

Black Sea Shared

Regional environmental NGO newsletter for the Black Sea



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Ministerial Meeting

On April 17, 2009 a Ministerial Meeting/Diplomatic Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution was held in Sofia, Bulgaria. The meeting focused on the state of the Black Sea environment and dedicated part of the agenda to discussions on amendments to the Convention. The meeting reviewed the progress in the implementation of the Convention with presentations of the State of the Environment Report of the Black Sea 2000-2006/7, the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea 2002-2006, as well as the national statements on the implementation of the Convention.

The conference also adopted several documents further developing the legal framework of the Convention. The documents adopted and signed were the revised Protocol on Pollution Control from Land-Based Sources and Activities, the updated Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea, Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the BSC, Biodiversity Protocol and Landscape Conservation Protocol for Georgia.



The adoption of the proposed amendments to the Convention, intended to allow the accession of regional economic integration organizations, like the EC, was delayed by the Russian Federation, which pointed out it needed more time to study the matter. The need for amending the Convention has been discussed on different occasions by experts including representatives of NGOs. They share the opinion that new provisions are necessary related to public information and participation, as well as reporting and compliance. This message was conveyed in the statement of the regional Black Sea NGOs presented at the Ministerial Meeting. Information on the event is available at the website of the Black Sea Commission www.blacksea-commission.org

NGO statement

Black Sea NGOs associated with the Black Sea NGO Network prepared and presented a statement at the Ministerial Conference in Sofia. The document was drafted in Kiev, Ukraine in March. In the statement they expressed the sincere concern of civil society and the regional public about the future of the Black Sea environment. They also urged the Contracting Parties to the Black Sea Convention and the national governments of the Black Sea basin countries to enhance their future cooperation for the protection of the environment and the development of the region. One of the important points is the region-wide recognition endorsed, by NGOs as well that the Bucharest convention needs to be urgently improved and amended so as to allow the EU to become a Contracting Party. Among areas requiring immediate attention are access to information, public participation compliance mechanisms and reporting requirements.

The statement was accompanied by recommendations to the national governments of the Black Sea basin countries. The NGOs also urged the Contracting Parties to the Convention on

the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution to encourage other countries of the Black Sea basin to join the Convention, to amend the Bucharest Convention to incorporate contemporary environmental law and policy principles of sustainable development, the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle, as well as Best Environmental Practices and the Best Available Technologies and environmental democracy principles of access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making on all levels. The preparation of the statement and recommendations was supported by the project 'Environmental collaboration for the Black Sea: Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine' funded by the EU.

Environmental collaboration

'Environmental collaboration for the Black Sea: Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine' is a recent EU funded project which was implemented in the period 2007- 2009, which provided support to one of the EU key long-term priorities in the neighbour countries – successful transition to democracy and market economy. This includes adoption and implementation of adequate policies in environmental protection, especially for ecosystems which have regional and global significance such as the Black Sea region. A recent EU-funded study involving more than 100 scientists from 15 nations listed the Black Sea as one of several seas in a serious state of decline as a result of coastal development, overfishing and pollution from agriculture. The recovery and conservation of this unique ecosystem require adequate institutional capacity and financial resources. The project improved regional co-operation and regional agreements for protection of the Black Sea, most importantly the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (the Bucharest Convention) and related documents. It worked in connection with the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission focusing on improving national capacities to develop and enforce environmental legislation to implement the Bucharest Convention. Project activities also supported capacity building on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), and Marine Protected Areas. Project website www.ecbsea.org



Black Sea NGO Forum 2009

The second edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum was organized and held by the Civil Society Development Foundation (FOND) in Bucharest, Romania on 29-31 October, 2009. Over 180 participants from 21 countries attended the event. The topics of the Forum entitled 'NGOs in Times of Crisis' were selected following a consultation process that was launched in early summer 2009.

Based on the first edition's evaluation and suggestions, the second edition of the Forum included more space for discussion and participation - 2 series of 5 parallel panels. Among the topics covered were: democracy: fair elections and election monitoring; human rights - freedom of the media and freedom of expression; environment - climate change/Black Sea regional cooperation; children rights - child protection / violence against children; and social protection - social services / health services. Five more cross-cutting panels were held focusing on: strengthening civil society, advocacy and policy, financial sustainability and fundraising, legitimacy of the sector and relations with governments; and volunteering and citizen participation.

The Secretariat of the Black Sea NGOs introduced a new Black Sea NGO Fellowship Program (BSNFP). The program, launched with the support of the Black Sea Trust, is opened for mid-career NGO representatives from seven countries in the Black Sea Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine). They will be working for one month together with the staff of the Black Sea NGO Forum Secretariat in Bucharest. More information at:

www.blackseango.org/.../black-sea-ngo-forum-2009.php

Four seas

4SEAS is an EC funded project under 7th Framework Programme involving seven partners from Italy, United Kingdom, Poland and Ukraine. The project is taking place within the basins of the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the North Sea.

