

Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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BSAD 2008



Black Sea Action Day 2008 was marked in all coastal communities of the littoral countries with focus on public awareness and communication activities. Twelve years after the beginning the concern for the environmental predicament of the Black Sea is still growing along with the urgent need to promote greater national and regional action to protect the Black Sea environment.

The attention of experts, scientists and the wider public has been focused on the forthcoming ministerial meeting of the contracting parties to the Bucharest Convention. While the main barrier to protecting the Black Sea is still a lack of public awareness of the problems and their impacts, there are fears that the capacity of the Black Sea to recover from pollution is close to its critical limit.

If it changes for the worse, the whole region may change entirely transforming the life of millions of people. For ages the sea has taken care of us. The time has clearly come for us to take care of the sea.



BSERP closed

The second phase of the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project of UNDP/GEF the major regional intervention of the international donor community closed at the end of June 2008. For nearly a decade it provided 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. The UNDP/GEF has been instrumental in supporting the development of the third sector in the littoral countries over those 15 years.

Black Sea JOP

'Common borders — common solutions' is the title of the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme (Black Sea JOP), an instrument under the European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of the EU. It aims to contribute to: "a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin". The programme's three specific objectives are: promoting economic and social development in the border areas; working together to address common challenges; and promoting local, people-to-people cooperation. There are 10 participating countries in the Black Sea JOP, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, and Greece.

The Black Sea JOP aims at a stronger and more sustainable economic and social development of the Black Sea Basin regions. Through the Black Sea JOP, communities in the areas concerned will be encouraged to further develop their local economy, confront environmental challenges and promote greater interaction among people. The launch of the first call for proposals is estimated to be at the beginning of 2009. More information is available at <http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/>

Maritime links

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/links_en.html
This comprehensive library of links aims to give you the world of maritime affairs at your fingertips. You can enter at different levels: European, national, regional and international. From there, you will discover the wide range of government institutions, industry associations, researchers, media and civil society organizations who are working on the diverse array of issues related to our seas and oceans.



A year of achievements

One year ago, and after one of the most comprehensive stakeholder consultations ever, the European Commission tabled its proposal for an Integrated EU Maritime Policy. EU Heads of State and Government endorsed the Commission's vision at the December 2007 European Council under the Portuguese Presidency. The European Commission marks the first anniversary of the Integrated Maritime Policy by reviewing the concrete progress achieved to date. The last twelve months have seen major new initiatives in areas as varied as border surveillance, sustainable tourism, maritime transport strategy, climate change, marine and maritime research strategy, or maritime governance. At the same time, the Commission's services coordinating this policy have been reorganized within DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to provide cross-cutting coordination on a regional basis. The Commission plans to launch a number of new policy initiatives in the coming months which will also make an immediate, tangible difference to the way our oceans are managed.

An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union (the 'Blue Book') in brochure format is available at http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/publications_en.html

Black Sea SCENE project



A sustainable Internet-based service BlackSeaScene InfoNet is now available as part of the Black Sea SCENE project, a regional research infrastructure coordinated action in the EU Sixth Framework Programme FP6. Scientists, decision makers, industries, environmental NGOs and other stakeholders, as well as the public in the Black Sea countries are now in a position to be better informed and better prepared to approach issues related to the Black Sea.

The 25 project partners, in the course of the final project year, developed a number of products mainly catalogues but also tools to support the research in and around the Black Sea. The products are closely related to those within SeaDataNet, but are developed by the Black Sea SCENE partners specifically for Black Sea SCENE purposes. They cover search applications of catalogues with Datasets, Projects, Scientists, Reports, a DQC inventory etc. Users of the research infrastructure will be able to manage and to operate central indices and database of information on the Black Sea hosted by institutes around it. The service will also facilitate harmonization in quality and formats, storing and retrieving of Black Sea information for use by Black Sea SCENE partners, scientific users and the public.



