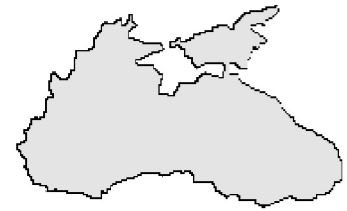


Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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Looking ahead

In 2003 the regional community has more grounds for optimism with regard to the opportunities and prospects for bringing about a substantial change in the state of the Black Sea environment. With the Black Sea Commission now fully operational the regional initiative for developing the Black Sea regulations has revived. At the ministerial meeting in Sofia in June 2002 the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (BS-SAP) went through its first revision after signature in 1996. A new Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity was signed and a draft Regional Black Sea Contingency Plan was developed in cooperation with IMO. Ukraine has adopted a State Programme on Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea as part of its national legislation. Efforts are being made to speed up the process of signature of the Fisheries Convention.

Currently a big regional capacity-building project is under way within the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Strategic Partnership for the Black Sea and Danube River Basin Countries. It is known as the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project and will address basin-wide eutrophication over 2002 - 2004.

Official newsletter of BSEP

Issue No 7, October 2002, of *Saving the Black Sea*, official newsletter of the Black Sea Environment Programme (BSEP), is available in electronic form at the web site www.blacksea-environment.org. It contains information about Black Sea Commission activities, GEF support for the control of eutrophication in the Black Sea, the World Bank-GEF Investment Fund for nutrient reduction, European Union support for BSEP via the Tacis programme, prospects for region-wide introduction of environmental status indicators, economic instruments for control of eutrophication, public participation and stakeholder involvement, as well as useful contact information.

Research cruises

To accomplish the research activities within the regional monitoring programme, envisaged within the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP), the Advisory Board has decided to conduct 3 cruises on a vessel that will carry out mainly water column (pelagic) investigations within 2003-2004. The cruises have been scheduled to take place in late summer (July/

In this issue

- *Looking ahead*
- *Official newsletter of BSEP*
- *Research cruises*
- *Danube biosphere reserve threatened*
- *Oil spill prevention action*
- *Blue Stream operational*
- *Second nuclear reactor at Cernavoda*
- *New magazine*
- *Regional tourism*
- *Regional NGO meeting*
- *Secamp-2000*

August), winter (January) and early spring (March/April). The exact timings of the cruises will be decided by the International Study Group upon its formation. For benthic sampling, the services of a smaller vessel will be employed. It is intended to carry out a single cruise for benthic (and limited water column) sampling during late summer 2003. Publicity support campaigns for the 2003 cruise and BSERP is envisaged in the BSNN project 'Black Sea NGO Networking toward Recovery of the Black Sea Ecosystem'.

Source: BSEP web site

Danube biosphere reserve threatened

Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma at the end of last year delayed the signature of a decree enabling the transport ministry of Ukraine to build a shipping channel through the Danube biosphere reserve, because of protests of environmentalists and scientists from many countries. The administration of the Ukrainian president received huge numbers of faxes and telegrams of the protest - about 120 messages from more than 24 countries of the world and probably decided to slow down the process of signing. The draft Decree on partition of the Danube Reserve is still being discussed at the Administration of the President of Ukraine, together with letters and telegrams sent by labour collectives, schoolchildren, etc. from the Odessa district demanding the construction of the channel through the reserve,



inspired by the Ministry of Transport and the company "Delta - Lotsman". It shall be noted, that the number of such messages less than the number of letters in support of protection of the reserve, but the situation is still alarming.

Source: Ecology and Human Rights

Oil spill prevention action

The European Council gave its full support for efforts to prevent oil spills in European waters like that from the tanker "Prestige" in November. At the Transport Council, transport ministers agreed that European Union countries are to seek voluntary agreements with industry bodies to prevent any single-hulled tanker carrying heavy fuel, tar, bitumen and heavy crude oils from using EU ports. The European Commission, which is the EU executive branch, has been invited to develop a model agreement, and to ensure that the 13 EU candidate countries also implement the measure.

