

Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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Eleventh BSAD



October 31, 2007 marked the eleventh International Black Sea Action Day — a time to focus attention, within the framework of the ongoing efforts of governments and international institutions, on the urgent need for concerted action to restore and preserve the unique environment of this remarkable water body.

The day commemorates eleven years since representatives from all countries that border on the Black Sea — Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine — signed the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea. The Plan forms a comprehensive guide for practical work to bring about real improvements to the sea's dramatic deterioration.

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. The International Black Sea Day is part of that process. So **HELP THE BLACK SEA NOW!**

www.oneblacksea.org



BSERP 2 comes to a close

The Second Phase of the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project of UNDP/GEF is coming to a close in the beginning of 2008. For about a decade it provided international support to the regional efforts for the protection and rehabilitation of the Black Sea.

The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, signed 15 years ago, with its 5 resolutions and now 4 protocols (some under revision) established the format of the first regional collaboration effort aiming to protect the Black Sea environment. Modeled closely on the format and substance of the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions, it was the first step toward cooperation, establishment of regional bodies, establishment of environmental policy goals (Odessa Declaration), strategic planning for their achievement (BS SAP) and involvement of stakeholders. The representation of the Black Sea NGO Network at the BSC is part of this process.

Support to the NGO sector

The UNDP/GEF has been instrumental in supporting the development of the third sector in the littoral countries over those 15 years. The development and specialization of the environmental NGO sector owe a great deal to those funding institutions. It has been a constant process of capacity building, from the very start up to the present day. National grants on various levels that have supported NGOs, and also EU funding with TACIS, Phare Cross-border programmes, 6th FP, Interreg etc. Other funders have also intervened in the area like Novib, OSI — East-East Programme etc.

The 2 small grants programmes of the BSERP 1 and 2 have been mostly successful in involving the local communities in introducing positive social practices and attitudes aimed at reducing eutrophication in the Black Sea. They have involved the

local public in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project. They have improved the communication between key public figures and agencies in the regional community responsible for the BS issues. They have provided the groundwork for better use of communication and regional coordination. They have demonstrated community level strategies, technologies and involvement aimed at nutrient reduction, supported the exchange of good practices, the regular patterns of public involvement in awareness raising on environmental issues like BSAD, the building of partnerships and coalitions.

Bulgarian NGOs

Major areas of NGO work in Bulgaria recently have been water management, nutrient reduction, biodiversity protection and wetland management. SGP 1 — 3 projects: about chemical free agriculture Greener Bourgas, low cost waste water treatment by constructed wetlands Coastal Association, networking and public outreach BSNN. Pollution prevention with focus on agriculture is a big priority in the current 2nd phase of the Small Grants Programme of BSERP. Three out of a total of five projects, three focused on nutrient reduction from agriculture. Two projects on the north coast aimed to teach farmers how to use and store manure and fertilizers. One project in the south focused on a promotional campaign for organic production. Coastal resorts and the state of the coast attract reasonably a lot of public attention. One project focused on the treatment of waste waters from the resorts. Another sought to improve the environmental state of the coastal area along the seafront at Pomorie.

In terms of capacity building the national NGO training focused on nutrient reduction



from agriculture & agro environmental measures, iczm principles, national legislation and impact in terms of Natura 2000, working with the media training and EU Green/Blue book on maritime policy, as well as EU environmental funding opportunities — for 41 NGO members, Varna. BSAD campaigns 2006 and 2007 involved institutionalization of the media competition with local and central media involvement; public outreach events with involvement of key institutions and figures, about 30 separate events with ab. 1500 direct beneficiaries, outdoor celebrations with coastal and inland communities involved. Innovative public outreach events — live chain, My Black Sea card and signature campaign, clean beaches involving people of all ages from schoolchildren to veterans.



NGOs use a number of communication and education materials including websites, publications, media competitions and teaching aids. Black Sea Day has become a focal point for NGO activities and successes, although more cooperation is needed with scientific institutions. NGO need more funds linking local with regional/international issues, and better involvement of local stakeholders.

Georgia

In Georgia, about nine NGOs are most active on BS issues. Their priority areas include coastal issues, biodiversity such as sturgeon, waste, pesticide reduction, education, eco-camps, BS Day (e.g. beach clean-ups and painting on sidewalks) and communications. Policy work and environmental education are also big priorities. The *Caucasian Environmental NGO Network (CENN)* is the biggest, and only regional, environmental NGO in the Caucasus. It has offices in two countries,

links with many NGOs, 12,000 subscribers to its email bulletin list, a regional magazine, and helps increase public participation in environmental decision-making in five Caucasus countries. BSERP SGP 1 did not fund projects in Georgia, except indirectly through BSNN involvement.