The consortium, coordinated by the Maritime Museum of Genoa, includes scientific museums, aquaria, research institutions and SMEs. All the partners are located on one of the four sea basins of Europe. The project is planned in four phases: audience expression of interest that includes preliminary screening about the public perception of science and seas; exhibitions set up including design and set up of physical and virtual exhibitions, plus side events; exhibitions performance foreseeing eleven months of visits, experiences and virtual tours in 4SEAS; and audience feedback envisioning bi-directional dialogue with the audience about 4SEAS. Currently, the project is in its final phase. More details and information at: <http://www.4seas.eu>

Save Utrish



Russian NGOs and environmental activists are launching a signature campaign against plans of the Russian government to build infrastructure, holiday and leisure facilities in the nature reserve Utrish on the Black Sea. Utrish is a unique juniper and pastiche forest located at the stretching along the Black Sea coast near Anapa, Krasnodar Region in Russia. In November 2008, with the tacit support of the local authorities, work began on the

felling trees and construction of a road to cut through the Utrish nature reserve. People from many Russian towns came to the spot to form a live barrier to stop the trailbuilders. They succeeded in stopping the construction works. Persistent appeals made by nature conservation organizations to the authorities compelled the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation to deem the construction illegal and confirmed the resolution to create a reserve in this area.

Nevertheless the construction machinery is still in place. The Ecological Watch on Northern Caucasus has taken the issue to court but meanwhile construction plans have been unveiled and staged public hearings held about them. Help to preserve Utrish! All international nature conservation organizations and scientists are asked to appeal to the Russian President urging him to protect Utrish.

You can join to this action at <http://www.save-utrish.ru> and <http://www.save-utrish.ru/english> We are asking you to stretch a hand of help to those already engaged - Greenpeace, WWF, the All-Russian Voluntary Movement "Save Utrish", the Ecological Watch of the North Caucasus and a non-violence resistance group of activists from many Russian towns who are camping on the spot to oppose illegal constructions works.

Upgrade Black Sea Scene



Upgrade Black Sea SCENE is a three-year project (2009 – 2011) supported by the EU Seventh Framework Program (FP7) for research and development. It is aimed at developing the research infrastructure of marine environmental institutes and organisations from the Black Sea countries. Upgrade Black Sea SCENE builds upon the successful experience of its predecessor Black Sea SCENE, adding 19 new organisations to reach a total of 51 partners (www.blackseascene.net) from the coastal Black Sea states and the EU countries.

The project aims to improve and harmonize the marine data management practices in the region, and expand the coverage of the data infrastructure. Furthermore, it will enhance the exchange of scientific knowledge, and regional cooperation of institutes for environmental problems and better protection, rehabilitation and sustainable development of the Black Sea ecosystem.

Among the principal objectives of the project are: to implement common communication standards and adapted technologies to ensure the interoperability of data centres around the Black Sea; to network the existing and new Black Sea data centres, active in data collection, and provide integrated databases of standardised quality online; to realize and improve online access to in situ and remote sensing data, metadata and products; to adopt standardised methodologies for data quality checking to ensure the quality, compatibility and coherence of the data generated and issued by many different sources.

A substantial amount of data is already available through the Black Sea Common Data Index version 1 (CDI V1) data access service which contains currently more than 90 000 individual entries. In the coming months additional data centres from the network will further populate the CDI metadatabase and other institutes will be encouraged to participate. The data services are aimed to make Black Sea scientific information and data more easily accessible for scientists and the general public in order to be better informed and prepared to approach issues related to the sea.

The development and adoption of common communication standards and adapted technology ensure the platforms interoperability. The quality, compatibility and coherence of the data, issuing from so many sources, is assured by the adoption of standardized methodologies for data checking, by dedicating part of the activities to training and preparation of synthesized regional and global statistical products from the most comprehensive in-situ and remote sensing data sets made available by the SeaDataNet partners (<http://www.seadatanet.org/>).

Joining forces for the reform of the CFP

On 8th June 2009 a new coalition of NGOs - OCEAN2012, was launched, dedicated to transforming European fisheries policy. Its mission is to prevent over-fishing and enhance human well-being. The consultation process for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has started on the 22nd of April, with the publication of the Commission's Green Paper. The Green Paper states, and Commissioner Borg emphasised, that the next reform of the CFP must overhaul the current policy, which has failed to achieve economic, environmental or social sustainability. OCEAN2012 will respond to the challenge and present proposals for transforming the CFP into a policy that puts environment first and recognises that there can be no fishing without fish.



OCEAN2012 was started by a steering group of 5 environmental and development NGOs: the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), the Fisheries Secretariat (FISH), nef (new economics foundation), The Pew Environment Group and Seas At Risk (SAR). The goal is now to have as many organisations as possible join the coalition and work together for a fundamental reform of the CFP, for the benefit of people and the environment. Black Sea NGO Network has joined the coalition. More information available at: www.ocean2012.eu

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>