On November 19, 2002, the oil tanker Prestige broke in two and sank off the Spanish coast. The vessel was carrying 77,000 tons of fuel oil (two times more fuel as spilled from the Exxon Valdez). Fuel oil, a heavy, viscous blend gathered from the bottom of tanks at the end of the refining process, can be far more toxic and difficult to clean up than crude oil. Ecologists fear that the 26-year-old Prestige is an environmental time bomb, as it is now resting 210 kilometres off the Spanish coast and 3.6 kilometres below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean.

The scenic shores of Galicia, in northwest Spain, have been blackened by the oil from the vessel. Galicia, where local people depend on fishing and summer tourism for their liveli

hood, has an uncertain future, as its diverse reserve of fish and shellfish is under severe threat.

The consequences for northwest Spain are worsening daily, as Spanish authorities extended restrictions on fishing and gathering shellfish. The ban now reaches as far south as the Portuguese border. The thick oil has contaminated dozens of Spanish beaches along the coastline, and thousands of seabirds have been killed or contaminated.

Oil spill compensation is covered by international law, regulated by the London-based International Maritime Organisation, but activists want the EU to do more. Officials are pushing for immediate implementation of more stringent shipping laws. EU Transport Commissioner, Loyola de Palacio, sent a letter to the 15 EU capitals, urging that new measures be written into national law and implemented as quickly as possible.

Under the new rules, port authorities are required to check at least 25 percent of all ships coming into dock, starting with older, single-hull vessels. Ships flying "flags of convenience" or registered in countries with lax safety, labour or tax rules are to be given priority. That process could have caught the Prestige, as a 26-year-old, single-hulled tanker registered in the Bahamas.

Source:
<http://www.corpwatch.org>

Blue Stream operational

Gazprom began pumping natural gas through the Russia-Turkey Blue Stream pipeline on December 29, 2002 as planned, Itar-Tass reported the head of a gas compressor station in the Krasnodar region as saying. The gas reached Turkey's Samsun Port late at night through the 1,250 km pipeline under the Black Sea.

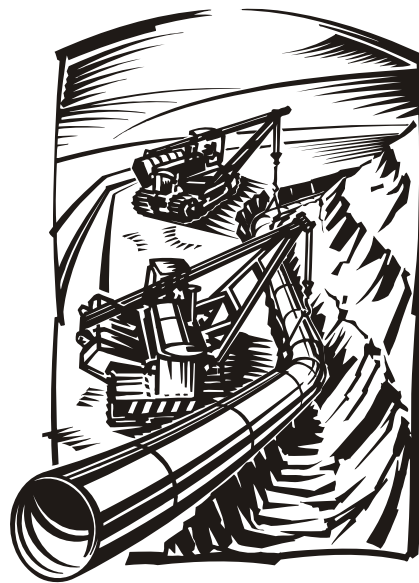
Turkey is scheduled to import 2 billion cubic metres of Russia's natural gas during 2003, and the figure would double each year till 2010, when it would reach its ceiling of 16 billion cubic metres per year. Laying the pipelines underwater at 2,100 metres is a world record that involved the use of most advanced technology by the Italian ENI Engineering Company. (AP)

Second nuclear reactor at Cernavoda

The Canadian government announced on 4 January it will help finance the construction of the Canadian-designed second nuclear reactor at Cernavoda, an RFE/RL correspondent in Ottawa and Romanian Radio reported. Canada is to guarantee loans to Romania worth \$210 million extended by France's Societe Generale bank. The costs of the construction are estimated at \$750 million and similar guarantees for loans could be offered by Italy, France, and the United

States, according to the Romanian report. The first reactor at Cernavoda was commissioned in 1996. Work on the second reactor was halted about that time because of poor construction work and lack of funds. The construction of the second reactor is to be completed by 2006.

Source : Bankwatch



New magazine

The presentation of the first issue of the regional bilingual environmental magazine "Caucasus Environment" ("Priroda Kavkaza") was organized on December 29, 2002 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Its motto is "Let's save the environment of the Caucasus together!" The new regional environmental magazine of CENN international team will be bilingual (English and Russian) and will be prepared by Georgian, Armenian and Azeri partners. There are future plans to publish the magazine in national languages and English.

