

Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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Tenth Anniversary of Black Sea Action Day



International Black Sea Action Day is a regional event designed to help all Black Sea countries and communities raise awareness on the environmental issues of the Black Sea and highlight the efforts aimed at its protection and rehabilitation. Black Sea Action Day 2006 commemorates the tenth anniversary of the signature of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan. It symbolizes the commitment of the governments of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine for serious action to make a real difference to the rehabilitation and recovery of the sea. On October 31 the regional communities honor the dedicated work of many people who devote their time and energy to help protect the environment. It is the promise of a better future for the 16 million people from six countries dwelling on the shores.

The Strategic Action Plan recognises that the Black Sea will only recover if all coastal communities and countries work together to address these shared problems. Each year public activities include: beach clean ups, competitions, concerts, media events and public meetings.

The Black Sea Commission

The Black Sea Commission is the regional body designed to implement the Bucharest Convention signed by the six coastal countries in 1992. On 31 October 1996 the Black Sea countries signed also the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea. This plan defined the policy measures, actions, and timetables required to achieve the environmental objectives of the

Bucharest Convention. The Black Sea Strategic Action Plan recognises that collective action is required from all Black Sea countries to reduce the impacts of pollution on the Black Sea ecosystem. Action is required from all stakeholders, also from each person living in the region.

International Black Sea Action Day has been celebrated every year since the Strategic Action Plan for the Protection of the Black Sea was signed on 31 October 1996. International Black Sea Action Day is a truly collaborative effort between all the regional organisations, NGO's, national government agencies, and coastal municipalities working together to protect the Black Sea. Some of the main partners this year include: the Black Sea Commission, the Black Sea NGO Network, and the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project.

Stronger Government Action Needed



In a survey of coastal communities living around Black Sea nearly 40% of respondents felt a lack of government action was the main barrier to improving the health of the Black Sea environment. When asked what they could do as individuals to protect the Black Sea most people (26%) said they would sign a petition to strengthen government policies to protect the Black Sea.

In late July 400 people were randomly questioned from several coastal cities and towns including: Sochi, Novorossiysk and Anapa in Russia; Odessa and Nikolaev in Ukraine; Varna in Bulgaria, Constanta in Romania; Trabzon, Ordu, and Zonguldak in Turkey; and Batumi, Kobuleti, Poti and Grigoleti in Georgia. The survey was initiated by the Global Environment Facility-funded Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project, and carried out in partnership with a number of Non Government Organizations from the six countries bordering the Black Sea.

Most people felt the factors having the biggest impact on the health of the Black Sea were: pollution from factories (21%), untreated sewerage (13%), rubbish and litter (13%), and the over development of coastal areas (12%). Only 9% of people felt that poor agricultural practices were having a negative impact on the health of the Black Sea. However, Ivan Zavadsky, Director of the UNDP/GEF Danube/Black Sea Programme, says poor agricultural practices are the main threat to the Black Sea ecosystem.

Mr Zavadsky says the Black Sea was only saved from complete collapse in the early 1990's because of sharp reduction in fertilizer use following the economic downturn in former communist countries bordering the Black Sea and the Danube River. "Economic collapse and good luck does not provide a good strategy for managing the Black Sea environment. We need to improve our agricultural practices before economic recovery triggers another environmental disaster in the Black Sea," he says.

Help the Black Sea Now!



October 31, 2006 marked the tenth anniversary of Black Sea Action Day focusing on the urgent need for coordinated action to restore and preserve the unique environment of this remarkable water body. This year one of our main objectives for International Black Sea Action Day is to get people to sign the Black Sea Pledge to help raise awareness of the simple steps people can take to protect their Black Sea environment.

A sustainable future for the Black Sea is only possible if the population of its drainage basin is aware of its role as a polluter and joins common efforts for pollution prevention and restoration of the environment. So [HELP THE BLACK SEA NOW!](#) Take the Black Sea Pledge and visit www.oneblacksea.org to learn more about the Black Sea and its future.

Invasive Species

A recently completed scientific expedition in the Black Sea has found that invasive species appear to be thriving in a Black Sea weakened by pollution from sources such as agricultural fertilizers and untreated sewage. Professor Laurence Mee, Chief Scientist on the Cruise and Director of the Marine Institute of Plymouth University, says the Black Sea will require increased protection from further human pressure as it adapts to new conditions and the new species that have settled in it. Because of deteriorating conditions Professor Mee says many niches have now been filled by "opportunistic species".

The recent multi-national scientific expedition on the R/V Akademik was carried out under auspices of the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. The cruise involved scientists in a wide range of disciplines from Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom. Dr Bill Parr, from the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project, says the overall situation has improved since the severe ecological decline witnessed in the 1980s. However, the Black Sea continues to remain vulnerable to the impacts of invasive species.

