

The Black Sea (BS) and the Environment (Greening the Black Sea Synergy)

Civil society position paper addressed to the BS Ministerial Conference in Kiev,

February 14, 2008

ODESSA, February 7, 2008

An alliance of Environmental NGOs¹, who met in Odessa on February 7, 2008, at the invitation of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and WWF:

- Welcome the Ministerial Conference, organised by the Government of Ukraine with the participation of the EU, as an important step towards long term regional cooperation in the BS region².
- Wish to stress the importance of the EU Black Sea Synergy, as a critical instrument to promote sustainable development, environmental protection, integration and governance, and an opportunity for “stimulating a regional dialogue with civil society” in the BS region.
- Call for greater involvement of the EU in the Black Sea regional cooperation by promoting political dialogue and sustainable development.
- Note the considerable environmental values of the Black Sea Region, the many services its natural environment provides to human society and economies and the presence in the region of particularly sensitive areas; and point out that regional environmental cooperation, can also contribute to reinforcing cooperation in the region more generally.
- Highlight that climate change is leading the region to a scarcity within the natural resource base, in particular fresh water and may lead to irreversible environmental degradation, increased poverty and migration flows if immediate, coordinated and cooperative action is not taken.
- Strongly believe that national and international support for concrete environmental projects, with involvement of all stakeholders, will strengthen confidence, stability and cooperation in the so-called frozen conflicts.
- Recognise that a severe and additional pressure on the BS environment stems from recent illegal, uncontrolled and unsustainable tourism developments within existing protected areas and furthermore the privatisation of state lands will make the establishment of protected areas increasingly difficult.
- Stress that fossil and nuclear power are not solutions to climate change as fossil fuel based energy leads to further greenhouse emissions and nuclear energy poses a severe risk from its hazardous waste. These sources of energy must be phased out as a necessity for sustainable life on our planet. Oil and gas extraction from the BS shelf is a major threat to marine protected areas and wetlands.
- Are concerned by rapidly increasing environmental impact of transportation, especially shipping of oil by sea as between BS countries as well through the Bosphorus Strait. Neglecting of modern safety

¹ List of NGO attending the meeting is attached. Representatives signed in their personal capacity.

² Black Sea Synergy countries include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Greece,

standards and regulations increases probability of accidents unfortunately exemplified by the recent one in November 2007 (Kerch accident).

- Request attention to the construction of Winter Olympic 2014 facilities within protected areas of the Sochi National Park and the buffer zone of the Caucasian State Reserve.

NGOs request the countries of the Black Sea region and the EU to:

1. Implement the Aarhus Convention to ensure civil society organizations have access to environmental information, participation and access to justice and are involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of regional sustainable development policies as well as in the reform process in every BS country.
2. Ensure that civil society is able to participate effectively in the development and implementation of the Black Sea Synergy.
3. Treat environmental NGOs as important peace building actors in conflicting areas and to establish a special EC grants program dealing with activities related to conflict resolution.
4. Promote biodiversity conservation, notably through the establishment or strengthening of existing protected areas networks, in particular transboundary protected areas in conflict zones.
5. Promote implementation of the SEA³ and EIA⁴ legislation (UNECE and EU) and ensure careful and proper assessment of future development plans with particular attention to protected areas.
6. Support fundamental research for sound decision making. Encourage joint studies and monitoring of the state of the environment and natural resources coordinated at the level of the BS countries.
7. Promote technology transfer of the best available energy conversion and end-use technologies together with decarbonization of economies. Obsolete technologies and the waste materials produced in one country should not be exported to countries with lower standards.
8. The energy end-use efficiency and renewable energy integration should be given a priority in the regional cooperation.
9. Phase out existing subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear energy.
10. Promote international safety rules and standards and properly coordinate the construction of oil infrastructure by BS states. Avoid duplication of terminals due to political reasons and competition.

³ Strategic Environmental Assessment

⁴ Environmental Impact Assessment

Greening the Black Sea Synergy workshop

NGO list

Organisation	Country
WWF European Policy Office	Belgium
WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme	Austria
WWF Caucasus Programme	Georgia
WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme	Ukraine
Association for Sustainable Human Development	Armenia
European Integration	Armenia
Institute for Peace and Democracy	Azerbaijan
Environmental Law Center "Ecolex"	Azerbaijan
Bulgarian Black Sea NGO Network	Bulgaria
Georgian Energy Efficiency Center	Georgia
Green Alternative	Georgia
CEE Bankwatch Network	Georgia
Ecotiras - International Environmental Association of Rivers keepers	Moldova
NGO "Ecospectrum-Bender"	Moldova
Mare Nostrum	Romania
"Save Taman!"	Russia
Environmental Watch on North Caucasus	Russia
Russian Geographical Society	Russia
Black sea NGO network	Turkey
EUROSOLAR (Turkish Branch of EUROSOLAR European Association for Renewable Energies)	Turkey
KADOS Kadikoyu Friends of Science Culture and Art Association	Turkey
TÜRÇEP Environmental NGOs Platform of Turkey	Turkey
BAKÇEP Western Black Sea NGOs Platform	Turkey
MARÇEP Marmara Region Environmental NGOs Network of Turkey	Turkey
Ecoclub Ukraine	Ukraine
Centre for Black Sea Studies	Ukraine

Centre for Regional Studies	Ukraine
Econad	Ukraine
Resource & Analysis Center "Society and Environment"	Ukraine
National Ecological Centre of Ukraine	Ukraine
ECOPRAVO Lviv	Ukraine
NGO Black Sea Women's Club	Ukraine
Youth Ecological Center	Ukraine
Wetlands International	Ukraine
National Ecological Center of Ukraine	Ukraine