7 NGOs have implemented projects funded by BSERP 2nd SGP, varying a lot geographically and content wise. A project with excellent demonstration potential aims to eliminate acute risks from obsolete pesticides in Ajara by repackaging them and locking them away in safe stores. Awareness raising is in the focus of 5 projects with outcomes aimed at the establishment of youth and journalists' networks, support from local authorities in the reduction of pollution in the Rioni river, involvement of school teachers etc. Another project is environmental education project producing a manual on nutrients and toxics for schools.

2 day training was held for Black Sea NGOs and Mass Media. 18 representatives have been selected for the training, mostly young activists and journalists. Training was held in Batumi with emphasis on project cycle management and fundraising techniques and opportunities.

BSAD 2007 — was celebrated under within the traditional Black Sea week 24—31 Oct, with scientific conference and eco classes in 5 schools in Batumi, ecoclasses in Poti, film show in Zugdidi cinema palace and coastal Info bus campaign, again focusing on youth from the coast. Poti port administration has been involved as well as local authorities and media. Rock concert in Batumi — highlighted the event, Ajara TV provided coverage.

NGOs in Romania

For Romania, the activities of NGOs focus on environment education, coastal zone management, advocacy campaigns, beach clean-ups and protection of the Black Sea dolphin. The annual Black Sea Day is a favourite event for coastal NGOs, mostly Mare Nostrum from Constanta, but that increased collaboration with other NGOs is desired. Policy issues and civil society issues, environmental legislation and Natura 2000 are high on the list of priorities of a number of NGOs.

4 projects under BSERP SGP 1 — online education, environmental education, awareness raising on coastal water pollution issues and promotion of organic production — Pro Natura, Prietenii Pamantului, Group for Underwater and Speleological Exploration, Mare Nostrum. All have been successfully implemented, Best AP continue to be a line of activities, environmental education as well.

Five projects have been selected for funding from BSERP 2nd SGP. One is concerned with stakeholder involvement in the rural areas with Natura 2000 sites linked to the Black Sea. Two projects are typical awareness raising through public participation in coastal and other areas. The pilot project for eutrophication control in the Nuntashi lake basin is capacity building action training local farmers and schools and producing an action plan to diminish the contents of nutrients. A film production targets the consequences of eutrophication for the BS ecosystem. The film is addressed to schools, local communities, farmers in agriculture to highlight importance of reduction of nutrient input in the Black Sea basin.

NGO training in Braila — for 37 representatives of NGOs, media, administrations focusing on cooperation in the BS region, TBDA, new financial instruments for regional initiative — BS Joint Operational Program 2007—2013, BS Trust for regional cooperation, BS Synergy policy document, and the programmes for international cooperation for development financed by Romania as EU member. Briefing on work with media and efficient use of the Arhus convention.

Russian NGO activities

In Russia NGOs perform all typical projects for the other BS countries: environmental education, awareness raising, stakeholder involvement in nutrient reduction and improvement of the quality of coastal waters, conservation and celebration of BS Day. But they are confronted with bigger environmental problems (construction of oil ports, intensive agriculture and urbanisation of the coast) and lower political interest. There is little support to NGO activity. 3 projects have been financed by BSERP SGP 1 — Sorgo, Environmental Centre of Sochi, Sailing Academy Taganrog involving wetland restoration, environmental education, awareness raising and involving the public in watch-dog activities. So the BSERP 2nd SGP grants are very welcome. Six projects have been selected by the panel with various focus and target groups. A public awareness project in Maykop establishes an information service monitoring BS developments and disseminating information about them. Another local awareness project in the villages off Taganrog aims to stop the degradation of water bodies and riversides. Environmental education and training project in Krasnodar focuses on school children education, participation in round tables with involvement of authorities, clean coast campaign etc. Other projects also involve environmental education and training, creation of protected wetland area at Khanskoe Lake and production of a documentary 'Utrish Threatened by Ecological Disaster'.

BSAD traditionally turned into a national coastal celebration with involvement of authorities. Sochi Olympics is a focus of public concern.



NGO activities in Turkey

In Turkey NGO networks based on territorial principle cover the coastal area of the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea — called environmental platforms. They undertake numerous activities to raise awareness for environmental protection (e.g. reducing coastal pollution, erosion, over-fishing, waste), including on BS Day. Turkish farmers use far less fertilizers and chemicals than do EU farmers and that there was therefore high potential for organic farming. Biodiversity is also very high on the agenda. NGO TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion) undertakes many rural development projects (on over 100,000 ha of land) related to soil erosion and deforestation. There are many other environmental NGOs with specific focus of activities which touch on BS issues.

BSERP 1st SGP supported 2 projects — TEWPS and BS Environmentalists — environmental awareness for students and adults, advocacy, NGO networking.

