

BLACK SEA OIL SPILL PREPAREDNESS

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The unprecedented pressure from human activities on the Black Sea ecosystem arising from the peculiar features of this marine ecosystem as the most isolated sea resulted in dramatic environmental changes over last few decades. Although the recent signs of recovery of the Black Sea ecosystem are quite promising, to the great extent they occurred due to 1990s economic decline in the most of states situated the Black Sea basin. Prevention of new cycle of catastrophic deterioration of the Black Sea ecosystem in conditions of economic recovery of in its basin is the main challenge which the countries in the Black Sea basin are facing currently.

The catchment area of the Black Sea includes major parts of seventeen countries and the second, third, and fourth largest rivers in Europe, respectively the Danube, Dniro and Don rivers

Main Industrial Sources of Pollution in the Black Sea Basin



Borisova, O., Kondakov, A., Paleari, S. et al. GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT: Eutrophication in the Black Sea Region. Impact Assessment and Casual Chain Analysis, 2005, University of Kalmar, Sweden.

Assessment of the impact from land-based sources and human activities of more than 160 million people living in the Black Sea basin conducted by the BSEP Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis in 1995-1996

allowed to identify the priority environmental problems of the Black Sea that required the concerted response of the Black Sea coastal states and basin-wide cooperation, namely: eutrophication, oil pollution, overfishing and invasive species

The global climate change and its impact on the Black Sea ecosystem becomes more and more meaningful emerging problem.

Recognizing the drastic decline of Black Sea ecosystem, its subsequent impact on the Black Sea living resource, wellbeing and health of coastal population the six countries that border the sea signed the *Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution* in Bucharest, Romania, in April 1992 (the *Bucharest Convention, or the Black Sea Convention*).

The Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution - Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine, committed themselves to

“...take individually or jointly, as appropriate, all necessary measures consistent with international law and in accordance with the provisions of this Convention to prevent, reduce and control pollution thereof in order to protect and preserve the marine environment of the Black Sea” (Article 5, paragraph 3)

Four Protocols to the Black Sea Convention are enforced in the Black Sea Coastal States including the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Black Sea Marine Environment by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations, 1992.

The level of potential operational and accidental risk of oil spills with consequent oil pollution of marine and coastal environment is very high in the Black Sea. Main sources of such oil spills are as follow:

- **Oil pipelines:**
Potential risks due to pipes deterioration;
Oil leakage during the illegal incuts to pipelines
- **Operational oil spills during reloading and trans-shipment**
- **Oil transportation by sea/rail:**
rail carriage (gasoline tank car insecurity);
Carriage by sea (tankers insecurity; storms, mists)

Oil refineries

Estimated total load of oil from the Black Sea coastal states 57 404, of which 53300 was attributed to the Danube river, and 135 tons a year to the oil spills. Illegal oil discharges were not included in this estimate (

Sources of the information:

1. National Reports "Assessment of Land-Based Sources of Pollution", 1996.
2. First Meeting of the Emergency Response Activity Centre, Varna, May 1994.

The rising risk of accidental oil spills from oil transport is clearly visible from the number of tankers passing the narrow Bosphorus strait which can have a dramatic consequences for population and for environment in case of major accidents.

**1995: Inner Black Sea - Main Tanker Routes
(20 and more tankers)**



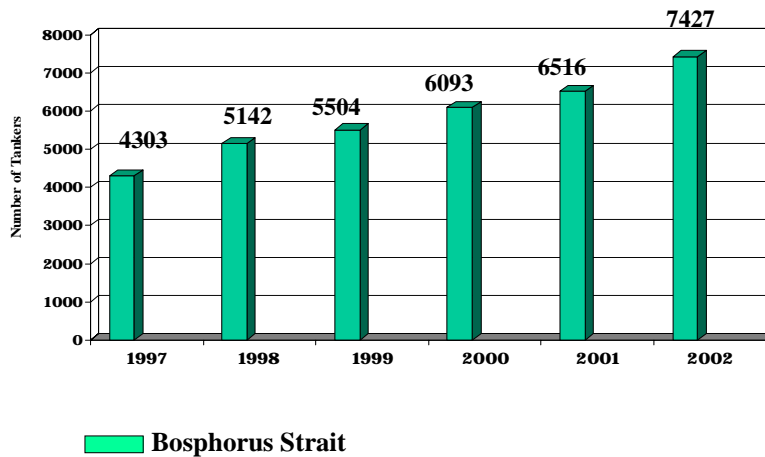
1995: Main Tanker Movements via the Bosphorus



The vast majority of tankers transit through the narrow Bosphorus straits.
Source: Feasibility Study for Reception Facilities in the Black Sea Ports of Georgia, Ukraine and Russian Federation, Black Sea Traffic Assessment; funded as part of the EU Tacis contribution to BSEP