The aim of CENN was to create an independent newsstand-quality publication on environmental issues - a magazine that could educate, inspire and empower Caucasus citizens to make a difference for the environment. Except information and education, the most important challenge of the magazine will be to help readers become active and more responsible as citizens.

The magazine has three main priorities, which will be highlighted all across the publication: Promotion of transboundary cooperation; Poverty reduction; Confidence (peace) building.

Electronic versions of the publication will be soon available on CENN web site: www.cenn.org

If you are interested to subscribe for the magazine receive a copy of publication "Caucasus Environment", please write to CENN <info@cenn.org> or contact CENN office for further details.

Regional tourism

Turkish tourism minister Guldal Aksit said that the Balkan market was very important for Turkey, adding that over 2 million tourists were expected to come to Turkey from regional countries. Speaking at a news conference in Ankara on January 11, 2003. Aksit said she and her Bulgarian counterpart took up the issue of improving bilateral tourism relations. She said that Bulgaria had recently become a very important market for Turkey. A total of 833,000

tourists came to Turkey from Bulgaria as of the end of 2002, and Bulgaria ranks fifth among countries sending the highest number of tourists to Turkey.

Aksit said she also had a separate meeting with tourism representatives of regional countries in the sidelines of the Second International Tourism Conference in Sofia. She voiced concrete proposals for regional cooperation at the meeting, adding that "my first proposal is foundation of the Union of Travel Agencies of Balkan Countries, another one is promotion of regional countries prior to and during the Olympic Games that will be held in Athens in 2004. Another proposal of mine is transfer of ships to Black Sea and making the sea a lake of yachts. All the attendees accepted my proposals. The region has great importance in respect of tourism. Another step for formation of a Balkan Tourism Union at the level of private sector will be taken. This region has great potential in respect of tourism, but it only gets a share of five percent from the European market where 60 percent of the tourism movements take place. This share will increase by the foundation of this union."

Source: Anadolu Agency



Regional NGO meeting

Over 40 representatives of Black Sea NGOs from the six coastal countries came together in Varna, Bulgaria, 3-6 October 2002 for a regional meeting entitled 'Fostering Cooperation between Decision-makers and the NGO community in the Black Sea Region'. The event was organised by the Black Sea NGO Network with financial support from the Open Society Institute and the East-East Programme.

The participants clearly indicated their commitment to continue working together and support the regional efforts aimed at the solution of Black Sea issues. They reviewed the process of implementation of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan and expressed support for the efforts of the coastal governments and international financial institutions to implement activities aimed at the recovery of the Black Sea ecosystem. The participants agreed to meet again in Romania in 2003 to discuss the issue of nutrient reduction. Another meeting in Ukraine was scheduled for 2004 within the long-term strategy of involving NGOs in the regional decision-making process. The materials of the meeting are available upon request from the BSNN Regional Office.

Secamp-2000

The Sevastopol Environmental Organisation Secamp-2000 (Ukraine), formally registered in 2000, began activities in the

framework of Tacis Black Sea project in 1997. Ever since it has been active in marking of International Black Sea Day with events like beach clean-ups, festivals and exhibitions. The Secamp-2000 main goal is to promote the protection and improvement of the Black Sea environment. Main areas of activity include sustainable development of Black Sea region, biodiversity protection, ecotourism, environmental education, production of various publicity and awareness raising materials like cartoons, movies; booklets, guides etc. The first Black Sea environmental cartoon "I would like to draw the Black Sea" of Sergey Khvorov, Valery Skryabin, Olga Skryabina, Vasily Pavlov and Alexander Khvorov was shown in Evpatoria, Crimea in March 2001 and on other occasions in Ukraine, Russia and Turkey. Secamp-2000 chairman Sergey Khvorov is author of a popular children's version of BS-SAP "How to Save the Black Sea". Contact information for the NGO is available on the BSNN site.

Newsletter of the Black Sea NGO Network

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