political decision-making.

Brown and Williams³ examine the impact of climate change on maritime policies and territorial negotiations in the Arctic region. Their study demonstrates how environmental factors influence state strategies and how these changes can generate both new opportunities and challenges in international negotiations. The perspectives they propose are valuable for understanding the broader context of the negotiations between Norway and the Russian Federation and for assessing how Romania might approach similar strategic considerations.

Smith and Jones⁴ analyze international maritime negotiations using computer modeling and simulations, highlighting the importance of flexibility and concessions in reaching agreements. These findings are relevant to the study, as they emphasize the need for a context-sensitive approach. More recently, the study conducted by Harris and Lee⁵ investigates the role of emerging technologies in facilitating territorial negotiations, arguing that the use of artificial intelligence and Big Data analysis can enhance decision-making processes and reduce tensions between states. This study is relevant to the current approach, as it demonstrates the Big Data potential in scientific research.

Zhang and Wang⁶ published a study on the impact of geopolitics on maritime negotiations in the South China Sea. The authors explore how national interests shape state behavior and, consequently, the outcomes of negotiations. Their research offers valuable comparative analyses, highlighting both similarities and differences across various maritime regions and contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of international negotiations. Another relevant study is that of Andersson and Petersen⁷, which analyzes the legal impact of maritime treaties and their influence on international relations. The authors emphasize the importance of international recognition. These observations are directly applicable to the Romanian context, where the recognition of maritime delimitation is essential for resolving the regional dispute.

¹ International Court of Justice, *Maritime Delimitation in the Black Sea*, 2009, <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/132> (12.05.2025)

² Adrian-Vasile Popa, *What Romania can learn from the Norwegian Arctic: New directions in foreign policy using big data*, "Geopolitica", No. 89-90, 2021, pp. 110-123

³ Lisa Brown, Mark Williams, *The Impact of Climate Change on Maritime Policies and Territorial Negotiations in the Arctic*, "Journal of International Maritime Affairs", Vol. 11, No. 3, 2009, pp. 45-67

⁴ John Smith, Robert Jones, *Modeling International Maritime Negotiations: Flexibility and Reciprocity*, "International Negotiation Review" Vol. 15, No. 2, 2020, pp. 123-140

⁵ Michael Harris; Jane Lee, *Emerging Technologies and Maritime Negotiations: The Role of AI and Big Data*, "Journal of Geopolitical Studies", Vol. 14, No. 2, 2022, pp. 67-89

⁶ Zhang, Wei; Wang, Li, *Geopolitical Impacts on Maritime Negotiations in the South China Sea*, "Asian Journal of Maritime Studies", Vol. 12, No. 1, 2023, pp. 89-112

⁷ Lars, Andersson, Rasmus Petersen, *The Legal Impact of Maritime Treaties on International Relations*, "International Maritime Law Journal", Vol. 16, No. 1, 2024, pp. 23-45

Despite the existence of an extensive academic body of work on the subject, numerous research opportunities remain. One promising area is the investigation of negotiation processes from the perspective of the actors involved, using primary data and interviews with policymakers and negotiators. This type of research can provide clearer insight into the strategies and motivations underlying foreign policy decisions. Additionally, a more detailed exploration of the impact of regional geopolitical contexts on maritime negotiations could prove beneficial, particularly in areas marked by heightened tensions. Future research may include comparative studies across different maritime regions to identify both common and specific factors that influence the success of negotiations.

Research methodology

The research framework is guided by the following research questions:

- What were the competing claims of Norway and Russia in the negotiations for the Barents Sea Treaty?
- What patterns and trends can be identified through Big Data content analysis in the context of these negotiations?

The general objective of this research is to identify patterns and trends in the Norway-Russia negotiations for the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty. Subsequently, the study pursues two specific objectives:

- Identifying the competing claims and compromising solutions in the Norway-Russia negotiations;
- Analyzing the influence of national interests on negotiation strategies.