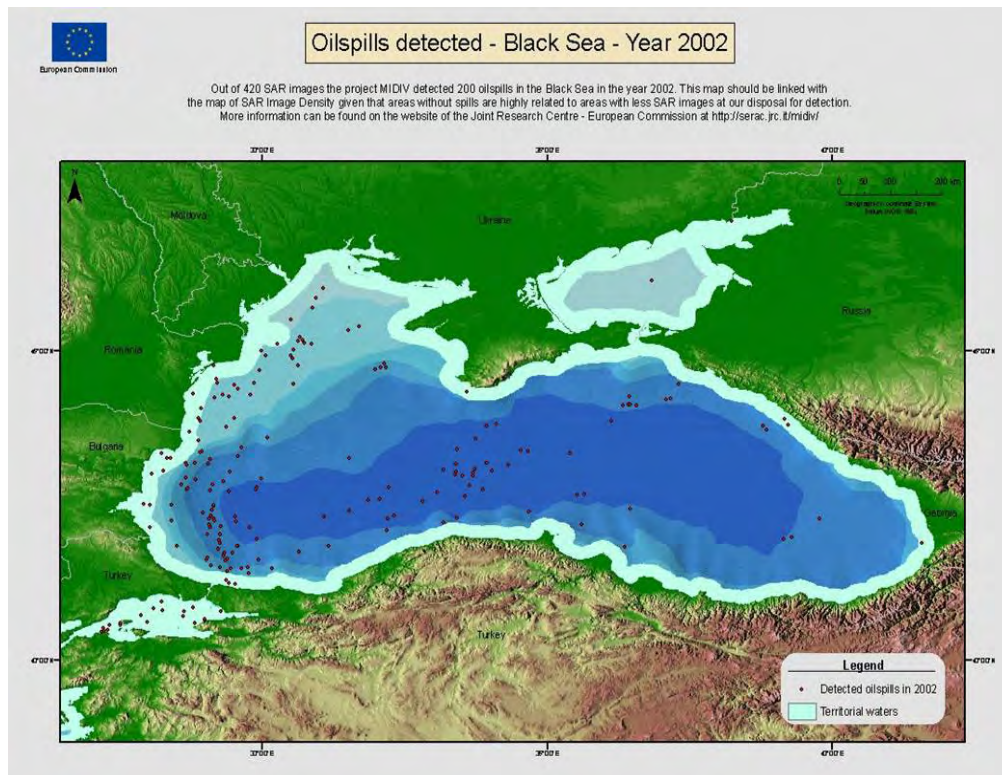


Number of Tankers (Annually)



Source: after M. Korcak, Turkey, Satellite Monitoring and Assessment of Sea-based Oil Pollution in the Black Sea, Istanbul, 15 June 2005, www.blacksea-commission.org

The monitoring data of oil slicks/spills in particular in the open sea are not abundant and needs significant improvement. However the results of satellite observation, even if results are 20% true, still show significant number of oil slicks on in the Black Sea.



Expected two fold increase of transport of Russian and Caspian oil via Black Sea particularly through Russian and Georgian marine ports , progressing exploration of oil and gas deposits in the Black Sea proper in Ukraine and Turkey, Romanian oil rigs and potential expansion oil terminals and oil pipelines in Bulgaria calls for the strengthening safety measures and setting up the up-to-date oil spill response system

In line with provisions of this Protocol and supported and guided by International Maritime Organization (IMO) the Advisory Group on Environmental Safety Aspect of Shipping of the Black Sea Commission prepared a Draft Black Sea Contingency Plan and submitted it to the Black Sea Commission.

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The Plan is adopted with the aim of implementing of Article IX of the Bucharest Convention and Article 2 of the Emergency Protocol and constitutes an Annex to the Emergency Protocol.

The purpose of the Plan is to establish a mechanism for mutual assistance, under which the competent national Authorities of the Contracting Parties will co-operate in order to co-ordinate and integrate their response to marine pollution incidents either affecting or likely to affect their coasts, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zones (hereinafter referred as areas of responsibility) of the Contracting Parties or to incidents surpassing the available response capacity of each of the Contracting Parties alone.

The General objective of the Plan is to organize a prompt and effective response to oil spills affecting or likely to affect the area of responsibility of one or more of the Contracting Parties and to facilitate the co-operation in the field of oil pollution preparedness and response.