The public awareness activities within the Black Sea SCENE, carried jointly by the Varna based Institute of Oceanology IO-BAS and the Black Sea NGO Network through various communications media, alert the general

population of the Black Sea region and some EU partners to the significance of data information about the Black Sea ecosystem and the significance of its present state with perspective of threats, protection, rehabilitation and sustainable development. The joint effort is aimed toward stimulating the growth and development of awareness, understanding and consciousness toward the biophysical environment and its problems, including human interactions and effects. It can also help people in the regional communities to start thinking "ecologically" or in terms of an ecological consciousness.

The Black Sea Scene Infonet carries descriptive information about the Black Sea provided in a readily accessible form for the wide public. This is one of the basic areas of public interest in the BS SCENE which will provide information about the present state of the BS, the threats, the efforts about protection and rehabilitation and also about the BS SCENE itself namely how the project will contribute to the sustainable development of the region.



Time to Meet!

The Federation of Romanian Development NGOs (FOND) organized and held the Black Sea NGO Forum 2008 "Time to Meet" October 31 — November 2, 2008 in the country's capital Bucharest. This is the beginning of an annual tradition bringing together over 100 NGOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, Russia, and other EU member states active in the wider Black Sea region.

The event has been organized in partnership with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation and UNDP Romania in the framework

of the Black Sea Synergy. The aim of this event is to increase the level of dialogue and coordination among NGOs in the wider Black Sea region, as well as to strengthen the advocacy capacity of NGOs in order to influence development strategies in the region. The forum focused on creating a pool of concrete projects and on proposing concrete recommendations for regional NGOs and donors in order to increase the number and quality of regional partnerships and projects.

Over 100 participants have come together to exchange experiences, to find partners for their project ideas and to elaborate project concepts in the field of social justice, human rights, democratization and good governance, sustainable development. A portfolio of concept proposals will be presented to the donors in the region. More information is available at <http://www.blackseango.org/>

Kyiv 2009

The Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) originally scheduled for 30-31 October 2008 has been postponed for the spring of 2009. The meeting to be held in Kyiv, Ukraine is scheduled tentatively for 8 - 9 April 2009. It will adopt and approve a number of important regulatory instruments among them the updated Black Sea Strategic Action Plan. A regional NGO Conference within the EU funded project 'Environmental Collaboration for the Black Sea' will be held in January 2009 to discuss the drafts of the official documents and to prepare a joint NGO platform document to present at the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention. Coordinator of the NGO event is the Odessa Branch of the Black Sea Environmental Academy of Sciences.



Environmental cooperation

Seas At Risk, the association of environmental organizations concerned with the marine environment of the North East Atlantic and wider European seas, organized, in September 2008, a meeting with sister NGO networks that work for the protection of Europe's regional seas: Coalition Clean Baltic, the Black Sea NGO Network, and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development. The participants discussed the challenges and opportunities posed by the Maritime Policy of the EU and its environmental pillar, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. All NGO networks agreed that these should be the focus of their work in the coming years, and two representatives of the European Commission (from DG Mare and DG Environment) have emphasized the value of NGO input to both processes. To enhance the effectiveness of future work, the networks have jointly decided to cooperate under the heading of European Seas Environmental Cooperation (ESEC). The aim of the coordinated action is to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure quick dissemination of information at various levels, through a single focal point, which will reach the NGOs in the 4 networks and all of their members, and simultaneously convey their concerns and input to the European Commission.

While the NGOs remain openly critical of some of the shortcomings of the Maritime Policy, they do acknowledge that it has brought marine issues to the forefront of policy discussions, and recognize that it provides a potentially valuable framework for the pursuit of environmental objectives. Their existing structures can allow them to efficiently and effectively coordinate NGO input to the further development of the Maritime Policy and the implementation of its Action Plan.



Newsletter of the Black Sea NGO Network

Editorial team: Emma Gileva, Ralitsa Zhekova, Aleksandar Shivarov, photo: © Krasimir Delchev, design: Iliya Iliev

Contact information:
Black Sea NGO Network
P. O. Box 91
2 Dr. L. Zamenhof St., fl. 2
BG-9000 Varna, Bulgaria
tel.: +359 (52) 615-856
fax: +359 (52) 602-047
e-mail: bsnn@bsnn.org
<http://www.bsnn.org>