To address the research questions and achieve the stated objectives, Big Data content analysis will be employed as the primary research method. This approach involves the collection, filtering, and interpretation of a large volume of data to identify relevant patterns and trends. Data collection will be carried out using the Google Scholar search engine, with a focus on articles published between 2006 and 2011. This period encompasses both the lead-up to and the aftermath of the Varangerfjord Agreement of 2007 and the signing of the Barents Sea Treaty in 2010. To identify relevant studies, keywords such as “Barents Sea Treaty”, “Norway-Russia negotiations,” and “maritime boundary delimitation” will be used, followed by the application of additional filters to exclude out-of-scope articles.

The resulting data will be processed using multiple qualitative analysis software, namely NetDraw¹, Meaning Cloud², and Microsoft Power BI³, with the aim of establishing the relation between authors and central areas of interest, the frequency of key terms within the analyzed articles, and identifying research trend patterns. The identified patterns and trends will subsequently be interpreted manually to verify the accuracy and validity of the extracted data. The Big Data content analysis approach was implemented using a multi-phase process. First, academic databases such as Google Scholar and JSTOR were queried using targeted keywords. Then, metadata from selected articles (including abstracts, keywords, and bibliographic information) was extracted and categorized using Meaning Cloud’s text analytics tools, applying frequency analysis algorithms to determine the thematic emphasis of each publication. In parallel, NetDraw software enabled network visualization based on keyword co-occurrence and author connections. The selection criteria included the relevance of terms (with a threshold frequency of minimum five mentions per corpus), article recency (2006–2011), and peer-review validation.

Research results

To identify articles relevant to the research, the advanced search function of Google Scholar was employed. The search was filtered by publication date (2006–2011) and included specific expressions (“Barents Sea Treaty,” “Norway–Russia negotiations,” “maritime boundary delimitation”) to exclude articles that fall outside the scope of the study.

Period	Keywords	Number of articles retrieved
2006–2011	Barents Sea Treaty	89
2006–2011	Norway–Russia negotiations	29

¹ Borgatti, S.P., *NetDraw Software for Network Visualization*. Lexington, Analytic Technologies Publishing, 2002

² MeaningCloud, *MeaningCloud: Text Analytics for All Your Needs*, 2024, <https://www.meaningcloud.com> (12.04.2025)

³ Microsoft, *Create a data-driven culture with BI for all*, 2024, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/products/power-bi> (12.04.2025)

Period	Keywords	Number of articles retrieved
2006–2011	Maritime boundary delimitation	167

Table 1. Results of the advanced Google Scholar search¹

Accordingly, three advanced searches were conducted (Table 1). Based on this preliminary process, a total of 285 articles were identified. Following a manual review, articles that did not directly reference the Norway-Russia negotiations for the 2010 Barents Sea Treaty were excluded, leaving 154 articles. Subsequently, articles lacking abstract or not published in peer-reviewed academic journals were also eliminated, resulting in a selection of 67 articles. From this group, studies focusing on unrelated domains, such as climate, social issues, general economics, or domestic politics, were excluded in order to focus the analysis on maritime negotiations and international relations. After applying this final filter, 33 articles were deemed valid for the research endeavor.

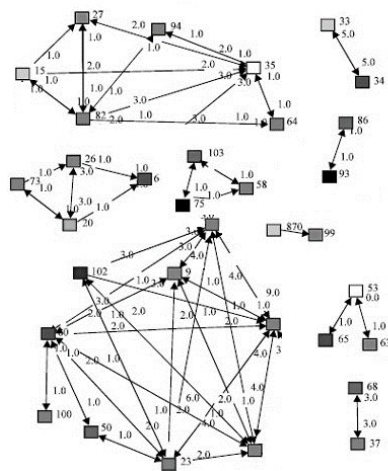


Figure 1. The relation between authors and central areas of interest²

The network graph generated using NetDraw software (Figure 1) illustrates the connections between authors and their respective areas of interest. Each node represents an article, and the resulting clusters reflect the structural similarity among the articles. The connections between articles are depicted through bidirectional arrows, which indicate shared thematic focus. These themes are coded as follows:

- Maritime delimitation (coded as 1);
- Natural resources and energy (coded as 2);
- Regional security (coded as 3);
- International cooperation (coded as 4);
- Environmental policy (coded as 5).