For this purpose the following **Specific Objectives** are defined:

a) to determine the extent of co-operation for the implementation of the Plan between the responsible national authorities, at the operational level;

- b) to divide the responsibilities and to anticipate the transfer of responsibility from one of the Contracting Parties to another;
- c) to establish the principles of command and liaison, and to define the corresponding structures;
- d) to provide arrangements concerning the operation of ships and aircraft of one of the Contracting Parties, within the area of responsibility of the other Parties;
- e) to specify the type of assistance which might be provided and the conditions under which it will be provided;
- f) to determine in advance the financial conditions and administrative modalities related to co-operative actions in case of emergency.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following **Actions** are intended to be taken through the implementation of the Regional Contingency Plan:

developing appropriate preparedness measures and effective systems for detecting and reporting pollution incidents affecting or likely to affect the area of responsibility of the Parties;

promoting and implementing regional co-operation in contingency planning, prevention, control and clean-up operations for combating pollution caused by oil spills;

establishing the necessary measures to restrict spreading of and to minimize the hazard posed by oil;

developing and implementing a program of training courses and practical exercises for different levels of personnel involved in oil pollution prevention and combating;

developing procedures to increase regional co-operation.

Nevertheless, the Contracting Parties agree that response operations in case of a marine pollution incident which occurs within the area of responsibility of one of the Parties will be conducted in accordance with provisions of the National Contingency Plan of the Party concerned

In 2003 The Black Sea Contingency Plan to the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Black Sea Marine Environment by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations (Emergency Protocol), Volume I, Response to Oil Spills, 2003 in response to increasing intensity of oil transport and subsequent potential risk of oil spills was approved by the Black Sea Commission and signed by Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Georgia, Russian Federation and Ukraine finalize their internal procedures for signing the Plan. The first steps towards practical implementation of the Black Sea Contingency are being undertaken by the Black Sea Commission institutional network in close cooperation with Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI).

In 2005 the mapping of MARPOL sensitive area was finalized by all Black Sea coastal states, the results are submitted to the Black Sea Commission as Annex 2 to the Contingency Plan will become an integral part of the Black Sea Contingency Plan (www.blacksea-commission.com)

Created for coordination of interaction of national contingency plans in case of major oil spills the Black Sea Contingency Plan accelerated development of corresponding national plans. As a rule on the level of individual ports the contingency plan is well set up in every Black Sea coastal state

National contingency plans

Bulgaria – all Annexes to the Black Sea Contingency Plan are completed and submitted to the Black Sea Commission. They are distributed to the Contracting Parties

Georgia – prepared and awaiting approval of Parliament. Delay with approval is explained by political changes in Georgia; Parts of National Contingency Plans on oil spills are being implemented on practical level by Maritime Transport Administration and port regulation; all Georgian ports have oil spills combating plans even before final approval of the national plan by the Government of Georgia

Romania – the national contingency plan prepared and is being implemented, communication will be improved following the experience of the exercise on combating oil spills

Russian Federation – the Federal Contingency Plan was approved in July 2003. The Russian Regional Contingency Plan for the Black Sea was updated in line with requirements of IMO and is waiting approval by the Head of Krasnodar Kraij and Rostov Oblast

Turkey – continues the development of national contingency plan

Ukraine –the national Black Sea contingency plan will be developed after approval of Black Sea Contingency Plan to the Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Black Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations: Volume I Response to Oil Spills. At the practical level each port has its own contingency plan and all necessary equipment for handling oil spills.

All Black Sea coastal states have sufficient capacities for dealing with small and medium oil spills however the capacity of technical means in case of major oil spills are insufficient and the Black Sea Contingency Plan will work towards elaboration and establishing clear procedures and actions to be fully prepared for dealing with accidents of such level.

In promoting the practical implementation of Black Sea Contingency Plan the BSC Advisory Group on Environmental Aspects of Shipping in 2005 the close with Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative conducted the first Black Sea Training in Pollution Reporting (POLREP) under the Black Sea Contingency Plan and elaborated a detail schedule for conduction POLREP drills in 2006. Assisted by OSPRI the Advisory group adapted HELCOM Manual for the purpose of the Black Sea Contingency Plan and started to work on the improvement of the template for the Directory of Response Personnel and Inventory of Response Equipment, Products and Other Means Which Each Party Might Offer as Assistance in Case of the Activation of the Plan.

In January 2006 the first Black Sea BRAVO drill was initiated and conducted by Bulgaria, the second drill will be repeated in the second quarter of 2006 by Georgia and elements of the Black Sea Contingency plan will be tested in June, 2006 during bilateral Russian –Turkish exercise.

Realizing the precautionary principle stated in the Strategic Action Plan for Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea (1996, amended 2002) the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution aimed its efforts at the preparedness and preventive actions in dealing with potential oil spills.

Biographical Sketch

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Ukrainian, graduated from Moscow Mendeleev Chemical University; Ph. D in environmental protection and natural resources management; worked in Institute of Hydrobiology of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and as expert of Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine; in 2000 joined the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea as Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, coordinates work of the seven Advisory Groups of the Black Sea Commission including the Advisory Group on Environmental Safety Aspects of Shipping.