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Thank you. Good evening. I come from a French-speaking country so I will start in French and continue in English. Of course, I would like to thank Thierry de Montbrial and the IFRI for inviting me. For yesterday evening's topic, Laurent Fabius was essentially referring, among other things, to the European Union's neighbours and, in particular, to the policies of its neighbours to the south and to the east. I will be concentrating mainly on the EU's neighbours to the east and in the Balkans. Why? Because there are, in these areas, strong political, geostrategic, military, economic, security and energy interests, and as such, there are many things to say about this subject. But I will be approaching it from a Romanian angle, through the intermediary of the sensibilities that we have in my country as well as in the light of history and of our regional experience. However, I shall start by referring to something that was said by a great French statesman, Raymond Poincaré, a century ago. He said that Romania is located at the threshold of the Orient, where nothing is taken seriously. Perhaps this is true, at least in part. But when I think about the history of my country, which once found itself at the crossroads of three empires – the Austrian, Ottoman and Russian – and which of course had to process the experience of the Balkan wars, the two world wars, a division of the country in very complex historical circumstances, a period of communist rule, an authoritarian regime, I think that these things were not taken lightly, on the contrary in fact. And that is why everything that happens in our region is a small detail. Tomorrow will be the 15th of December and we will be commemorating 24 years of the bloody revolution of December 1989 in Romania, the men and women who went out onto the streets for freedom, for democracy. It is for this reason that we are interested in our region, in an enlarged space that essentially promises more stability, democracy, rights and freedom. That is the main interest of my country. Today, Romania finds itself at the Eastern border of NATO and the European Union.

I will continue in English.

I am a lawyer – I graduated from a law faculty in Bucharest – and not an engineer, but nevertheless, having been in high school and being a lover of physics, it is extremely important to reach a stable system. Today the international system is not stable anymore, and regarding what Laurent Fabius said about the bipolar, unipolar and multipolar world, I am saying that today the international system is redefining itself, for reasons that we are aware of, such as the economic crisis, political, ideological and other challenges and risks. It is the same in our region, and I will make some brief comments on the Balkans.

Comparing the Balkan region to only 25 years ago, it is almost predictable, which is a fundamental qualitative step forward, because for all we know, tomorrow the region will be part of the European family, despite some nuances concerning some individual cases. However, it is nevertheless a predictable situation compared to 20-25 years ago. This is not the case with the eastern side, where it is a much more fluid situation, and we see what is happening today.

However, from a European perspective, there are some important mechanisms that we try to use, such as the Eastern Partnership, with positive and less positive results, including what happened in the Vilnius summit organised by the EU; it was good news for the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, but not so good from a European perspective, despite a very interesting qualitative transformation in the Ukraine, with 60% of the population in favour of a rapprochement with the EU. The Black Sea Synergy was a Romanian initiative in 2007 with the support of the EU, along with the German EU presidency and also the Danube strategy of the EU, which connects 14 EU and non-EU member states with projects financed by the EU concerning navigability, infrastructure, bridges, trade, human exchanges and tourism.

The significance of those three tools is more integration and a better spirit of cooperation, and we are supportive of that movement towards a more integrated region, and we could also make a reference to a new Silk Road, making the connection to Central Asia through the Caspian and Black Sea to the heart of Europe.

Finally, we are seeing this also in terms of having a stronger and much more influential Europe. After the next European elections and the emergence of the new cycle of power within Europe, we will need a stronger and more efficient European political leadership with a stronger political vision that will be much more efficient than was the case



previously. I would like to propose a game, half in seriousness, which is nevertheless very relevant. Every day Europeans are using a very small but highly relevant institution, the Euro currency. I do not know whether you have had the time to look at the EUR50 note; there is a map of Europe. The design, if I am not mistaken, was created in 1995 or 1996, and when speaking about an important institution like the EU, perhaps this design was not accidental – perhaps it was political planning or reflected visionary spirit. It is very interesting to see this map in 1995; we see the Central and the Eastern region, including the Balkan region, and the Republic of Moldova. I am very comfortable with this idea, and I will let you discover the prediction at that time concerning the eastern border of the EU. It is unfinished business, and we will need a new political leadership to finish it.