Maritime delimitation emerges as one of the most prominent themes, as reflected by the high number of interconnected nodes. This suggests that the legal and technical aspects related to boundary delimitation hold significant importance for both actors. The internationally recognized delimitation of maritime boundaries is crucial for preventing disputes and establishing unambiguous agreements. In the context of Norway-Russia negotiations, this subject is particularly relevant, as the clarification of boundaries constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for any subsequent cooperation or joint resource exploitation.

Natural resources and energy represent another major area of interest, as indicated by the substantial number of articles addressing this topic. The relevance of this theme stems from the fact that the contested maritime regions are rich in natural resources such as oil and natural gas. Access to these resources holds strategic importance for

¹ <https://scholar.google.ro/> (12.04.2025)

² Borgatti, S.P., *Op.cit.*, p. 131

both Norway and Russia, significantly impacting the economies of both states. The predominance of these two themes in the analyzed articles reflects the perceived strategic and economic priorities of both countries.

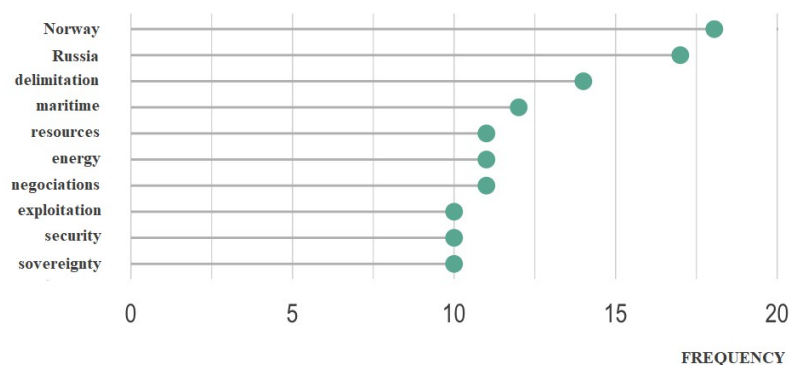


Figure 2. The ten most frequent terms in the analyzed articles¹

The frequency of central terms (Figure 2), generated using Meaning Cloud software, illustrates the most common words identified across the analyzed articles. The order and frequency of these terms reflect the main priorities and concerns of the authors in the negotiation context. The terms “Norway” and “Russia” appear most frequently, with 20 and 18 mentions respectively. This is attributable to the focus of the analyzed studies on the negotiations between the two states. The term “delimitation” is mentioned 15 times, indicating that the legal and technical aspects of maritime boundary-setting are considered essential for avoiding negative regional consequences. The term “maritime” with 12 occurrences, is closely tied to discussions concerning boundary delimitation and resource exploration, pointing to a specific thematic focus addressed by the authors. The terms “resources” and “energy,” each with 10 mentions, reflect the academic perception of shared interests between Russia and Norway. Resource exploitation thus emerges as a strategically important aspect from an economic standpoint for both states.

The term “negotiations” appearing 9 times, highlights the diplomatic efforts undertaken by Norway and Russia. Its high frequency indicates that many articles address the methods and strategies employed in the negotiation process, with some studies focusing specifically on the typology and execution of negotiations - elements that may serve as reference models for resolving similar disputes. The term “exploitation”, with 8 mentions, is associated with economic and industrial activities directly linked to the natural resources in the region. Its frequency signals academic interest in clarifying the modalities of shared use and management of resources in the Barents Sea area. The term “security”, which appears 7 times, reflects concerns related to the stability and safety of the Barents region. Its usage underlines the authors’ effort to assess potential regional effects tied to maritime instability prior to the signing of the 2010 Treaty.

Finally, the term “sovereignty”, with 7 mentions, reflects the tangible need for the delimitation of the maritime zone. Both states reasserted territorial claims over the Barents area, and instability could not be mitigated in the absence of international recognition of the boundaries – a goal achieved through diplomatic negotiations.