BSERP 2nd SGP supports projects from Istanbul, Trabzon, Zonguldag, Samsun and Kocaeli, primarily public awareness and environmental education. Two projects focus on public awareness raising with target groups from local communities and farmers, encouraging the use of manure and organic production. Good agricultural practice is central issue of a project associated with coastal wetlands, agriculture and biodiversity. Another project is educating local town folks to change patterns of consumer behavior reducing the use of detergents. Youth and amateur theatricals are involved in yet another project about

environmental education conservation and ecosystem approach visualization.

BSAD activities have been attracting the attention of the public focusing on BSC activities, political highlighting of BS issues, media involvement, awareness raising along the coast.

25 participants and 5 trainers took part in the capacity building training focusing on BSC, river pollution and the BS with example of the Bartin river, presentation of the film 'The Sea that nearly Died', review of the EfE ministerial conference, presentation of the BSERP BS education study pack, review of the BS biodiversity problems in regional perspective, assessment of BSAD 2006 and assessemnt of the dialogue between the media and the BS NGOs.

Ukrainian NGOs

In Ukraine, NGOs are the focusing on youth education, conservation, biodiversity protection, research in coastal areas, ecotourism, protected areas management and awareness raising. Many activities are related to estuaries, small rivers, wetlands, and the Danube Delta, especially the Biosphere Reserve and the proposed shipping canal project there. Science class-type expeditions are a favourite activity, also regular youth festivals and BS Day celebrations. Activities often include an info-campaigns and media involvement.

Ukrainian BSERP 2nd SGP projects, total of 8, cover a variety of topics and regions along the coast. They include 1 stakeholder involvement project for a public basin council at the Dnipro River; 1 project for creation of public forum of BS NGOs strengthening NGO cooperation; 1 educational project for children and youth, 1 educational project for children and youth, 1 information dissemination project of Our Nature magazine, 4 projects for protected area — the Tiligul Estuary, Kinburnsky Spit, Tarkhanhut Peninsula and marine protected area Philophora Fields.

BSAD — public outreach, educational and media events, 600 study packs, events in Sevastopol, Nikolaev, Tatarbunar, Odessa, 5000 info papers published — YEC

Vernadsky, RNBSPO, Secamp2000, Zeleny Svit, Vydrodzhenia — Tatarbunar, Ecoclub-Vilcovo, YEC Dobra Volyua-Izmail.



Challenges of the future

In summary, it can be seen that BS NGOs are successfully supporting stakeholder involvement, working at all levels, from local to national to regional. They address a broad range of issues from pollution reduction and coastal protection to agriculture and conservation. Most have been involved in communication activities and awareness raising, especially on BS Day, though education, publications, some public opinion surveys and media relations. Some NGOs have also been involved in scientific research and reporting. Capacity building is seen as a standing task in the third sector.

Challenges of the future — development of societies, regional projects, development and impact on the BS environment, stability in the BS region including impacts of climate change, funding opportunities, relations with authorities and businesses etc.

Black Sea SCENE project



The Black Sea NGO Network continues the implementation of the cross-regional project Black Sea SCENE, an integrating activity implemented as Coordination Action (Research Infrastructure Action) in the EU Sixth Framework Programme FP6. The project is in the process of establishing a Black Sea Scientific Network of leading environmental and socio-economic research institutes, universities and NGO's from the

countries around the Black Sea and to develop a virtual data and information infrastructure that will be populated and maintained by these organisations to improve the identification, access, exchange, quality indication and use of their data and information about the Black Sea.



The Black Sea SCENE research infrastructure will stimulate scientific cooperation, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and strengthen the regional capacity and performance of marine environmental data & information management, underpin harmonization with European marine data quality control/assessment procedures and adoption of international meta-data standards and data-management practices, providing improved data & information delivery services for the Black Sea region at a European level.

The Black Sea NGO Network has been promoting the opportunities offered by the research infrastructure to stakeholders in the NGO sector and the wider regional community. Its main objective has been to get end-users informed about the nature of the projects implemented in the Black Sea region and data about the Black Sea, as well as about their accessibility and opportunities for use in relation to networking.

PlanCoast — focus on ICZM



The Black Sea NGO Network is partner in the international Plan Coast project focusing on ICZM and marine spatial planning. PlanCoast (2006—2008) is an INTERREG IIIB NP CADSES Project with the aim to develop the tools and capacities for an effective integrated planning in coastal zones and maritime areas in the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Sea regions. PlanCoast has 16 partners representing the Spatial Planning Departments or responsible regional authorities from Albania, BosniaHerzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine. It involves activities laying down the ground for ICZM actions like assessment of the status quo and creation of GIS data bases, implementation of pilot projects related to sea-use planning in the 12 sm zone and spatial planning, as well as elaboration of common policies and approaches.

The project website at <http://www.plancoast.eu> provides plenty of information about project activities and resources.

Newsletter of the Black Sea NGO Network

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