

Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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SOS for dolphins

News of 48 dead bottlenose dolphins washed up on the shore near the Romanian port of Sulina raised concern in police, environmentalists and scientists. Police said the cause of death was unclear, but added that they did not have marks or cuts from fishing nets like other dolphins that died recently in the area. A joint commission made up of policemen and environment authorities is investigating the find. Environmentalists say a growing illegal trade in live Black Sea bottlenose dolphins for aquariums over the past decade has threatened their survival. The mammals' vulnerability is increased by their slow reproductive cycle and water pollution. Their death rings an alarm bell for the balance in the sensitive ecosystems in the Black Sea.

Dozens of dolphins die monthly after they get caught in fishing nets, said Simion Nicolaev, head of the National Institute for Marine Research. In May 10 dolphins died on beaches 30 km south of Sulina. Environmentalists blamed the military for their deaths, because the bodies surfaced shortly after army exercises with live ammunition in the area. The military denied killing the dolphins, but suspended the exercises. (*Reuters, EIN*)

Cooperation BSNN-BSERP

The acting coordinator of the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP) Mr Pat Reynolds and Mr Victor Pisotskiy, public participation specialist visited the BSNN Regional Office on July 7, 2003. At the meeting the future relations and forms of cooperation between BSNN and BSERP were discussed. Regarding relations and the manner of working together in the future BSNN and BSERP representatives agreed on improved transparency for BSERP project and exchange of information, as well as better utilization of the regional representation function of the BSNN.

In the spirit of good cooperation BSNN took the responsibility to support the planning process and develop concept for contents of BSERP Phase II in the part related to public participation in activities for rehabilitation and protection of the Black Sea. (*BSNN*)

New directories

Directories with information about state and local institutions, associated with the environment and the Black Sea from the six coastal countries; Black Sea waters and sustainability non-governmental organisations and

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different types of media, covering environmental topics have been published on BSNN website. The directories are downloadable in Excel format. (*BSNN*)

EU commitments

European Commissioner for Enlargement Günter Verheugen during his visit to Bulgaria in July stayed in Varna and participated in a roundtable on EU-related issues with NGOs on July 11, 2003. The commissioner indicated that one of the current goals of the European

Commission is to complete accession talks with Bulgaria by the end of its mandate in November 2004. He said that Varna has a special place in the country and, following EU accession, will be on the external border of a united Europe. "Guarding the border is not something only for Bulgaria to do, but for the whole EU, and mutual efforts will be implied in fighting arms, drugs and human trafficking, he said. When asked about future EU commitments to development of the region and protection and rehabilitation of the Black Sea Mr Verheugen stressed that beside enlargement he was also responsible for relations with the EU neighbours. Therefore he believes that with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania the EU will be active part of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council and will have to design a strategy for cooperation with the region, not only in terms of economy and trade but in terms of the environment and other issues as well. EU is aware of the importance of economic cooperation agreement with Russia and Ukraine and that may be a starting point. EU has a customs union with Turkey, in general relations with EU neighbours are of great importance. And environment is and will remain a top EU priority so we have to develop a coherent strategy to cover all countries, he said. Whether we are going to have new institutions or develop the existing ones remains to be seen, he explained.

(BSNN)

EBRD starts public consultations

On July 23 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) posted on its web site materials about the environmental impact assessment of TogliattiAzot ammonia terminal. EBRD has started a procedure for public consultations, which will be finalized on October 28, 2003 when the Board of the bank will take the final decision about financing the project.



In 1999 the chemical corporation TogliattiAzot started building the terminal. The construction of this dangerous site caused wide public protest. The construction was stopped in the autumn of 2002 and renewed in the spring of 2003, despite missing state environmental impact assessment and construction permit.

TogliattiAzot applied for a loan to EBRD in spring 2002. Concerned Russian environmental NGOs informed the EBRD about the environmental risks posed by the terminal to the local population. According to NGOs this project contradicts the mission and main principles of the EBRD.

In spite of this, the EBRD started reviewing the project. However, thanks to the efforts of the general public and environmental NGOs, the EBRD was influenced and it classified the project under category A, meaning the project is environmentally dangerous and the procedure should involve wide public consultations.

(Independent Environmental Service on the North Caucasus)

EIB not fit to invest in

Socially responsible Dutch bank withdraws investment due to the EIB's weak environmental and social performance. ASN announced that it will be immediately withdrawing investment money from both the EIB and the World Bank. Recent ASN research found that, "In the areas of environmental, social and human rights policies the EIB scores insufficiently for ASN to continue its investment." The EIB's lack of transparency was another important factor behind ASN's decision. The bank has promised to sell the EIB bonds which it currently holds.

Magda Stoczkiewicz, leading the EIB reform campaign on behalf of Friends of the Earth International and CEE Bankwatch Network, adds: "We are very pleased with ASN's decision and in the last couple of years we have been highlighting many of the EIB's institutional and operation failings which have now also been revealed by ASN: its lack of transparency, its threadbare environmental expertise and

standards, as well as the detrimental impact of many of its financed projects on people and the environment.”

The EIB is owned by the 15 member EU states, with the respective countries' finance ministers acting as the bank's governors. Stoczkiewicz continues: “The EIB governors should take a closer look at this institution and pressure for reforms.”