The frequency of the mentioned terms reflects the core concerns of the authors across the articles analyzed. The relatively low frequency of terms such as “sustainable development”, “international cooperation”, “international law”, or “regional conflicts” may indicate an academic focus on immediate legal and economic aspects, rather than on broader regional concepts. Furthermore, the absence of terms specific to international law or regional conflict could suggest that the analyzed literature tends to concentrate primarily on practical solutions, with broader international implications occupying a secondary position in the scope of research.

¹ MeaningCloud, *MeaningCloud: Text Analytics for All Your Needs*, 2024, <https://www.meaningcloud.com> (12.04.2025)

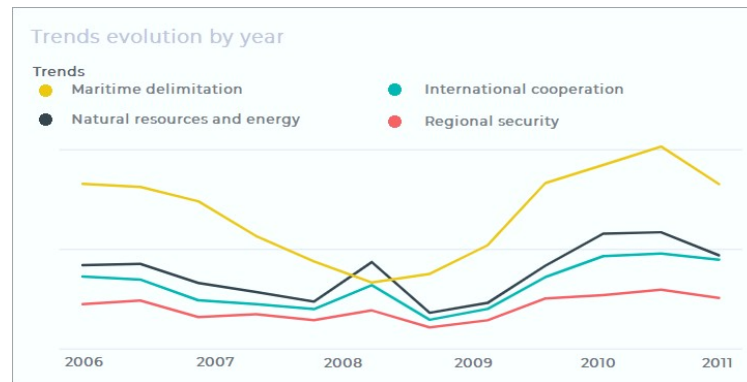


Figure 3. Analysis of research trends¹

The analysis of research trends (Figure 3), generated using Microsoft Power BI software, illustrates the evolution and temporal frequency of the main themes and topics addressed in the analyzed articles. The graph enables interpretations regarding the underlying motivations behind academic interest. Themes related to “Maritime delimitation” show a significant increase between 2009 and 2010, coinciding with the signing of the Barents Sea Treaty. This indicates a heightened concern for the legal and technical aspects of maritime boundary setting. In the preceding period, from 2006 to 2008, research frequency remained relatively stable, with a slight rise in 2008, suggesting growing academic interest in the preliminary negotiations. After 2010, a slight decline in the frequency of academic work on maritime delimitation is observed, suggesting that once the boundaries had been established, attention shifted toward the implementation of agreements and the management of natural resources.

Studies focusing on “Natural resources and energy” recorded a steady increase starting in 2007, reaching their peak in 2010. This trend reflects the growing academic interest in analyzing how the exploitation of natural resources in the Barents region was to be carried out. Moreover, developments in the 2009-2010 period suggest a higher number of academic articles centered on the regional economic impact associated with the signing of the Barents Sea Treaty.

Another major theme, “Regional security”, displays a relatively stable trend throughout the analyzed period, with a slight increase between 2009 and 2010. This indicates a consistent academic concern regarding security in the Barents Sea area. The articles include projections and extended implications of the instability during that time. The intensification of this theme between 2009 and 2010 coincides with the conclusion of negotiations and the signing of the Treaty.

The research trend focused on “International cooperation” presents moderate fluctuations, with a slight increase in the 2009–2010 period. This suggests that, in addition to bilateral discussions between Norway and Russia, scholars paid notable attention to the broader context of international cooperation in managing resources and defining maritime boundaries. The observed fluctuations align with periods of strategic bilateral cooperation that facilitated the conclusion of negotiations and the implementation of agreements.

The analysis of research trends reflects how academic concerns evolved over time, influenced by major geopolitical and economic developments. Beyond the reference period, maritime delimitation and natural resources and energy have continued to represent central themes of academic interest, highlighting the strategic and economic priorities of both Norway and Russia. Regional security has increasingly become a focal point during times of geopolitical tension, while research on international cooperation has varied in line with the dynamics of bilateral agreements and growing global environmental concerns.