Ivan Zavadsky, Director of the UNDP/GEF Danube/Black Sea Programme, says the findings of the expedition confirm the need for greater regional cooperation to reduce the amount of nutrients being released into the Black Sea. "The threat to the Black Sea ecosystem will not be properly addressed until national governments increase promotion of better farming practices, introduce better wastewater treatment systems, and improve the management of their coastal zones," he says.

Black Sea SCENE



The Black Sea NGO Network is currently implementing a cross-regional project Black Sea SCENE, an integrating activity implemented as Coordination Action (Research Infrastructure Action) in the EU Sixth Framework Programme FP6. The Black Sea SCENE project is undertaken by 25 partners from the Black Sea countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, in cooperation with 6 partners from the EU member states and one from Norway (EU Associated state). The overall management and coordination of the Black Sea SCENE is carried out by the Marine Information Service MARIS B.V. from the Netherlands.

The project aims to establish a Black Sea Scientific Network of leading environmental and socio-economic research institutes, universities and NGOs from the countries around the Black Sea and to develop a virtual data and information infrastructure. The Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) will contribute to the transformation of the Black Sea SCENE information infrastructure into a user-friendly environmental knowledge platform.

The Black Sea SCENE partners are proactively addressing the end-users community to promote and disseminate the Black Sea SCENE activities and project results. The BSNN has been involved in the end-user and stakeholder consultation process with the purpose to help extend the

circle of end-users outside the scientific research community. The consultation of potential end-users serves to obtain requirements and feedback for the networking activities of the Black Sea SCENE and the development of the Black Sea virtual data and information infrastructure.

Black Sea SCENE Activities

Black Sea SCENE activities involve workshops about Black Sea and environment related data, its availability, quality and the terms of its use. Environmental and socio-economic scientists and technical specialists of the partners will meet regularly in Workshops. At the workshops Common Data Quality Control procedures will be explored and harmonized. Partners will compile overviews of their marine datasets and data acquisition activities using established European metadata formats.

Partners will assess the quality of their datasets and include Data Quality indicators in the metadata. A virtual data and information infrastructure will be implemented to facilitate the access to metadata and datasets. This will include a Black Sea regional portal with central meta-directories, equipped with dynamic mapping functions, and giving links to distributed datasets at partners.

Black Sea SCENE will mobilize a large number of Black sea institutions that hold significant quantities of environmental and socio-economic data and information as well as knowledge and expertise. It will support the European research community by providing availability overviews and access to marine environmental and socio-economic Black Sea data.

Black Sea SCENE and the Black Sea virtual data and information infrastructure will encourage trans-national and worldwide (IOC, NATO Sfp, GEF, UNEP and UNDP projects) use of the available datasets. It will also improve the compatibility of archiving systems among regional partners.

Metadata and the Black Sea SCENE

The Black Sea SCENE is in the process of creating a metadata information infrastructure. End users who do not belong to the scientific community need to know more about metadata and its use. The simplest useful definition of metadata is "structured data about data." This very general definition includes an almost limitless spectrum of possibilities ranging from human-generated textual description of a resource to machine-generated data that may be useful only to software applications.

The term metadata has been used only in the past 15 years, and has become particularly common with the popularity of the World Wide Web. But the underlying concepts have been in use for as long as collections of information have been organized. Library catalogs represent a well established variety of metadata that has served for decades as collection management and resource discovery tools.

Metadata is structured data about data. Increasingly the term refers to any data used to aid the identification, description and location of networked electronic resources. In this context there now exists a variety of metadata formats from the basic proprietary records used in global internet search services, through a continuum encompassing simple attribute/value records such as the ROADS templates used in eLib subject services, the more structured TEI and MARC formats, and at the richest level detailed formats such as CIMI and EAD, typically applied to archival material.

Black Sea Youth Network Established

A project made possible by the assistance of the Open Society Institute East-East Programme brought together over 40 NGO activists from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Moldova in the Black Sea Youth Leaders Conference held 15-18 September 2006 in Varna, Bulgaria. Its goal was to encourage the young people from the Black Sea countries to perform the role of active citizens and to contribute to saving the Black Sea on the basis of international agreements, the activities of

existing NGO networks and NGO expertise in public participation in decision making on environmental issues. As a specific topic the participants addressed the issue of youth capacity building in view of EU enlargement. They focused on the establishment of a youth network with joint planning and networking activities, as well as project preparation in view of the ongoing Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project Phase 2.



Newsletter of the Black Sea NGO Network

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