(*CEE Bankwatch*)

Water and wetlands index

WWF has issued Water and Wetlands Index, Summary of Water Framework Directive Results, a paper presenting the results of a pan-European survey carried out by the WWF European Living Waters Programme, which provides a *snapshot* of Member States and Accession Countries' progress in the transposition and implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The survey was carried out using a questionnaire on specific aspects of WFD transposition and implementation, which was completed by WWF National Offices, partner NGOs and independent consultants in 17 EU Member States and Accession Countries. The paper is available upon request at BSNN Regional Office that took part in the preparation.

(*DEF, WWF European Living Waters Programme*)

EU agrees greenhouse gas trading scheme

European Union environment ministers agreed to create the world's first international greenhouse gas emissions trading system, a key part of efforts to fight global warming. Subject to final approval by the European Parliament, the scheme will from 2005 cap the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that big factories and power plants can emit and allow them to trade emissions rights with other firms in the 15-nation bloc.



Large plants in key sectors will have CO₂ caps: power generation, oil refineries, coke ovens, ore smelters, steel works and cement, glass, ceramics, pulp and paper factories. Member states can apply for sector-wide opt-outs until 2008 when the scheme becomes compulsory. They can also apply for additional sectors and other greenhouse gases to be included in the scheme after 2008. The opt-out was a key

demand for Britain, which already has a voluntary emissions trading scheme up and running at national level - the first of its kind, and did not want clashes. (*Climate Action Network Central and Eastern Europe, CANCEE*)

Black Sea Pages

Black Sea Pages is a new electronic service focussing on news and travel. It provides a database platform on which people can share the latest news, travel tips and opinions on the countries and regions situated around the Black Sea. The goal of the project is to make information about the region easily accessible.

It has been launched in April 2002 by Herman Wierenga from the Netherlands. In July this year a new version of the Black Sea pages came online, improving the accessibility and the general look of the site. It is a non-profit initiative, currently supported by a team, involved in maintaining and further development of the site. The Black Sea Pages is accessible at <http://blacksea.free.fr> or via the updated links of the BSNN site. (*BSNN*)

The Black Sea in Bucharest

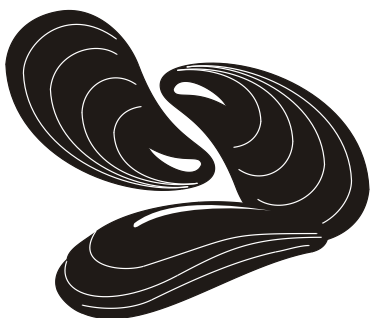
The Black Sea has been in the focus of attention of Romanians, starting from October 2002. A photo exhibition about the Black Sea has been launched in Constanta, the biggest Romanian seaport. After a month the exhibi-

tion visited another important town Bacau and since June 27, 2003 it has been set in Bucharest.

The Black Sea photo exhibition includes 30 images, taken by photographers from Romania and Moldova participating in a contest organised by the *Perspective* magazine, publication of the Romanian Environmental Journalists Association (REJA). The pictures include both exciting and unpleasant visions of the sea. The exhibition visitors can admire the beautiful places around the Black Sea, and have the opportunity to assess the development of the area and to analyse the level of pollution of the sea.

The contest winners received prizes, including photo materials and an annual subscription for *Perspective*. A detailed description of the contest and publication of the awarded works is to be found in the *Perspective* magazine.

The Black Sea contest was organised by REJA. The Black Sea exhibition was a project of Mare Nostrum, organised with the financial support of the European Union the Phare Access Programme. (*Dumitrita Bobina, REJA*)



Black Sea Eco-Academy

The Black Sea Eco-Academy (BSEA), an environmental information and education centre, was founded by the Black Sea NGO Council in Batumi, Georgia in 1994.

As a core member and Georgian national office of the BSNN, BSEA acts as a liaison between various international, national and local environmental and civic groups, media organisations in the Georgian coastal zone. It works towards sustainable development of the Georgian coastal zone through the development and implementation of public awareness, environmental education and training programmes and projects aiming at active cooperation and joint activities involving all sectors and stakeholder groups.

The specific objectives of BSEA are to:

- Involve all sectors of society in the protection and rehabilitation of the Black Sea, promote sustainable business management, establish and support development of Local Agenda 21, increase public awareness and public participation in the decision-making processes;
- Stimulate awareness of the diversity of wildlife and habitats associated with the Black Sea;
- Contribute to the environmental education strategy for the national and regional curricula for schools;
- Advise local authorities, business and industry on environmental protection and conservation and their importance to the

community;

- Provide independent advice to decision-makers on environmental protection and conservation matters relevant to the biological and landscape diversity of the Black Sea and the sustainable development of the Georgian coastal zone and during the development of policies on these matters.

Since its establishment the Black Sea Eco-Academy has implemented over 20 projects with financial support from various organizations and programs, including foreign embassies, TACIS, World Bank, USAID etc. The implemented activities have included establishment of a Local Agenda 21 Group, educational and training programs for various target groups, information and awareness raising campaigns e.g. International Black Sea Day activities and beach clean up actions, community mobilisation initiatives, stakeholder surveys, resource use studies, waste minimisation and management. (*BSEA*)

Newsletter of the Black Sea NGO Network

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