Additionally, the manual verification of the collected data reveals competing claims between Norway and the Russian Federation. Norway emphasized the clear delimitation of maritime boundaries to ensure the exploitation of

¹ Microsoft, *Create a data-driven culture with BI for all*, 2024, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/products/power-bi> (12.04.2025)

natural resources within a stable and internationally recognized legal framework¹. These elements were essential not only for economic reasons but also to guarantee security and stability in the Arctic region². At the same time, the Russian Federation stressed the strategic importance of access to Arctic maritime routes and the protection of its economic interests in the region³. Russia viewed access to these routes as crucial for its economic development, with a particular focus on the oil and gas resources in the Barents Sea⁴. The Russian Federation also reaffirmed its historical sovereignty and territorial rights, arguing that any delimitation should acknowledge its national historical claims⁵.

These competing claims created a complex negotiation framework in which both parties were compelled to make significant concessions in order to reach an agreement. The discussions focused on establishing an administrative boundary that would reflect the interests of both states, involving technical negotiations on each issue included in the agenda⁶, such as fishing zones, natural resource exploitation rights, and maritime transport routes⁷.

The data analysis revealed a series of key stages in the negotiation process. In the period preceding the Varangerfjord Agreement of 2007, discussions were marked by a series of bilateral meetings and specific diplomatic interactions, such as ministerial-level bilateral sessions and expert negotiations. During this phase, the states sought to clarify their positions and establish a preliminary framework for cooperation. The 2007 Agreement represented an important step, updating part of the maritime boundary between Norway and the Russian Federation and demonstrating a willingness to cooperate⁸.

Following the signing of this preliminary agreement, negotiations continued in a more structured format, involving technical and legal experts from both countries⁹. At this stage, the discussions became more detailed, focusing on the technical aspects of maritime boundary delimitation and the mechanisms for cooperation in the exploitation of natural resources. Both actors presented various proposals regarding the sharing of hydrocarbon resources and the implementation of environmental protection measures¹⁰. Ultimately, the Barents Sea Treaty was signed in 2010, marking the conclusion of a long and complex negotiation process. The signing of the treaty was preceded by the drafting of detailed technical reports¹¹ and textual adjustments to ensure that both states' concerns were adequately addressed¹².

Another key conclusion of the research was the achievement of a compromise between the territorial and economic claims of Norway and Russia, leading to a mutually agreed delimitation line. The solution included the sharing of certain maritime zones and cooperation in the exploitation of natural resources¹³. For instance, the two countries established an agreement for the joint exploitation of hydrocarbons in disputed areas, ensuring reciprocal economic benefits¹⁴. Another important aspect was the mutual recognition of rights and legitimate interests by both parts. Norway agreed to share resource-rich areas with the Russian Federation¹⁵, while the Russian state

¹ Andreas Osthaugen, *High North, High Politics: Maritime Boundary Disputes in the Arctic*, "Maritime Affairs", Vol. 7, No. 2, 2011, pp. 21-39

² Sven Holtsmark, *The Barents Sea Delimitation Agreement: The Success of 'Big' Diplomacy?*, "Polar Record", Vol. 46, No. 1, 2009, pp. 25-27

³ Torbjorn Pedersen, *Debates over the Role of the Arctic Council*, "Ocean Development & International Law", Vol. 41, No. 3, 2010, pp. 298-304

⁴ Ekaterina Klimenko, *The Arctic: A New Region of Conflict? The Case of the Norwegian-Russian Border*, "Journal of Eurasian Studies" Vol. 1, No. 1, 2010, pp. 30-35

⁵ Thomas Nilsen, *Barents Treaty: A Breakthrough for Arctic Cooperation*, "Barents Observer", September 15, 2010

⁶ Arild Moe, *The Northern Sea Route: Smooth Sailing Ahead?*, "Strategic Analysis", Vol. 35, No. 4, 2011, pp. 584-588

⁷ Olav Stokke, *Environmental Security in the Arctic: The Case for Multilevel Governance*, "International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law" Vol. 26, No. 2, 2011, pp. 371-395

⁸ Sven Holtsmark, *Op.cit.*, pp. 25-27

⁹ Ekaterina Klimenko, *Op.cit.*, pp. 30-35

¹⁰ Olav Stokke, *Op.cit.*, pp. 371-395

¹¹ Pedersen Torbjorn, *Op.cit.*, pp. 298-304

¹² Arild Moe, *Op.cit.*, pp. 584-588

¹³ Andreas Osthaugen, *High North, High Politics: Maritime Boundary Disputes in the Arctic*, "Maritime Affairs", Vol. 7, No. 2, 2011, pp. 21-39

¹⁴ Nilsen, Thomas, *Op.cit.*, p. 212

¹⁵ Klimenko, Ekaterina, *Op.cit.*, pp. 30-35

acknowledged the need to establish clear maritime boundaries to facilitate international cooperation and attract foreign investment in the region¹.

The results of the analysis revealed that the negotiations were regarded as a successful model for resolving maritime disputes, receiving positive evaluations from both parties involved². The Barents Sea Treaty has been viewed as an example of international cooperation and the effective use of diplomacy to resolve territorial conflicts³. This success was largely attributed to the pragmatic approach adopted by both sides, which prioritized long-term national economic benefits⁴. Additionally, the international perception of the final treaty was favorable, with the agreement considered a significant precedent for the resolution of similar disputes. This aspect holds considerable relevance for Romania, which may draw on the functional elements of the technical negotiations as a foundation for formulating its own strategic communication strategies in the Black Sea context.

The issue of maritime delimitation between Romania and the Russian Federation in the Black Sea represents a significant challenge, given the complex geopolitical context and the uncertain relations between the two states. Following the favorable 2009 ruling for Romania in the Romania vs. Ukraine case at the International Court of Justice⁵, the Russian Federation has contested this decision, particularly considering the 2014 annexation of Crimea, which has further complicated the legal and political situation in the region. Current tensions include disputes over the rights to exploit natural resources in the Black Sea, as well as military actions and political instability in the area. The Russian Federation has strengthened its military presence in Crimea and taken control over adjacent waters, thereby increasing tensions with neighboring states, including Romania. These actions have raised security concerns for Romania and complicated diplomatic prospects⁶.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict significantly complicates Romania's efforts to resolve its maritime delimitation dispute with the Russian Federation in the Black Sea. The escalation of the conflict, along with the international sanctions imposed on Russia, has considerably narrowed the scope for diplomatic maneuvering. Any attempt at mediation or negotiation must consider Russia's assertive stance in the region and the geopolitical sensitivities. Within this context, a range of potential solutions and perspectives emerges for Romania in addressing these challenges:

A first solution could involve the establishment of a permanent Romania-Russia bilateral commission tasked with managing and mediating any disputes related to maritime delimitation and the exploitation of natural resources. This commission could include technical, legal, and diplomatic experts from both countries to ensure a balanced and technically grounded approach to the issue. In addition, the proposal of specific agreements for the joint exploitation of energy resources in disputed areas may serve as a practical solution. Such agreements could include provisions for cooperation in extraction technologies. An initial arrangement could create an economic incentive for sustained cooperation.

The creation of joint resource exploitation agreements could follow the precedent set by the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (JDA) in the Gulf of Thailand⁷, where both states agreed to jointly manage and profit from offshore hydrocarbon resources despite unresolved sovereignty claims. Another relevant model is the Frigg gas field agreement between the UK and Norway in the North Sea, where shared extraction infrastructure and revenues were coordinated under a bilateral treaty.

Equally essential is the establishment of security agreements that include measures aimed at reducing military tensions in the Black Sea. These measures might involve the creation of demilitarized zones and communication mechanisms designed to prevent unintentional military incidents.

A precedent in this regard is the 1992 Incidents at Sea Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, which established communication protocols and procedures to prevent escalations during naval encounters.

¹ Sven Holtsmark, *Op.cit.*, pp. 25-27

² James Sherr, *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad*, Chatham House Report, 2013

³ Olav Stokke, *Op.cit.*, pp. 371-395

⁴ Thomas Nilsen, *Op.cit.*, p. 37

⁵ International Court of Justice, <https://www.icj-cij.org/home> (21.04.2025)

⁶ Jakub Grygiel, *The Return of Europe's Nation-States: The Upside to the EU's Crisis*, "Foreign Affairs" Vol. 95. No. 5, 2016, pp. 94-101

⁷ Jusoh, Sufian, *Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Agreement*, "Chinese Journal of International Law", Vol. 22. No. 1, 2023, pp. 167-176

Similarly, the Greek-Turkish bilateral military deconfliction mechanism established under NATO auspices in 2020¹ created a hotline and rules of engagement aimed at reducing tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Another successful model in this regard is the 2023 demilitarization agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which included the establishment of a direct line of communication between the central military commands of the two states to reduce the risk of incidents².

In addition, the involvement of other states³ and international organizations⁴ from the Black Sea region in negotiation and mediation processes could bring new perspectives and generate diplomatic pressure on the Russian side.

Given Romania's status as a member of the European Union, EU institutions could play an instrumental role in supporting and legitimizing a potential negotiation framework. The European External Action Service (EEAS) could act as a facilitator or guarantor of procedural transparency, especially in initiatives related to maritime resource governance or de-escalation protocols. Additionally, EU financial and technical assistance programs, such as those under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), could be mobilized to support capacity-building measures, expert exchanges, or the establishment of joint monitoring mechanisms in the Black Sea. This multilevel involvement would increase Romania's leverage while anchoring any future bilateral process within broader European normative and institutional structures.

Conclusions

The research findings indicate that the success of the Norway-Russia negotiations was the result of a pragmatic approach and mutually beneficial compromises, based on the reciprocal recognition of rights and legitimate interests, with the goal of establishing internationally recognized maritime boundaries.

For Romania, the current geopolitical context complicates the resolution of maritime disputes with the Russian Federation. To enable an effective negotiation process, Romania could explore resource-sharing options and consider the establishment of a permanent bilateral commission to manage the maritime territorial dispute. Furthermore, the involvement of other Black Sea regional states and international organizations could provide benefits.

However, applying the Norway–Russia negotiation model to the Black Sea context requires a critical examination of both similarities and divergences. While both cases involve disputes over resource-rich maritime areas and the need for legal clarity, the strategic environments differ substantially. Norway and Russia operated within a relatively stable institutional framework, with existing bilateral commissions and uninterrupted scientific dialogue. Moreover, while Norway engaged with a single negotiation partner, Romania must consider the interests of multiple actors, including Turkey, which exerts significant influence over Black Sea dynamics.

Therefore, the proposed measures should be designed with flexible institutional architecture. This would allow for the integration of multilateral consultations and observer mechanisms involving Ukraine, Turkey, and potentially NATO. Moreover, such measures could serve as *de facto* confidence-building tools, offering limited yet strategic avenues for re-engagement with the Russian Federation, without undermining Romania's Euro-Atlantic commitments.

Future research perspectives include the use of focus groups with Romanian policymakers to validate the findings of this study. This initiative could assess the objectivity and accuracy of national perceptions and of the potential solutions for resolving the dispute with Russia. By verifying the outcomes through focus group

¹ NATO, *Military de-confliction mechanism between Greece and Turkey established at NATO*, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_178523.htm (14.05.2025)

² John Smith Robert Jones, *Recent Developments in Conflict Resolution: The Armenia-Azerbaijan Demilitarization Agreement*, "International Journal of Peace Studies", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2023, pp. 112-130

³ Such actors may include Turkey and Bulgaria-whose involvement can be justified by their shared interests in maintaining regional stability and ensuring secure access to maritime resources. Turkey, as a major regional power and NATO member, has a strategic interest in safeguarding the Black Sea. Bulgaria, as a member of both the European Union and NATO, may play an important role in promoting adherence to international norms

⁴ International organizations such as the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) can provide neutral platforms for negotiation and resources for mediation, thereby contributing to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the resolution process.

consultations, the feasibility of the proposed solutions can be evaluated, and new approaches for reducing tensions and fostering cooperation may be identified.

Thus, the lessons learned from the Norway-Russia experience can offer Romania valuable courses of action in addressing current challenges in the Black Sea. The adoption of strategies validated through consultation with experts and political decision-makers may facilitate the identification of durable solutions, contributing to regional stability and security.

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